

October 15, 2014

To: Superintendent **Carole Smith**, Board Member **Ruth Adkins**, Board Member **Matt Morton**, Board Member **Bobbie Regan**, Board Member **Steve Buel**, Board Member and Co-Chair **Pam Knowles**, Board Member **Tom Koehler**, Board Member and Co-Chair **Greg Belisle**, Board Member Student Representative **Minna Jayaswal**, Sr. Director of Teaching Innovation and TAG Administrator **Erika Gillis**

Subject: PPS Parent TAG Advisory Council (TAGAC) 2013-14 End of Year Report

From: Mark Feldman, 2013-14 TAGAC Chair

I respectfully submit this letter, in fulfillment of my duty as the 2013-14 Chair of the PPS parent TAG Advisory Council (TAGAC), to prepare and submit an End of Year report on our activities during the past year. Additionally, on behalf of the full Council's mandate "to make recommendations to the TAG Administrator, the Superintendent, and the School Board, with respect to services for talented and gifted students in Portland Public Schools," I attach the document, "A Recommended Framework for Improved TAG Services in PPS."

During the 2013-14 school year, the TAGAC's primary activities and accomplishments have been:

- Members and guests met monthly to discuss the state of TAG Services within PPS and exchange information. They listened to presentations by PPS staff and relayed concerns. Reoccurring topics included 1) widespread dissatisfaction with TAG Services, both anecdotally and quantitatively documented by the 2012 TAG Parent Survey; 2) inconsistent and inequitable uses of school TAG budgets; and 3) the need for PPS to acknowledge and support the Single Subject Acceleration policy for math.
- The PPS Single Subject Acceleration (SSA) policy was documented on the TAG website through a joint effort of TAGAC members and TAG Department staff. SSA information was added to the PPS TAG website and related existing information was rewritten to make it more accessible and understandable.
- Committee Work: The Differentiation Committee, chaired by Terese Bushnell researched and produced a list of TAG related terminology that we plan to make available to parents to help understand TAG Services. The Equity Committee, chaired by Diana Ortiz, began to research relevant issues in hopes of being able to produce recommendations during the 2014-15 school year. The Communications Committee, chaired by Brenda Ray Scott, arranged for TAGAC parents to help maintain the TAG website and update TAGAC documents.
- TAGAC membership was increased to the 12 parent minimum specified in our Bylaws. Provisions were added to the bylaws to facilitate appointing new members and for several member positions to be reserved for the purpose of increasing diversity on the Council.¹
- A team comprised of Terese Bushnell, Johanna Colgrove, Deborah. F. and myself consulted TAGAC members, PPS parents PPS teachers and related research, to author "A Recommended Framework for Improved TAG Services in PPS," included as Attachment A. This was approved by the TAGAC at its June 10, 2014 meeting.

TAGAC's Recommended Framework for Improved TAG Services in PPS

If I had to summarize the results of the 2012 TAG Parent Survey² in one sentence, it would be "Except for ACCESS Academy, PPS has **no** TAG Services." This is in sharp contrast to Oregon TAG law, OAR 581-022-1330(4), which states that, "The instruction provided to identified students shall be designed to accommodate their assessed levels of learning and accelerated rates of learning."

A more nuanced perspective would elaborate that while some Building TAG Plans and other PPS documents describe various useful sounding practices, these seem highly discouraged, rarely implemented except at a school here and there, championed only by an innovative principal for a year or two, or only approved for a few students whose parents have time to advocate and demand loudly enough. For example, until this year, the Single Subject Acceleration policy was

¹ See <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/tag/9091.htm> for a copy of the revised Bylaws.

² See <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/tag/7811.htm> for a summary of the survey results.

literally hidden from parents. When found, it was often denied by principals. When requested, it was vehemently discouraged by the PPS math specialist. When implemented, which was quite rare, it required a parent to pick up their 5th grade child every day to take them to a Middle School for math.

The only consistent district-wide approach to satisfying the rate and level of PPS's gifted and talented students appears to be simply asking all teachers to differentiate instruction for all students in all classrooms. But the TAGAC concluded that regardless of the amount of professional development, without some radical changes to the District's TAG Services, it is not possible for all teachers to differentiate at the appropriate rate and level of learning for all students in all classrooms. The range of student achievement levels in a typical classrooms is too wide for this to be possible.

