

## TAGAC January 17, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Attending (members' names bolded):

**Scholle Sawyer-McFarland, Jessica Colby, Megan Robertson, Deborah F, Eric Houghton, Mike Marsden, Tanya Awabdi, Anh Nguyen-Johnson, Nathalie Hval, Nicole Iroz-Elardo, Meghan Whitaker, J. Grab, Bethany**

### I. Call to Order & Preliminaries

A. Call for additional agenda items.

B. Motion to adopt November minutes (Jessica) second (Eric). Approved.

C. Announcements

1. Had hoped for an update from Margaret Delacy regarding any credentialing progress/conversation, but she is not present. *[Margaret's report attached]*
2. Andrew Johnson (TAG office) reports that OATAG/PPS mini-conference went well. Would have liked more educator attendance. Offerings: depth/complexity training and resources. 40 educators were signed up, but only about 20 attended. Parents were turned away due to limited parent tickets.  
Deborah: educators report the conference was scheduled with too short of notice.
3. Next TAGAC meeting is February 7th @ Mazama conference room.

### II. Old Business

A. Update on ACCESS admissions process (Andrew J.)

1. Andrew passes around summary list of issues, challenges and possible solutions, along with Administrative Directive covering Alternative Education. Goals in redesign: simplify, streamline, minimize barriers, be very clear about what need is and how it's demonstrated. (Handout: Alternative Instructional Program Placement administrative directive: <https://www.pps.net/cms/lib/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/4814/4.30.031-AD.pdf>)

Q: How do we improve on 2017-18 issues (gender, SES, etc.)?

Andrew met with district work group this past week. Agreement that gender balance should be addressed directly (reserve spots specifically for boys/girls), but pushback from team on TAGAC perspective regarding demonstration of and ranking of need. References page 2 of Administrative Directive regarding process. Andrew says we haven't been following procedure -- somewhere between Alt Ed & Focus Option hybrid. This is an issue because students are leaving General Ed and moving into Alt Ed (although TAG not under Special Education umbrella in PPS).

Q: What about MLC? It is an alternative school, but was told it had to use a straight lottery and does not use this process. It feels like the work group's perspective only takes into account an Alliance-type definition of alternative education. This AD is already not followed consistently. [Scholle]

Q: What's the real purpose of having this school? It's not just following the policy. [Scholle]  
Andrew reports pushback from district team, wanting to select kids with the greatest need.

Q: Andrew asks what if we remove Alt Ed status?

Andrew references Single Subject Acceleration and Whole Grade Acceleration processes as being more substantive than what has been discussed for ACCESS admissions and the feeling that ACCESS admissions should be similarly or more substantive.

Q: False tension between 2 populations (intellectual and socio-emotional) -- comparing apples and oranges -- is that a child-centered choice? [Nicole]

Q: The subjectivity of determining need for ACCESS is worsened by there being limited spots and negligible TAG services in neighborhood schools. In that situation, accepting that all students with a 99% score who choose to apply are demonstrating need, and then leaving the

actual decision to the lottery could be seen as more equitable. [Scholle]

A: Too simple -- then you can't determine who has greatest need. Team wants a balance between school and parent statement, acknowledges imbalance in 2016-17. [Andrew]

Q: This pushes families to go outside of school system to demonstrate need. If it must be proven, why try to balance parent vs school? You could take parent statement *or* school statement. [Jessica, Deborah]

Q: A great proportion of Highly Gifted children do not act out in school. They do it at home. That's where the evidence is. [Nicole]

Q: What is happening at neighborhood school to support applicants who are turned away? It takes a few years for many families to secure alternative placement. [J.]

Q: 99th %ile kids need something different. That's need. Many studies available. Until we have real TAG services, can't use Alt Ed criteria to keep kids out. These kids all have need. Make the process simpler, make the capacity greater. [Scholle, Deborah]

Q: What would ACCESS look like if there were unlimited capacity? How would the program change? How big would it be? [Mike]

Q: if we simplify admission, would it be the same place if we didn't look at need? [Andrew]

A: This is already happening. There is no one ACCESS kid. There are kids working many years above and others working one year above who need other supports. [Nicole]

Q: It feels like educational needs are being downgraded. This is a school system and kids have the right to have their educational needs met, regardless of socio-emotional or other struggles. Why are we screening out kids? [Scholle]

Q: What are the numbers? How many 99th %ile? (Tanya)

Andrew feels that the prior admissions rubric developed by ACCESS principal was limiting the definition of the ACCESS student. References charter's use of "demonstrated need" and the resulting profile that was previously created (intentionally or not).

