

Date: ___ March 2018
For ACTION ___
For INFORMATION X
Board Agenda: Yes ___
No ___

FROM: Gregory L. Murphy, Chair, Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC)

THROUGH: Frances Donna Brearley, Talented and Gifted Coordinator
Terri Mazingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Lois F. Berlin, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: Proposed 2017-2018 Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee **Scope of Work**

SUMMARY:

The Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) activities during the 2017-18 school year will focus on a variety of topics, including: (i) the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program evaluation of the efficacy of TAG identification and the effectiveness of the academic rigors in the differentiation of the teaching of curriculum offered to TAG students; (ii) reviewing the Local Plan; (iii) examining delivery of services at each level (Elementary, Middle and High School); (iv) improving communication of what TAG offers within the student and parent communities; (iv) qualifying teachers for providing students an effective TAG education; and (v) creating a Manual for TAGAC that informs generally as to its history, identifies pending issues of concern and establishes goals for improvement going forward.

BACKGROUND:

TAGAC has discussed a number of potential items for its Scope of Work for the 2017-18 academic year. This memorandum describes the areas that the Committee may undertake for review and propounding recommendations.

Preparation for TAG Program Evaluations:

The Office of Accountability scheduled an evaluation of the ACPS TAG program for the 2016-17 School Year. In addition, arising out of a complete technical review by VDOE in the Fall of 2016, TAGAC was pleased to collaborate with the Office of Accountability to identify the best measurements for inclusion in its evaluation during its 2016-17 year and for monitoring and promoting same in future years. In summary, TAGAC called for increased, improved data collection and quantitative and qualitative analysis, and believes the Committee's continued participation in the lead up to these evaluations and reviews has and will enhance the final products.

TAG Local Plan review:

In following its established timeline, the process of reviewing and adopting a revised **Local Plan** continued in the SY 2016-17, but called for further study which appropriately caused ACPS to delay revisions to the **Local Plan** until SY 2017-18 so that the results of the evaluation and the State's technical review could inform the process. TAGAC will continue to work with ACPS to develop the new **Local Plan** by providing input and incorporating results from the ongoing eval-

uation. This will include a review of the Final Report and making comments and recommendations on the budget.

Communication:

While overall communication to parents and students about the TAG program improved, TAGAC Members still noted continuing gaps in important information to be disseminated, particularly with regard to educating parents on the process for identifying students. TAGAC will work with ACPS in its ongoing efforts to enhance communications to ACPS families by analyzing existing enhanced outreach efforts and considering their effectiveness to determine what more can be done to further same, including refining current communications regarding TAG identification, appeals, delivery of services, and additional opportunities for TAG students.

While it is recognized that ACPS has made some progress in developing and communicating Middle School Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs), which have helped to define specific expectations for TAG students, more needs to be accomplished. Because the explanation and use of the DEPs themselves will continue to be refined, TAGAC will be endeavoring to collect student and parent feedback on this new Middle School TAG approach.

In continuing with implementing processes to meet these previously identified needs and efforts being instituted regarding same, TAGAC still looks to foster improved communication among all TAG stakeholders: students, families, TAG designees, TAG teachers, administrators, and counselors at all grade levels.

Processes Development Update:

The Alexandria School Board seeks to formalize and make uniform its administrative reporting throughout its organization and that of its volunteer Committees affiliated with the Board, including TAGAC which will continue to contribute to that effort and abide by the decisions that result from it.

Delivery of Services :

Elementary School :

The **Young Scholars Program**, designed to help increase participation of underrepresented populations at schools with lower than average TAG identification, delivers services to some but not all of its Elementary Schools. It is an important element of the newly adopted **Strategic Plan** to increase TAG participation through programs such as **Young Scholars**, and so TAGAC will continue to put forth recommendations for enlarging the footprint of this and other such programs as expeditiously as possible. In addition to promoting **Young Scholars**, TAGAC will continue to examine the disparate delivery of services amongst the various Elementary Schools for students who are identified for General Intellectual Ability (GIA).

Middle School :

In April 2015, TAGAC submitted a Memo listing recommendations for improving the delivery of services to TAG-identified Middle School students. This Memo and the ACPS staff response, which made up the **TAGAC 2014-15 Annual Report**, are attached to this **Scope of Work** for historical reference (and TAGAC Annual Reports for subsequent terms are available on the ACPS website). ACPS staff discussed these recommendations at the May 2016 TAGAC meeting, and follow-up discussions were scheduled to occur. Unfortunately, because there still

appears to be a significant drop-off in TAG focused programs and effectiveness in Middle Schools, TAGAC will continue to investigate this concern. As with the DEPs, TAGAC will also endeavor further to collect student and parent feedback on the implementation of the previous recommendations made by ACPS Staff and in TAGAC's more recent Reports in the past three years for improving delivery of services to TAG-identified Middle School students. Additionally, further efforts will be explored for increasing extracurricular opportunities for gifted students at the Middle School level.

All School Levels :

TAGAC previously expressed its interest in developing more ways for students to fulfill the requirements for diploma in a way that still offered them maximum ability to take on the academic challenges they desire. Consequently, TAGAC will continue to seek to have a robust dialogue with principals, teachers, TAG counselors and appropriate Staff throughout the year at all school levels to better understand where TAG needs are being met and where improvements can be implemented to cure inadequacies in either what ACPS offers or fails to deliver effectively.

With recent data collected by ACPS, including student academic performance, diversification of ethnic enrollment, the number of students enrolled in AP exams and the results of their performance, and comparison to local schools and to national standards, TAGAC will have the opportunity to review the efficacy of TAG within ACPS and report to the Board as to its present state vis a vis other jurisdictions, both locally, statewide and nationally, and on its successes and deficits.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends acceptance of the **TAGAC Scope of Work**.

IMPACT:

Our goals include participating in the evaluation of the delivery of the **TAG Local Plan** and recommending improvements to better meet the needs of high ability learners.

ATTACHMENTS: TAGAC Annual Report SY2014-15

TAGAC April 2015 Memo

CONTACT PERSON: Gregory L. Murphy, TAGAC Chair SY2017-18