The TAGAC Recommendations describe additional well documented techniques and practices that would narrow the range of achievement in classrooms without resorting to "tracking." They are based on current successful practices at ACCESS Academy, practices at another innovative PPS Elementary School³, practices used in the Lake Oswego School District, and on published educational research. The full list of recommended measures is:

- 1. Place Elementary and Middle School Students in Appropriate Level Math and Reading Classes**
- 2. Reform Screening for Single Subject Advancement**
- 3. Use Flexible Grouping to Narrow Range of Achievement Levels per Teacher**
- 4. Eliminate and Repurpose School TAG Budgets**
- 5. Expand ACCESS Academy**
- 6. Post Additional TAG Statistics on the PPS Website**

Clearly missing is an evaluation of TAG Services "through an Equity Lense." But the TAGAC Recommendations do, very purposefully, address equity in several ways. First, they establish practices we hope will be valuable enough that gifted but under-identified students/families may take more interest in being identified. Second, very little of what is described actually depends on being TAG identified. These measures place ongoing responsibility on individual principals and teachers to provide the new services to any student who would benefit from them, whether that student is TAG identified or not. These measures do not eliminate testing, but they do provide other pathways by which gifted but non-TAG identified students will be recognized and steered into these new and valuable TAG services. Third, Measure 4 seeks to eliminate discriminatory aspects of School TAG Budgets. Finally, in the upcoming year, I expect the TAGAC to use Measure 6's statistics to help investigate equity issues more generally, including the strong indications that TAG identification is unbalanced with respect to race and socioeconomic status.

Despite Measures 1 – 3, exceptionally talented students at the very highest end of the ability scale would still require levels of differentiation that are impractically high for most classrooms. Over 300 such students have found their way to ACCESS Academy, yet close to 200 qualified students were turned away in the 2014-15 school year. TAG identification statistics lead me to believe that there may be several hundred or even more additional qualified students/families who are discouraged by ACCESS' arduous and ambiguous application process, by negative perceptions of ACCESS' status as an "alternative education academy" rather than a school, or by not having the time and connections to help them understand ACCESS' benefits. So Measure 5 advocates that ACCESS have a larger permanent campus or a second campus, much like Beaverton SD's multi-campus Summa program for highly gifted children, so that ACCESS can accept all qualified PPS students. Please consider this request during the 2014-15 boundary review process.

I believe that fully implementing these recommendations could transform the state of TAG education in PPS and make it a model for Oregon. I and other TAGAC members are available for discussion. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Mark Feldman, 2013-14, 2014-15 TAGAC Chair

³ Apprehensive teachers asked us not to name the school for fear of being forced by the district to stop.

A Recommended Framework for Improved TAG Services in PPS

APPROVED by the Portland Public Schools TAG Parent Advisory Council (TAGAC) on June 10, 2014

Source: <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/files/tag/recommendations-v11.pdf>

TAGAC Information: <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/tag/9090.htm>

The Portland Public School District's 2012 TAG Survey¹ showed widespread dissatisfaction with TAG Services. Yet, Oregon state law mandates that "The instruction provided to [TAG] identified students shall be designed to accommodate their assessed levels of learning and accelerated rates of learning."² The survey documented the widespread belief that this is not happening. In fact, many parents did not acknowledge that any type of TAG Services existed at all within PPS. This is in sharp contrast to Board Policy 6.10.015-P³, which "directs district staff to provide classroom or school programs designed to promote educational opportunity for talented and gifted students commensurate with their ability." While some Building TAG Plans and other PPS documents describe additional useful-sounding practices and/or opportunities, these are not universally implemented; TAG differentiation can be highly discouraged, only occasionally used at a school here and there, championed only by an innovative principal for a year or two, or only approved for a few students whose parents have the time and energy to persistent as vocal advocates.

We heartily approve of the new emphasis over the past year on having teachers provide differentiation to students of all achievement levels through a "Rigor and Relevance" framework and believe that the additional training in differentiation techniques being rolled out to teachers is a step in the right direction. However, many parents commented on the TAG Survey to the effect that "I know of no TAG Services". We believe that Portland Public Schools does not have widespread nor effective TAG Services in place, nor encourages TAG services for pre-High School level students⁴. Simply saying that 'all teachers should provide appropriately differentiated instruction for all students in all classrooms' is not sufficient to accommodate TAG students' assessed rate and level of learning, as mandated by Oregon law nor does it do enough to promote educational opportunity, as per PPS policy.

