

DRAFT

Date: September 2020

For ACTION ___

For INFORMATION ___

Board Agenda: Yes ___

No ___

FROM: Laura Rose, Chair, Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee
(TAGAC)

THROUGH: Gregory Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D, Superintendent of Schools
Gerald Mann, Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director of Instructional Support,
Department of Teaching, Learning and Leadership
Frances Donna Brearley, Talented and Gifted Coordinator

TO: The Honorable Cindy M. Anderson, Chairman, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: 2019-2020 Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee Annual Report

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Background:

The Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) for ACPS is focused on assuring that the needs of all Talented and Gifted students are met in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The Scope of Work for the 2019-2020 school year was to improve the educational and social/emotional needs of Talented and Gifted Students in ACPS by focusing its efforts on topics including:

- 1) Following and advocating for the implementation of the 2020 updates to the Local Plan; Being vocal contributors to the update of the local plan incorporating the recommendations from the 2017 TAG Consultants Report
- 2) Examining delivery of services at each level (Elementary, Middle and High School) and the effectiveness of the academic rigors in the differentiation of the teaching of curriculum offered to TAG students based on their specific and individual needs as well as accountability for delivery of these services
- 3) Examining appropriate identification of ACPS students for TAG services with a specific focus on underrepresented populations and programs
- 4) Focusing on the social/emotional needs of TAG students in ACPS.

Summary of Activities:

This represents a high level overview of our activities for the 2019-2020 School Year. Per the ACPS subcommittee operating guidelines the TAGAC has approved minutes for all of our meetings in the ACPS archives.

Our September meeting kicked-off with a focus on outreach and recruitment. Over the summer, the TAGAC chair sent letters of introduction to all school principals and solicited help to recruit more diverse candidates to the committee from both a racial and geographic perspective. Additional outreach was conducted by the chair attending the Young Scholars summer dinner event.

In October, the committee drafted documentation to support the one-year referral change to parents, teachers and principals as part of our ongoing effort for better communication. The committee also discussed what changes to the TAG Indicators Report would better demonstrate inroads that have been made to include students from traditionally under-represented groups in the TAG program. Additionally, the committee discussed ACPS department relationships we would like to pursue including: counseling, middle school principals and staff, the FACE center and the School Board's Special Education committee.

In November, the TAGAC chair attended the All Principal meeting to gather support for recruiting TAG parents from underrepresented groups to participate on the committee. The committee discussed concerns about the social and emotional needs of TAG students with the new Director of Counseling as well as received a briefing from the

Four Point Educational Partners consultant. We also received an update on differentiation strategies from the nRich Educational Consultants.

A special November meeting was called to welcome a presentation from Dr. Naglieri, a nationally recognized scientific researcher and author of the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). Several community and school board members attended. The committee gained a deeper understanding of the NNAT (administered to all ACPS first graders) and were keenly interested in his research which does not show a racial bias with this test. However, this is not the experience at ACPS. The committee discussed the validity of the NNAT, ACPS testing environments, timing of test administration, and the potential for multi-year NNAT testing to determine whether we can improve our test results.

In December, the committee welcomed Mr. Bill Knudsen, Director of Government and Affiliate Relations, National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC). He provided a high-level overview of federal and state legislation affecting gifted youth, discussed equitable identification and service delivery.

In January, the committee discussed the January 8th Inspiring Futures event, noting that two panelists had backgrounds in equity and gifted education. The committee further discussed our year-end work product which would consist of a comprehensive report focused on Identification, Differentiation, Counseling and Communication across the K-12 spectrum. This is a departure from our previous focus on elementary, middle and high school. Our goal is to build a cohesive experience across these areas, one that meets the needs of TAG students and benefits ALL students.

In February, the committee examined the annual TAG Indicators report provided by the Office of Accountability. Based on the committee's request, several new data points will be tracked: racial diversity by grade-level and tracking by gender. Previously, we could only view race at a macro-level K-12. Our hope is to see progress from better identification through programs such as Young Scholars and the Talent Search Team. This year's report indicates a potential gender bias in the 4th/5th English Language Arts program, fewer males are in this program. TAGAC recommends we monitor gender data.

On June 15th, we were able to meet via Zoom for 1 hour. The primary objective was to share feedback regarding the delivery of gifted services during the Spring School Closure due to Covid-19. In response to racial justice protests, committee members shared our continued commitment to address racial inequities within the TAG program and expressed a desire to participate in the 2025 Strategic Plan and 2020 Fall Re-Opening Plan.

School Closure Impacts:

1. In March, TAGAC was scheduled to meet with Clinton Page, Chief Accountability Officer and Angela Green, Testing and Improvement Analyst, to better understand testing administration and possible impacts on TAG identification.
2. In April, TAGAC was scheduled to meet with FACE Director, Krishna Leyva to discuss ways to partner and foster better communication about the TAG program.
3. In May and June, TAGAC planned to complete a comprehensive report on Identification, Differentiation, Counseling and Communication across the K-12 spectrum.
4. TAGAC planned to review draft changes to the Local Plan, with hopes for adoption by the School Board in Fall 2020.

Submitted by: Laura Rose, Chair, TAGAC SY-2019-2020

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