

**Alexandria City Public Schools
Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee**

October Minutes

Meeting: October 19, 2015 at 7:00 P.M.

TAGAC Members Present: Alex Griffin, Amanda Eisenhour, Donna Brearley, Justin Keating, Steve Lally, Alexis Stackhouse, Stacy Hayden, Scott Oswald, Gregg Murphy, Ashley Chappell, Renee Reynolds, Steven Gordon , Nicholas Miller, Melissa Doney

Guests: None

Approval of Minutes:

- Steve will make a change concerning the AP World History and email to Stacy Hayden. Updated minutes will be sent out.
- Minutes are approved with changes to the AP World History section.

Public Comments:

None

Chair's Report:

Mrs. Griffin brought up the fact that we did not do an annual report last year, because of this we need to do an annual report. She is hoping to have a sub committee get together from last year to reflect the findings and recommendations from last year. This is only pertinent to the people that were a part of the committee from SY 2014-2015.

The decision was made to write the report this Fall. Mr. Keating will clarify that an annual fall report is okay as opposed to a spring report.

Mrs. Griffin will send out a previous report and an outline as a good start. People can then let her know if they are comfortable writing a certain part. She will look at the memorandum from last year and look at the previous annual report to write an outline.

There was a question over if the report contained some sort of metrics. We do have information of what was previously responded to by ACPS about our middle school recommendations.

There was a suggestion and decision to split up the pieces (to be worked on by different individuals) in the future during September so that we can have it ready to be sent to the board in October. We want to make sure that it is purposeful and can help the school board.

Mrs. Griffin also introduced the new TAGAC member Melissa Doney to the group.

ACPS Updates:

Mrs. Brearley shared that we have started all of the professional development workshops previously mentioned whether they are middle school sessions, gifted cohort, or young scholars sessions.

She also shared that VDOE does a technical review on local plans. They put out guidance on what they would like to see included in the plans. It is basically a peer review process from coordinators & teachers from divisions who are not having their plans reviewed that year. Mrs. Brearley participated in one that reviewed Henrico's plan. She would be happy to share out what the state is currently looking for.

We will be getting reviewed next year. The committee that does this is supposed to share outstanding pieces and also things that we could continue to work on. It is an improvement process. If committee members would like to look at our local plan through the lens of VDOE, please contact Donna.

A question was raised about YS expanding to other schools. Currently Dr. Crawley is looking at data and budget implications to determine if this will happen. She shared she is currently putting together next year's proposed budget.

Teachers in both middle schools have had training and have written the first set of DEPs. On each area that a child is identified in, they will receive a DEP in that area. Clarification was made as to which students are receiving DEPs. These are students who were identified in elementary as opposed to all honors students. Mrs. Brearley will bring an example DEP to share at the next meeting. Support systems that are built in for teachers are their Professional Learning Communities where teachers collaborate. In addition to this, the MS resource teachers have also been doing a lot of DEP training.

The DEP can be for either individual students or for a group of students. Initially, they are trying to get the teachers to see the students who need DEPs to be seen as a group that needs differentiation. However, DEPs can be appropriate for individual students. It is up to teacher discretion. Some teachers are finding that they are writing down things that they are already doing, for others it is giving them support to do more things in their classrooms.

Mr. Oswald asked how the teachers are reacting to this additional work. Mrs. Brearley sent out a survey to find out their thoughts. So far there hasn't been much push back other than asking if they can have an online fillable form instead of a word document template.

TC Update on Class Ranking:

Ms. Eisenhour shared that the Class Rank committee met last Wednesday. It was an introduction to the discussion of class ranking. There will be three meetings and goal is to provide guidance for the school board. Scope of work is only on class rank at this time, however they may plan to discuss weighting eventually.

The big discussion was on what factor class ranking plays in college admission. The committee is hoping to bring in admission officers to find out their thoughts. In some ways they see the role declining, a lot of schools in the region and across the country are changing how they use class rank and it is changing how colleges do things.

They are not necessarily looking to get rid of class ranking, but maybe just grouping them (i.e. top 25, top 50). Other big question is how class ranking impacts what classes they will take. They also will be sending out students survey to ask them how they feel about it, how it impacts course decisions and other questions.

Mr. Lally is part of the committee as well and brought up how they are determining valedictorian. There are many different ways to do this and they are discussing it. They also discussed stress on students in addition to the course choices and college admission. They will elicit responses from admission officers at schools the TC students typically apply to.

Fairfax does not have class ranks. Many people (on the Class Rank Committee) felt that they couldn't discuss ranking without discussing weighted GPA, though Mr. Mann said that this was out of their scope of work.