While having all teachers differentiate for all students in all classes is a laudable goal, we believe that the range of student achievement levels currently present in individual classrooms is too wide for this to be possible. Even with additional training for teachers and even if class sizes were reduced, this would not likely be feasible. A teacher's time and resources are simply spread too thinly between too many groups of students with different rates and levels of learning. **We believe that PPS needs to internalize and institutionalize the realization that teachers cannot provide differentiated instruction for all students in all classrooms unless they actively reduce the range of student achievement levels in each classroom.**

We believe that the only solution is for PPS to narrow the range of achievement levels in classrooms so that each teacher can spread their time and resources more thickly, differentiating more effectively for a narrower range of abilities. These recommendations outline a framework to do this in ways that are not "tracking" and are in line with established best practices, many of which are already happening at a small number of PPS schools or in other nearby school districts, such as Lake Oswego, Beaverton, and Vancouver. In fact, we believe that students of all achievement levels will benefit. As TAG parents ourselves, we believe that implementing this framework will establish a visible and valuable set of TAG Services that will help high achieving students fulfill their potential and entice/promote identification of students whose families currently opt-out. We also believe the implementation of these recommendations will support teacher efforts and reduce teacher workload.

The one bright spot in the 2012 TAG Survey was the overwhelmingly positive response from parents of ACCESS Academy students. This is despite the fact that ACCESS students must test academically or intellectually in the 99th percentile for admission and should, therefore, be one of the most difficult groups of students to consistently challenge in the classroom. We are recommending that the district expand enrollment at ACCESS Academy and broadly adopt some key strategies practiced at the school that will translate well to all PPS schools. These are integral parts of the overall framework. As such, this recommendation should not be viewed as a menu of options from which to pick and choose. Only when taken as a whole, with all measures implemented, do we believe these recommendations will work as intended. Please refer to Figure 1 as you read these Recommendations, which summarizes the instructional measures in this framework.

¹ See <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/tag/7811.htm> for a summary of the survey results.

² OAR 581-022-1330 (4) See http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_500/oar_581/581_022.html

³ See <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/board/880.htm>

⁴ We are hopeful that International Baccalaureate classes, Advanced Placement classes, local college and university level and similar classes support High School (HS) level TAG students well, but TAGAC currently has too few HS parents to voice any opinions with confidence.

