

Date: March 9, 2017
For ACTION X
For INFORMATION _____
Board Agenda: Yes X
No _____

FROM: Alexandra Griffin, Chair, Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC)

THROUGH: Frances Donna Brearley, Talented and Gifted Coordinator

THROUGH: Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Alvin L. Crawley, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Ramee A. Gentry, Chair, and Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: 2015-2016 Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee Annual Report

BACKGROUND:

Over the past year, the Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) focused its attention on current metrics used to measure the success of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) Talented and Gifted (TAG) program, culminating in collaboration with ACPS to provide key questions the ACPS TAG program evaluation needed to be able to answer to determine TAG success in ACPS. Members of TAGAC contributed questions, suggestions, and conducted data analysis using publicly available data to better understand how ACPS currently measures its TAG program, and how evaluation could be improved. As part of this work, TAGAC invited Terri Mozingo, Ed.D, Clinton Page, and Jennifer Whitson from the Office of Accountability (OA) to discuss current data collected, and determine whether collecting other data points currently not collected was feasible.

When funds were secured within the Alexandria City budget for a TAG evaluation of the 2012 *Local Plan of the Education of the Gifted* ("TAG Local Plan,") TAGAC engaged with ACPS to ensure alignment of all TAGAC recommendations around evaluation, measures of success identified in the TAG Local Plan, and throughout TAGAC's work this past year. This report details specific TAGAC activities for ensuring robust evaluation of Alexandria's TAG program, organized by month.

Timeline and Topics of Meetings

Below is a brief synopsis of TAGAC meetings organized by month. The meeting date includes a hyperlink to the agenda, materials, and meeting minutes for each meeting.

September 14, 2015:

Conducted scope of work exercise to ensure better understanding of TAGAC work and encourage full participation of TAGAC Committee in activities.

October 19, 2015:

TAGAC prepared questions for Office of Accountability on types of TAG data available, and what TAGAC would like to see collected to better understand how well TAG was performing in ACPS.

November 16, 2015:

TAGAC continued to discuss potential data questions, and discussed finalizing the TAGAC Annual Report for 2014-15.

December 14, 2015:

TAGAC member Steven Gordon presented findings he had compiled from public sources on TAG programs in ACPS and surrounding jurisdictions. Office of Accountability guest Clinton Page answered TAGAC questions on collection of data to determine success of TAG in ACPS.

January 25, 2016:

Meeting canceled due to snowstorm.

February 22, 2016:

TAGAC discussed the draft of the 2014-15 Annual Report, submitted to the OA formal questions on data to determine effectiveness of TAG in ACPS, and heard an update from ACPS regarding TAGAC's middle school recommendations.

March 28, 2016:

TAGAC discussed meetings about TAG with ACPS officials, and continued work on the 2014-15 Annual Report.

April 18, 2016:

TAGAC discussed the external TAG program evaluation with ACPS officials, and worked on Committee documents (TAGAC Scope of Work and Annual Report).

May 16, 2016:

TAGAC conducted Committee elections, discussed data/accountability indicators for the TAG program

SUMMARY:

Scope of Work

TAGAC began the year by reviewing its scope of work and identifying key activities it could undertake to fulfill its scope. These activities were recorded and organized into an overall roadmap for the year. (See: Appendix A).

TAGAC Status Update on Middle School Improvements

TAGAC then reviewed ACPS progress made in fulfilling budget neutral recommendations to improve TAG programs at the ACPS middle school level. The work of the Committee was limited to review of the

progress, culminating in the February memorandum from ACPS, which provided TAGAC the status of implementation of TAGAC's middle school recommendations. (See: Appendix B)

TAGAC efforts on TAG program evaluation

Throughout the year, TAGAC worked to ensure that data collected related to TAG identified students aligned to the questions TAGAC raised about the quality of TAG programs within ACPS. Fundamentally, TAGAC wished to know how TAG programs were performing, both compared to other similar school districts, and with regard to the success rate of TAG students matriculating through ACPS. TAGAC used as supporting documents the metrics identified in the 2013-14 TAGAC Annual Report, the TAG Local Plan, and through research by TAGAC members. To facilitate this effort, TAGAC invited OA members collecting school data to present to TAGAC several times. Key materials included the following:

- TAGAC member-driven efforts (See: Appendix C)
- TAGAC questions and OA answers on metrics OA (See: Appendix D)
- TAGAC 2014 and 2015 Comparisons (See: Appendix E)
- 4/18/16 Draft Summary Overview of TAG Evaluation Scope (See: Appendix F)
- TAGAC Program Evaluation Session (See: Appendix G)
- TAG Accountability Indicators (See: Appendix H)
- 2013 Review of the (FCPS) Advanced Academic Programs (See: Appendix I)

Through a series of meetings and exercises, TAGAC worked collaboratively with ACPS to ensure the TAG program evaluation, which sought to determine the extent to which the TAG Local Plan had been implemented, included relevant questions TAGAC had considered in its work as it sought to understand the success rate of TAG within ACPS. TAGAC will expect to hear an update of the progress made toward an expected start to the evaluation in the 2016-17 School Year.