Suggestion: If we spent half as much time trying to define the procedure & process for what happens for the child who *does not get in*, imagine where we would be. What happens to that child has still not been addressed despite formal complaints. [Nicole]

Q: Where are we in the process of having TAG support in schools? Streamlining the ACCESS application process will free up time and resources to develop TAG services at every PPS school. [Deborah]

A: Don't exactly have a plan yet. Next year, differentiation will be addressed as part of unit planning. PPS has had no instructional framework. Currently district is focusing on Scope & Sequence work (by July 1st). Andrew leading 6-12 ELA & Social Studies effort and leveraging TAG TOSAs because they are not content-constrained. TAG dept continues to ask for clarity & decisions around TAG services. Cannot keep just developing plans, must implement something.

Q: Has TAGAC ever discussed neighborhood school ideal with TAG dept? Where's the focus -- depth/complexity? advanced procedural work? cluster grouping? [Andrew]

Q: Is Superintendent looking at magnets in middle schools? [Deborah] In middle school resolution, TAG services are supposed to roll out. Families are expecting something to happen. (See middle school resolution here:

<https://www.pps.net/cms/lib/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/219/REVISED%20MS%20RESO%2011-13-17.pdf> Relevant text is: " Develop a complementary district-wide TAG program to

serve students in neighborhood schools, including a system to screen and identify all PPS students in need of TAG services so the full spectrum of diverse learners can receive TAG services. The Superintendent will determine the timeline for development and implementation."

[Scholle]

Q: Refocus -- it's a very hard lift for most teachers when they have to create differentiated curriculum themselves -- TAG services are not happening in the standard classroom. [Nicole]

Q: Teachers need curriculum to use to support accelerated learners. This needs to be available and automatic for all above-benchmark learners. Meanwhile, can we at least derive best practices from ACCESS and use it as a model - walk-to-math for example? [Natalie]

A: School systems manage to make this happen all around the country. We know it's possible. [Scholle]

Comment: Very frustrating, been hearing these conversations for years about this work and kids are suffering year after year with needs not met. [Meghan]

Comment: schools can't figure out how to get TAG students' needs met (ex: 6th grade math at Ockley Green), don't have the supports they need. District processes are not working for responsively accelerating. [Eric]

Refocus -- back to ACCESS admissions. Trying to provide counter-arguments for Andrew to use in his meeting this Friday. Statement of need seems reasonable; application indicates need. Put applicant in lottery. Done. Simple, less bias, fewer barriers. [Scholle]

Comment: if you manipulate the pool prior to lottery, it defeats the purpose of having a lottery. [Natalie]

2. Andrew sums up -- TAGAC supports removal of review process to confirm/ determine need and allowing lottery to do the work.
3. Q: what about hardship transfer? [Scholle]
4. Comment: Because the program & rubric articulation are not in place yet and not likely to be there soon, a pure lottery is great. Put your energy into serving those who are not admitted. [Nicole]
5. Q: If district can put resources into schools, what emergency stopgap can be put in place -- something from ACCESS? [Natalie]  
A: For example, automatically offer SSA to 99th %ile math performance, for example.  
A: Or, consider one walk-to-math school per cluster, for example.
6. Q: What happens if/when girls don't apply to ACCESS this year? How will we fill by gender? PPS has a significant PR issue around girls and ACCESS. [Megan]
7. Andrew has another meeting on Friday; process is coming down to the wire. Working on letter to 99th %ile kids currently.
8. Q: Offer those turned away a next-step checklist with a list of interventions that neighborhood school can implement. This could be a good tool for information-gathering in schools.[Nicole]
9. Comment: Problem around alternative schools not being able to "recruit" makes it hard to get information to all families. One way to help avoid the appearance of recruiting would be to articulate a menu of options in district correspondence to families of ACCESS eligible families, one of those options could be ACCESS. This could help families a lot.
10. Q: Who are the members of ACCESS admission work group?  
ACCESS Principal Anh Nguyen-Johnson; TAG department senior administrative secretary, Kristin Johnson; TAG program director, Andrew Johnson; administrator in charge of Jefferson and Grant cluster schools, Karl Logan; director of enrollment planning, Judy Brennan
11. Comment: Major cultural issue in PPS around TAG, families get a lot of pushback, even opposition, on above-benchmark students' right to education. [Scholle]