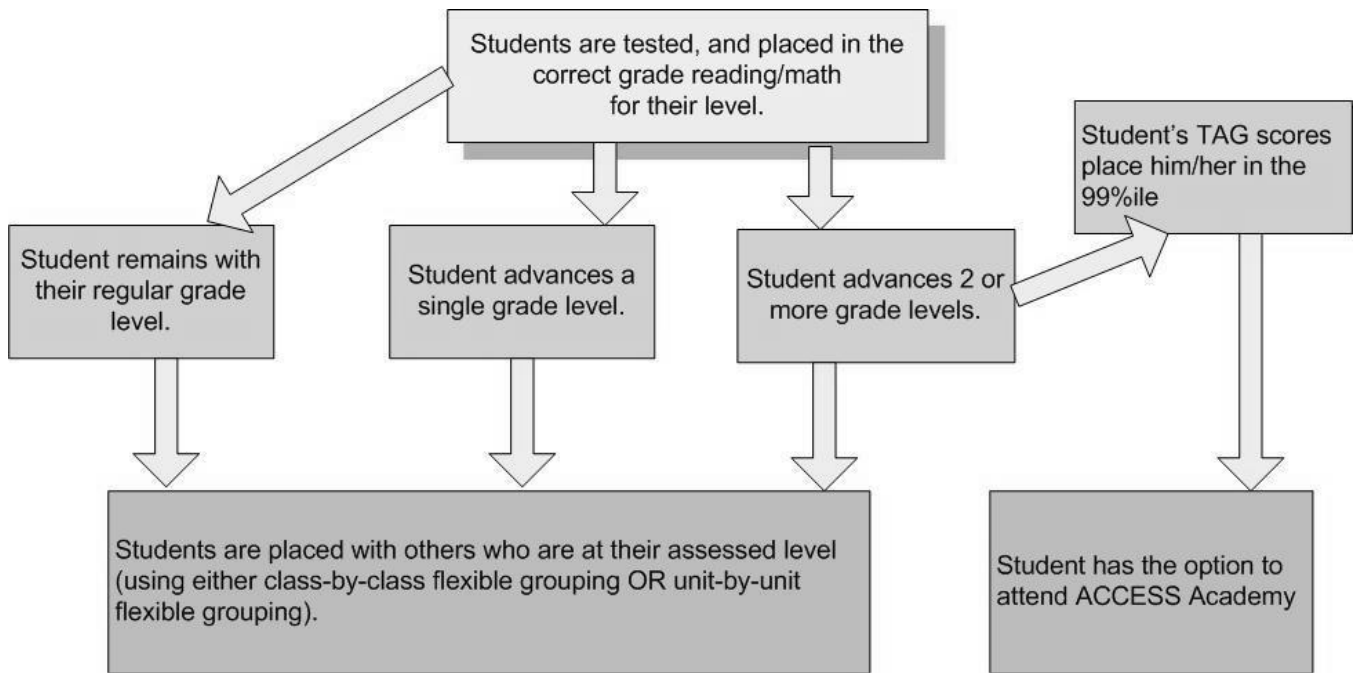


Figure 1. Outline of main instructional issues in this Recommendation

Measure 1. Place Elementary and Middle School Students in Appropriate Level Math and Reading Classes

This measure guarantees that every pre-High School student whose math or reading level is 1 year above their age-based grade, will be placed into appropriate level math and reading classes.⁵ The placement is a data-based process that is accessible to all students (not just TAG identified students) because it is initiated by teachers at schools rather than requiring parent advocacy.

- A. Require all schools teaching K-6 math and K-6 reading to align math and reading classes so that any qualified student can study those subjects at their appropriate grade level, by joining another classroom for that period. Immersion and focus schools are not exempt. Middle Schools must schedule math classes in such a way that it is possible for qualified 6th grade students to take 7th grade compacted year 1 math and for qualified 7th grade students to take compacted year 2 math. This institutionalizes proper placement and improves equity of TAG Services because parent advocacy is not required for proper placement.
- B. Require all K-5 schools to provide 6th grade math and reading so that 5th graders can be placed at least one grade level above their chronological grade without needing daily transportation to a Middle School. There could be a cost for K-5 schools (K-8 schools already have this available), so principals should try to find innovative solutions and compare the cost against alternatives such as itinerant teachers serving several nearby schools, busing students from nearby schools to one school, etc.
- C. Require all K-8 and Middle Schools to provide one year of High School math so that 8th graders can be placed at least one grade level above their chronological grade without needing daily transportation to a High School.
- D. At the beginning of the school year, every student should receive comprehensive assessment of skills for both reading and math. The assessment should reflect the Common Core Standards and the reasoning skills actually expected of students. Students scoring 85% or better proficiency at their grade level should be placed in the math or reading class at the next higher grade.⁶ Students scoring close to that should be evaluated along with other available information, such as the previous year's state test, TAG identification status, etc. We do not intend to require the development of new sets of exams, but it is our understanding that many PPS schools already do such a beginning of year assessment, so such exams already exist.⁷ If these tests are not already standardized for all schools, we strongly suggest the District do so.
- E. Students who demonstrate above grade level proficiency on the beginning of year open ended comprehensive assessment or who have tested up for a second year, should automatically be evaluated for multi-grade Single Subject Advancement and should be tested to see if they qualify for admission to ACCESS Academy. Determinations for SSA and/or ACCESS should be completed before parent-teacher conferences.
- F. All PPS students should take the Oregon State assessment test for a subject in the grade level they are actually studying rather than their chronological grade level. If a student does not meet or exceed the standards for that test, the student should repeat the same math or reading class the following year.
- G. Provide ongoing evidence and status to parents on whether or not their child is being challenged in the classroom. This could be done by Elementary School teachers entering math and reading pre-assessment and post-assessment scores into the ParentVUE (or a similar) system or by simply sending those scores/sheets home in backpack mail. The first such evidence and status should be available to parents early in the year, significantly before the parent teacher conferences..
- H. Develop a process for parents to request re-evaluation of level during the school year, after consultation with the teacher and principal.

⁵ One highly respected school district in the area, Lake Oswego has a similar program where, based on comprehensive test results, it provides 6th grade math at every Elementary School and buses students if required to meet a level 2 grades or higher. They have reported to us that approximately 10% of their students are working at least 1 grade level ahead..