Other Activities

While TAGAC's focus during the 2015-16 School Year was evaluation of TAG, the Committee also discussed potential improvements needed at the high school level, including conducting a review of Advanced Placement (AP) classes to determine what proportion of TAG identified students were enrolled in AP classes, and whether they were meeting the needs of those students. TAGAC also discussed the need to verify whether the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) program offered at the high school was for the general population, and not geared toward TAG students. ACPS inquired on behalf of TAGAC and confirmed that the STEM program was geared toward a general population. Additional marketing efforts were discussed to ensure parents and students were aware that this program was open to all students and was not developed with TAG students in mind. At the elementary school level, TAGAC discussed the need for better communication of TAG identification in elementary schools. Specific actions will be identified during future TAGAC meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

TAGAC has been pleased to be an active part of the evaluation efforts happening at ACPS. Further collaboration and refinement may involve implementing the following recommendations:

- A) Review AP data and link to TAG data to assess the success of TAG students

- B) Provide commitment to TAGAC for a schedule of when data will be available to the Committee for its evaluation purposes
- C) Promote more and better communication to hard-to-reach populations about the TAG program and its identification process
- D) Include attrition rates of TAG students between elementary and middle schools, and provide a comparison of TAG students versus non-TAG students
- E) Survey TAG high school students and parents as to the efficacy of TAG programs in meeting their needs, including resources, deficiencies and improvements

Staff Response

The staff appreciates the TAGAC's efforts to continually improve and enhance the efficiency of the TAG program in ACPS. In response to the recommendations above, the staff has provided the following action steps to address each recommendation:

Recommendation A and B:

- A) Review AP data and link to TAG data to assess the success of TAG students
- B) Provide commitment to TAGAC for a schedule of when data will be available to the Committee for its evaluation purposes

Staff response:

The data sets which are described in Appendix H were presented to TAGAC in spring 2016 as potential indicators to be supplied by the division on an annual basis no later than November 30th each year. Feedback was received from the committee and adjustments were subsequently made. The Department of Accountability and the TAG Office will jointly compile and report these data for use in the TAGAC Annual Report. Staff is pleased to report, that through collaboration with TAGAC, the division will be a regional leader in the depth and breadth of data supplied via these annual indicators (see page 5 of Appendix H). These indicators in part are intended to fill what has been a nationwide information gap based on TAG students not being identified as a reporting group within NCLB and now ESSA federal legislation.

Recommendation C:

- C) Promote more and better communication to hard-to-reach populations about the TAG program and its identification process

Staff response:

The TAG Office looks forward to the TAGAC suggesting new and enhanced ways to increase our outreach to all populations within ACPS. The TAG office will begin these efforts by increasing communication to hard-to-reach populations through the use of social media (Twitter), the TAG website, which will feature short video segments along with the parent presentations in a variety of languages, family events developed and conducted in collaboration with the FACE center, as well as expanding outreach to local housing and community centers with face-to-face presentations done by school and division level staff.

Recommendation D and E:

- D) Include attrition rates of TAG students between elementary and middle schools, and provide a comparison of TAG students versus non-TAG students
- E) Survey TAG high school students and parents as to the efficacy of TAG programs in meeting their needs, including resources, deficiencies and improvements

Staff response:

At the request of the TAGAC, the division supplied the “Talented and Gifted Brief: Grade Level Cohort Survival” analysis in April 2015. Moving forward, staff recommends the use of a survey of parents of students receiving TAG services to gauge parent perceptions and satisfaction with TAG services and initiatives. The survey data will serve the division and TAGAC in having a more comprehensive understanding of areas of success and areas for improvement as it relates to parental perceptions of TAG services across the K-12 continuum. These efforts will begin in school year 2016-2017 with parent survey and focus groups as a part of the TAG Evaluation project.

The full program evaluation underway during SY 17 will provide feedback from all stakeholders, including high school students and parents as to the efficacy of TAG programs in meeting their needs. A full report and data analysis will be available by September 2017.

CONCLUSION:

TAGAC has appreciated the level of collaboration between ACPS and the Committee on all topics, but in particular on evaluation efforts. Collaboration will yield results that will benefit all parents, students, and faculty.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends approval of the ACPS responses to the Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee Annual Report.

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