### III. New Business

- A. Discussion: First part of presentation around new equity direction for TAG department (Andrew J.) Andrew presents an approach that targets increasing identification of historically underserved (HU) students by 10 percent. Just getting the current assessments & ID model to more students won't do it. We need to revise the ways we identify within those populations. Use a body of evidence instead of relying on assessment & score only. Even with a qualifying score, Oregon administrative rule (OAR) indicates that we must look at a body of evidence and that "No single test, measure or score shall be

the sole criterion.” Leverage law around “potential to perform.” Use context to interpret HU students performance on traditional measures differently. Use of CLED scale (<http://www.cledscales.com>).

B. Q: Is this just about improving numbers? What will these newly identified students gain?

Community feedback: we don't get nominated and we don't care. Perpetuation of racism (tests, services). Need a system/offering that would be contextually relevant -- ask that question of those communities. [Scholle, Nicole]

Q: Putting the onus on the teacher. A holistic look is great but have to re-educate a whole generation of teachers to get this done. What about a district norm for historically underserved students?

Identify the top 5% within each HU group. [Nicole]

Q: Why do we always have to make a case to meet needs? Understand the context of the law, but why all the hoops? [Natalie]

A: Andrew says, yes -- regardless of ID, it's about service, support and meeting needs. Take off the labels, kid still has needs.

A: Constrained resources are what ends up determining who gets services.

Q: Presentation gives helpful profiles of different types of unstereotypical students who might be considered to have TAG potential, but need to take the next step here. What interventions could make a difference for each of these kids and how? Include that in the presentation and teachers and parents will see why TAG services could be helpful. For example, Tucson and Salt Lake City (with large hispanic populations) both have Spanish dual language immersion schools for TAG students to provide an intervention for emerging bilingual students.

Comment: Differentiation helps every student. In the act of serving upper stanines, everyone wins.

C. Andrew says he is working with small group of Martin Luther King Jr. school kids who have been identified by teachers/staff. Important to have an opportunity to put strategies in action. Too theoretical otherwise. [Andrew]

#### IV. Committee Sessions: Equity Committee

A. Tabled

#### **Tabled:**

A. Andrew will continue equity direction presentation at the next TAGAC meeting, 2/7

B. 10/11/2017 Recommendation to Board regarding next steps for regional services model. (Scholle)

C. 11/1/2017 Discussion of ACCESS high school component (see handout)

**Memo from Margaret DeLacy, OATAG**

11/18/2017

Friends:

Following the last Portland TAG Advisory Committee meeting, Director Paul Anthony who attended the meeting, arranged a meeting with Laurie Wimmer of the Oregon Education Association to discuss the rules around employing teachers with a TAG specialization. Laurie in turn advised me to call Teresa Ferrer of the OEA, who returned my phone call the following day.

Below are the notes of our discussion.

I would like to thank Director Anthony for taking the initiative on this.

Margaret

Theresa Ferrer, Professional Practice Consultant at the Center for Great Public Schools wrote her masters' dissertation on small district TAG programs. She coordinated TAG programs in Florence.

An endorsement is required by the state to teach a particular population; specializations indicate additional training or skills but are not required.

The extent to which a district can require a specialization may or may not be covered by the union contract. If it doesn't appear in the contract, a district may decide not to pay attention to it. At that point, assuming there are no other contract issues, an administrator may or may not "prefer" a teacher with a specialization for a particular population. A district with no contract language can also decide to "prefer" a specialization for certain positions district-wide.

Each district's union can negotiate about this. For example, a union could say that teachers who have a requested specialization must be interviewed first. Same is true about the rules for teachers hired during a RIF.

It would be helpful for an educator who is already a member of a given district's union to bring this up to the union management (i.e. suggest that the union include in its contract language stating that this preference may be included in position open announcements) . That is usually more effective than making requests from outside.

An endorsement and/or specialization from another state can transfer across to a specialization in Oregon but the TSPC has to approve it. It is easier if an endorsement is actually on the teacher's out-of-state license.

The same is true of transferring an Oregon specialization for other states. Some states will look at the course work and other training required for the specialization from another state before approving it; some others will approve automatically.

If we want PSU or another local institution to support a specialization, it would be very helpful to have the district write a letter to the PSU dean expressing a need for the training. It would also be helpful to get similar letters from other districts.

[notes by Margaret]