⁶ Of course there is some leeway for teachers and principals to set the exact percentage, but please note that "The majority of teachers [in a study] (80%) identified a specific proficiency standard by which to evaluate whether students had mastered the regular curriculum. The criteria for determining proficiency ranged from 80%-100% and the most frequently used standard to document student proficiency was 85%." This quote is as excerpted by the author of [Reis, Sally M., Deborah E. Burns and Joseph S. Renzulli, "Curriculum Compacting: The Complete Guide to Modifying the Regular Curriculum for High Ability Students," Creative Learning Press Mansfield Center, Connecticut, 1992.] and presented at <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/siegle/epsy373/fcompact.htm>

⁷ Many such exams are commercially available for both reading and math, such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Measures of Academic Progress (MAPS), etc.

Measure 2. Reform Screening for Single Subject Advancement

In this framework, Single Subject Advancement (SSA) should only be necessary for advancement of 2 grades or more. It still faces the same obstacles as it currently faces, such as how to transport 5th graders to 7th grade math and how to transport 7th graders to 9th grade math. So whether or not 2 grade advancement can be done is still dependent on a variety of factors, just like single grade SSA currently is. But with the other measures of this framework in place, the number of students in this case-by-case situation should be greatly reduced.

- A. Requiring a 99% test score as a screening criteria (as is the case now) before an actual determination of whether SSA is appropriate, is too high a bar. Instead of the current screening process, under certain conditions described in Measure 1, a student will be automatically assessed for multiple grade SSA. As per Measure 1, in all but unusual cases, a process for single grade SSA should no longer be necessary.
- B. Under exceptional conditions recognized only after appropriate consultation with a student's teacher and principal, a parent may also request SSA screening. The screening should be based on a variety of data including state achievement test scores, classroom pre-assessments, classroom summative assessments, report card grades as well as indicators such as, a parent questionnaire and teacher and principal input.
- C. Ensure that the SSA Pathway Determination process is open-ended and happens within two weeks, in order to make it easier for a student to potentially integrate into a new class. It must not be postponed until the next school year. Although we realize this is not currently the case, ideally, the testing should use the same tests as those used yearly to evaluate placement, as described in Measure 1. If results indicate that multi-year advancement in a subject area is appropriate, a case-by-case SSA plan should be developed and the student should be given the option to be evaluated for ACCESS Academy. (See Measure 5.)
- D. Change existing references to Single Subject Acceleration to Single Subject Advancement in order to reflect that it is may meet a student's **level** of learning but is not a solution for **rate** of learning. Also note that SSA is now only necessary for students needing to advance 2 or more grade levels. SSA is expected to be much less used under this framework.

Measure 3. Use Flexible Grouping to Narrow Range of Achievement Levels per Teacher

Narrow the range of student achievement in each individual classroom so teachers can differentiate for all students. Make it feasible for teachers to apply Rigor and Relevance based differentiation for all students in the classroom. The benefit for TAG students is that greater depth (higher levels of rigor and relevance) can be achieved for higher achieving students. Non-TAG students also benefit because teachers have to spend less time differentiating for a small number of higher achieving students. Teachers will benefit from fewer parent complaints about bored students and TAG busy work. The PPS District benefits by having a full time TAG Service without major budget implications.

- A. Teachers report that existing teaching materials, such as Bridges for math, do not include adequate high-end extensions. It is critical that district level Content Specialists should create unit-by-unit high end extensions that teachers can use in robust differentiation activities that go with particular math or reading units, science challenges, etc.. Every teacher should not have to develop these differentiation activities themselves. The District should provide to all teachers in all schools appropriate differentiation materials suitable for a wide range of TAG and high achieving students for all standard curriculum.
- B. Require principals and teachers of all schools teaching grades K through 6 to implement, at all grade levels in all classes, one of the two methods of flexible grouping described below. With both types, students are grouped based on ability in ways that reduce the range of achievement levels in the class.⁸ Figure 2 shows an example of the ability levels a teacher might have to differentiate for in a traditional classroom.

Far Above Average Ability	Above Average Ability	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Far Below Average Ability
Far Above Average Ability	Above Average Ability	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Far Below Average Ability
	Above Average Ability	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Far Below Average Ability
	Above Average Ability	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Far Below Average Ability

Figure 2: The mix of all abilities in a typical 30 student classroom.