Weighting was explained more thoroughly to TAGAC. The weighting in honors courses for ACPS is a 0.5 increase and a 1.0 increase in AP courses. This can encourage students to take more challenging classes but can also lower the level of the class or make students hesitant to take classes such as art.

Ms. Eisenhower mentioned that on her course selection survey last year, many students mentioned they took courses to help their GPA.

Implications on class rank with TAG and a question of how much energy TAGAC should put into this all was discussed. It was determined that TAGAC really doesn't have too much to do with class rank with exception of rigor in the classes. Our main concern would be that because of the GPA boost a lot of people will take an honors class and the teachers may be unable to teach to the level of rigor that it should be.

Other relevance is that TAG students are the most likely to be impacted by this. It is something to think about as opposed to a central topic of our concern. Weighting can also be important (if the committee switches to that topic) because this affects how many students take AP courses and districts are sometime rated on how many AP courses are offered. TAGAC will be in the loop but will not focus on this.

It was also brought up that it may be relevant because of our concern of students leaving after 5th grade. We received data on this previously, but the data did not compare TAG identified vs. non-TAG identified, therefore the data is not valid.

We also discussed that as we look from grade to grade the percentage of TAG students goes down. We do not know if this is because ACPS is doing a better job with TAG identification, lack of students retained, or other reasons. We need to see data on a cohort moving through years of schooling to see what is happening.

Scope of Work & Data Discussion:

Need to determine what to work on next year based on the overview of responses/ key themes from TAGAC Scope of Work.

Will come up for data needed to ask Clinton Page for what we want to further advise us. We need to be clear on what Clint can provide.

If we have a data set that we are interested in, can we get it at the beginning of next year so it is ready?

- IT is working on getting some data public on the dashboard, however it will not have small specific data because then it violates privacy.

Questions for Clint:

- How long does it take for us to get the data we request? What is the general timeline?
- How does he prioritize requests from advisory committees?
- What data do we have available for SOL scores as opposed to pass/advance/pass/fail?
- Can we measure SOL data over time? (or is this not possible because of SOL changes)
- We want to look at other things besides SOL data. What do we have that we collect already that is standardized for us to see?
- How is ACPS measuring success?
- Who does this data disseminate to?

Data we are interested in:

- How are we doing on reaching our underrepresented populations?
- How are our TAG students doing with getting into the schools that they would like to?
- Tracking underrepresentation
- Identification Data
 - When looking at TAG identification we would also like it separated by the 4 categories (math, science, social studies, and language arts).
 - Questions about identification
 - Have the identification changes that were made worked?
 - What percentage of underrepresented student populations are now TAG identified?
 - How has this changed?
 - Have these changes helped some underrepresented populations and not others?
 - Has value been added because of these identification changes?
 - What statistics can we use to see if value has been added?
- Post secondary success for TAG students
- How many TAG identified students have teachers that have some sort of TAG PD?
 - There is a baseline from 2 years ago.
 - Can easily track the endorsement add on vs. PD.
 - How many teachers are TAG certified on their license?
 - Is this training being utilized by schools?
 - What percentage of our TAG identified students are being taught by teachers who have received some sort of training in that area?

Mr. Gordon mentioned that he read through the SOL report from ACPS but didn't see specifically what the numbers were telling you i.e. gen ed vs. TAG vs. subgroups. He would like to see statistics on how well our TAG students doing on these tests. Hope to do comparisons to VA as a whole, to see if we are underperforming or doing better than other locales. Also would

like to see how high the high-achievers are going. We need more information than if they just passed, but instead how high?

Other thoughts regarding data:

- We want to look at TAG students and if we are doing what we hoped. We can then use this for our reports to make recommendations to the board.
- Need to also keep track of what changes have happened in correlation with the data and why these changes may have happened with clean data that we get in the future.
- We need to make sure that our data has a point and can help us tell the story. We don't want pointless data.
- TAGAC is wondering if we should be relaying data information to the school board about TAG?

Clint will try to come to either our December/January meeting since he most likely cannot come to the November one.

We should check to see if they are already keeping certain data, and determine what data to collect more of in the future. It is easier to collect it as they go as opposed to going back and retrieving it. It may be helpful to have Clint share a short run down on what his process is/ what kind of data he already collects. Secondly, we need to determine what we want to ask him for on an annual basis.

Wrap Up:

- Need to continue working to wrap up the research questions for Clint.
- Our next meetings are:
 - November 16th
 - December 14th