There are various ways principals and teachers may decide how to mix student groups appropriately for their particular student population. Our two suggested methods of flexible grouping differ in how frequently the groupings change and both have advantages and drawbacks related to this. Less frequent change focuses grouping decisions toward the beginning or end of the school year, with infrequent mid-course corrections during the year, allowing teachers to work more independently. More frequent reorganizations require closer and more in-depth communication within grade level teaching teams during the school year. Teachers and principals should work together to decide which approach works better for each grade at their school.

Class by Class Flexible Grouping⁹

Class by Class Flexible Grouping puts students in groups when they are assigned to teachers for the upcoming year, typically in the Spring or over the Summer. Assignments need to be based on quantifiable evidence of achievement, TAG identification status, and consideration of potential performance. Placements change yearly but could also change in-between if a student is clearly outpacing peers or struggling with most material. In every classroom, teachers use Rigor and Relevance based differentiation to meet the rate and level for all their students. An advantage is that there is no disruption to the traditional daily routine and the students that each teacher has in class do not change frequently. There are also social benefits to TAG children of spending more time with others who “get them.” A drawback is that since the students stay together for all subjects, a broad range of skills must be considered together. For example, it may be difficult to place a student who excels at Reading but has difficulty in Math.

In this model, some classes may purposely not have the most gifted students, as in Figure 3, and others may

⁸ There are multiple possible ways to mix students and still narrow the range. Reports from PPS teachers using Unit by Unity Flexible Grouping are that both straight high to low grouping and mixing from two groups have been preferred in different years by different teams of teachers.

⁹ This TAG Service and other school districts using it are documented in [Winebrenner, Susan and Dina Brulles, “Teaching Gifted Kids in Today’s Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use,” 3rd Edition, Free Spirit Publishing, Inc, Minneapolis, MN, 2012.]

purposely not have the farthest below average students, as in Figure 4. But, there are still a variety of levels in each class. This and the fact that the groupings change over time mean that these strategies do not “track” students¹⁰.

Above Average Ability Student	Above Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Far Below Average Ability Student	Far Below Average Ability Student
Above Average Ability Student	Above Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Far Below Average Ability Student	Far Below Average Ability Student
Above Average Ability Student	Above Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Far Below Average Ability Student	Far Below Average Ability Student
Above Average Ability Student	Above Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Far Below Average Ability Student	Far Below Average Ability Student

Figure 3: Primarily heterogeneous student mix, but class does not contain far above average students.

Far Above Average Ability	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability
Far Above Average Ability	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability
Far Above Average Ability	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability
Far Above Average Ability	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Average Ability Student	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability	Below Average Ability

Figure 4: Primarily heterogeneous student mix, but class contains far above average students

Unit by Unit Flexible Grouping¹¹

Unit by Unit Flexible Grouping takes advantage of standardized math and reading curriculum and the patterns of small units and pre-assessments required for proper differentiation. After students in a grade level take a pre-assessment for a unit, the teacher teams meet and use the results to assign students to the appropriate classroom for that unit in that subject only. Teacher teams decide on the patterns of assigning students to classrooms that work best for them. Each day, the students move to their assigned classroom for that subject. In each classroom, teachers use Rigor and Relevance based differentiation to meet the rate and level for all their students. At the end of each unit the students take the pre-assessment for the next unit and are re-assigned into new groups and possibly to different teachers based on the results for that unit. An advantage of this approach is that it can closely match each student’s abilities on a subject by subject basis. A disadvantage is that it requires students to move around much more during the day and requires close teamwork among teachers in the same grade.

¹⁰ See www.pps.k12.or.us/files/tag/Cluster_Grouping_Excerpts.doc for further information.

¹¹ This TAG Service is currently in use in at least one school within PPS.

Measure 4. Eliminate and Repurpose School TAG Budgets

Schools who have a Vice Principal or other school administrator as TAG Coordinator do not have to use TAG budget to compensate the TAG Coordinator. Schools that must use the TAG budget to compensate a TAG coordinator end up with less discretionary money available per student. The recent menu from which schools can choose in-class pullouts for TAG students has made this inequity even more obvious because the pullouts either limit the number of students or are priced based on the number of students. Further, school TAG budgets are often used to purchase enrichment despite Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) statement that, "School enrichment might be helpful, but it does not meet the requirements [of appropriate rate and level instruction] on its own."¹²

These uses of school TAG budgets are sometimes seen as merely a way to deflect criticism of an absence of TAG Services within PPS. Even then, many parents complain that enrichment paid for by school TAG budgets is not always used to benefit TAG students and is often held on mornings of late start days or after school when children of working parents are often not able to attend -- another inequity for lower income parents. While in general we strongly support enrichment, the needs of all students need to be met in the classroom during the school day.

This measure eliminates the current incarnation of discretionary school TAG budgets and replaces them with substitutes that contribute to rate and level based education and improve both equity for TAG students at smaller schools and equity for access to TAG Services for all students. It also requests restoration of additional funding to adequately staff PPS's TAG Department.

- A. Eliminate the existing discretionary school TAG budgets. Use the funds to pay for as much as possible of the rest of the items in this Measure.
- B. The district should pay extended responsibility compensation to teachers for being a TAG Coordinator at all schools currently doing so in the 2013-14 budget. Other schools will continue using a Vice Principal or other administrator as the TAG Coordinator.
- C. Differentiated instruction in every classroom of the district is supposed to include high achieving students, so incorporate TAG specific professional development into mainstream processes used to train teachers. Do not rely on a school's TAG Coordinator to pass on this professional development in differentiation to the teaching staff. Make high-end differentiation a mainstream and institutionalized practice required of all teachers..
- D. Purchase a district wide license for an online learning application that all students can use at school and at home, to study at whatever rate they can or are interested in. (For example, IXL.COM has been purchased and used by several PPS schools on an individual basis, seems to be well liked, and is often used to augment classroom work. A district license would also save money for those schools and the PTAs currently paying for it.) Online services would also benefit non-TAG students by providing additional drills and explanations for at-level learners and review materials for students who are behind. Further, online drills can also be used outside of school by students whose families could otherwise not afford it, to provide achievement focused curriculum support that may even prepare young students better for TAG identification testing in 2nd grade.¹³
- E. Until several years ago, the TAG Department had a full time Administrator and as many as four Teachers On Special Assignment (TOSAs). Staffing reductions have left the TAG Department with an Administrator who works with TAG only part-time in addition to other responsibilities and a single TOSA. Restore staffing to at least the previous level of a dedicated Administrator and an additional three Full Time TOSAs, for a total of at least four TAG Department TOSAs. This would make possible the following impact:
 - 1. Supporting the additional and timely SSA testing described in Measure 1, Item E and Measure 2, Item C;
 - 2. Supporting schools in implementation of proper level math and reading placements described in Measure 1 and Flexible Grouping described in Measure 2;
 - 3. Improving responsiveness of support to students and families as well as responsiveness of the identification process;
 - 4. Supporting teachers in creating differentiated instruction for TAG students described in Measure 3, Item B; and
 - 5. Establishing a stronger monitoring system to ensure that TAG students are receiving appropriate instruction.

¹² See item 10 in the ODE TAG FAQ at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2321>

¹³ Although some will say that this is "gaming the system," the reality is that financially capable parents do this all the time through after-school classes and pricey supplementary educational materials at home. Providing this to all families could help to improve equity in the TAG identification process.

Measure 5. Expand ACCESS Academy

Exceptionally talented or gifted students are often at risk of experiencing difficulties because of a substantial asynchrony between age and cognitive or academic development. They may be isolated in neighborhood schools and are at risk for depression in normal school settings¹⁴. This measure advocates expanding ACCESS enough that all qualified K-8 PPS students should be granted admission to ACCESS Academy, if they choose to attend. This further supports the general goal of narrowing the range of achievement levels in classrooms, since students qualifying for ACCESS Academy would typically require a significant amount of differentiation to meet their rate and level of learning. It may also help improve ACCESS Academy's racial and socioeconomic equity profile by attracting students in families who might otherwise be discouraged and not bother to apply. Measures 1E and 2C also help to improve equity by automatically triggering an evaluation for qualification into ACCESS Academy without requiring parent advocacy.

- A. Give the ACCESS Academy a permanent school location that allows it to expand to accommodate all students who qualify¹⁵. Preferably, establish an additional west side ACCESS Academy, to minimize busing and avoid long bus rides for young students.
- B. Review the ACCESS Academy application process to ensure socioeconomic and racial equity¹⁶ as well as transparency of the admissions criteria.
- C. Research the impacts of a change in admission criteria such that the only qualification for admission is a 99th percentile TAG identification test score; engage TAGAC members, ACCESS staff and administration, parents of current and waitlisted ACCESS students, parents of PPS students potentially qualifying for ACCESS, and district administration.
- D. Continue to test all PPS students for TAG status in 2nd grade, but allow 5th grade TAG students to request retesting to see if they qualify for ACCESS Academy.
- E. Reclassify ACCESS Academy as an Alternative School (instead of an Alternative Program) so that it has equal standing for funding (e.g. from the Portland Arts Tax) and can retain Administrators by offering compensation comparable to Principals.

¹⁴ See the ACCESS proposal approved by the School Board when establishing ACCESS Academy for a discussion of the emotional issues faced by gifted students. http://www.pps.k12.or.us/depts/tag/program/access_draft5.pdf These issues are also discussed in further detail in [Neihart, Maureen, Sally M. Reis, Nancy M. Robinson, and Sidney M. Moon; "The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know?", Prufrock Press, January 1, 2002.]

¹⁵ Projected capacity for 2014-15 is "300+" students. ([http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/access/files/2014-15_Prospective_Family_Letter\(3\).docx](http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/access/files/2014-15_Prospective_Family_Letter(3).docx)) The ACCESS Academy website (<http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/access/194.htm>) reports that only 80 students from 190 applicants were accepted for 2013-14. At current enrollment of 236, this suggests that nearly 350 students would qualify and attend now, but this number would likely grow as the program becomes more well-known within PPS. A strict 1% of all 32,516 K-8 PPS students suggests that 325 students would qualify, but does not take into account that students can qualify in any of three areas, so is likely far too low. Taking 1/3 of the 3,191 K-8 TAG identified students in 2013-13 at the 97% level in any one of three areas. In 2007, PPS's Research and Evaluation Department preliminarily estimated that "1320 of PPS's 47,000 students may be eligible for this school..." (<http://jeffersonflusterclub.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/reportaccessjan2008.pdf>) A 2001 survey of qualified PPS students and their parents indicates that about 75% of parents would be interested in sending their children and about 70% of students would be interested in attending. (See <http://www.tagpdx.org/proposal.htm> and ignore blank responses.) Taken together 75% of 1320 suggests an upper bound of 990 qualified students that would want to attend.

¹⁶ Despite serving the entire district, in the 2013-14 school year, ACCESS Academy enrollment was 2.5% African American, 4.2% Hispanic, 68.2% White and 12.3% of students were eligible for Free and Reduced Lunches, while the respective district percentages were 10.7%, 16.2%, 55.8%, and 44.8%. Source: http://www.pps.k12.or.us/files/data-analysis/2013_Enrollment_Summary.pdf

Measure 6. Post Additional TAG Statistics on the PPS Website

In order to understand the characteristics of the TAG student population, the following statistics should be compiled each year and posted along with other statistics on the PPS website. Many of these are in preparation for future work by the TAGAC Equity Committee.

- A. Add a report of number of TAG identified students at each school broken down by ethnicity, gender and special populations for each school. An example of this for ethnicity can be found at the end of www.pps.k12.or.us/files/board/SAC_Final_Packet_4-28-11.pdf in a table entitled “PPS Grade School TAG Demographics: Title 1 vs. Non Title 1.” We would like to add gender and special populations including Free Reduced Lunch (FRL) status to this and have it reported on a yearly basis.
- B. PPS reports student achievement gains in reading and math broken down separately by grade level, ethnic group, gender, special populations and performance level. The report for 2013 is at http://inside.pps.k12.or.us/depts-c/rne/results/2013/overviews/Visio-distr_m13.pdf. Add the following to these yearly reports:
 - a. In the “Special Populations” section, add “TAG Intellectual”, “TAG Reading”, and “TAG Math” to the “TAG” breakdown.
 - b. In the “Performance Levels” section, add charts that further breakdown each of the five performance levels by each of the special populations, each of the ethnicity categories, and gender.
- C. Add further breakdown by TAG status (i.e. Intellectual, Reading, and Math) to all TAG related statistics reported under “**How do the District's special program students perform on assessments?**”, for example, on this webpage:
<http://inside.pps.k12.or.us/depts-c/rne/results/2013/specProg09.php?resultYear=2013&school=distr>
- D. Add a report of the number of students at each school that have been placed in a reading or math class above their chronological grade level (as described in Measure 1.) Include the number of students that have been subject advanced at each school.