

Portland Public Schools TAG Advisory Council (TAGAC)

November 18, 2014 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes – DRAFT 2

Attending Members: Johanna Colgrove, Mark Feldman, Deborah. F., Nicole Iroz-Elardo (appointed at meeting), Mike Marsden (appointed at meeting), Scholle McFarland (appointed at meeting), Diana Ortiz, Miriam Zellnik

Absent Members: Susan Lattimore, Callie Love, Amy Rueda

Attending Guests: Jane Chaddick, Margaret DeLacey

Attending PPS Staff: none

I. Call to Order and Preliminaries

6:30

1. Mercedes has had ongoing health issues and submitted her resignation from TAGAC by email to Mark prior to this meeting. Mark thanked her for her service. That leaves 9 remaining members or which we have a quorum present for first time this year. Previous meeting minutes were approved.
2. Erika Gillis told a small group of us she was leaving PPS at a meeting last Friday, for personal reasons.
3. There was discussion about recruiting new members and Johanna suggested that Mark should consider nominating some of the current meeting attendees who have participated in past meetings and are interested in becoming members. After brief introductions and confirming their interest, Mark nominated Nicole Iroz-Elardo, Scholle Sawyer McFarland, and Mike Marsden. All three accepted their nominations and were accepted as members by unanimous vote. That brings TAGAC membership back to the minimum 12 members specified in the Bylaws. There is still a quorum present.
4. It was suggested that because it has been so hard to get a quorum, we should set an upper limit on needing 5 members. Moved, Seconded and approved that Mark should draft such a change to the Bylaws that could be voted on at the next meeting. **(AR: Mark)**

II. Old Business and Unfinished Action Items (AI)

1. **(AI: Johanna** Investigate possibility of presenting Recommendations to Portland Council PTA.) We are on the agenda for the January 26 meeting at 7pm. These are held at the Oregon PTA office on Belmont.¹
2. **(AI: Mark and Erika** Hold meeting about proceeding on recommendations.) Johanna, Deborah and Mark reported on a small group meeting with Erika Gillis and TOSAs Cathy Daley and Tessalie Schulte. Cathy presented a summary of comments on Benefits, Challenges and Questions about Single Subject Acceleration gathered from a TAG Facilitator (formerly the school TAG Coordinators) PD. These list was:

SSA Benefits

- Instructional needs of TAG students met at Rate and Level
- Qualified teacher to meet learning need and style
- Student Engagement
- Movement through curriculum at an appropriate pace
- K-8's can be more responsive than K-5's
- Current process of screening/determination process/instructional pathway sufficient

SSA Challenges

- Resources to support (\$, staff)
- Logistics (transportation and scheduling)
- Social/Emotional (identity crisis, age, maturity)
- Gaps in learning when content is skipped
- Bridges math curriculum doesn't spiral back to previous concepts
- Transition years (grades 5-6 or 8-9)
- Student less supported when accelerated
- Other content or activities missed when moved to another class
- Student frustration if not academically challenged
- Dual language Immersion schools scheduling issues

SSA Questions

- What plan is in place to stop gaps/misconceptions/foundation skill building?
- Will PPS support a tutor for accelerated students?
- Could this be a flexible grouping option instead?
- Why change a process that seems sufficient?
- How can this be sustained at a high school level?
- Can we use data to benefit ALL students at rate and level, not just TAG students?

It was also made clear to us that SSA is not a PPS policy, since it was never approved by the Board, but, rather, a

¹ See <http://oregonpta.org/contact/> for the probable location, but please confirm.

procedure. As this was only a 30 minute meeting and Erika used part of it to tell us about her departure from PPS, there were no real conclusions or plan reached from this meeting. Mark asked about the unresolved AR for Tessalie to tell us how many of the approx 30 requests for acceleration were SSA. Was told it was not possible to get this information. We need to get the meeting notes that Erika took at this meeting. **(AR: Mark)** Post Erika's departure, PPS staff are no longer available to discuss this topic or other measures from the TAGAC Recommendations this year. Nicole noted that an additional issue at immersion schools is what language to test kids in. Not only do they require advanced subject skills, e.g. math, but need the vocabulary in another language. For example, if a student demonstrates above level achievement in math on a Spanish test, can they be advanced in English or only Spanish? Restricts scheduling. In Immersion school, is language skill in math also a requirement to accelerate? Mark noted the solution for his child at an immersion school had been to send child to a non-immersion English classroom for math. Creative ad-hoc solutions may be necessary. Deborah clarified that she has been told it is against district policy to walk to math UNLESS a child goes thru SSA process. Walk-To-Math is said to have been shut down in last few years at Odyssey and Winterhaven for this reason. Mark says we should confirm this with someone with firsthand knowledge. If true, we should document it as many building TAG Plans claim to support Walk To Math..

III. Conversations with PPS

none

IV. Committee Sessions

1. Diana passed out a summary of areas that the Equity Committee is looking into. Diana will send it to membes
2. New members Nicole and Scholle agreed to serve as co-chairs of the Communications Committee.

V. New Business

1. Advocating for our Recommendations – This discussion included many comments about the SACET recommendations and ensuing Board deliberations. The comments included:
 - a. The most in need TAG kids are the low income.
 - b. Lottery changes may “take the top” off low income schools, and leave them at high income schools.
 - c. They are tinkering with enrollment instead of looking at services and core curriculum.
 - d. We could try to convince a couple principals to pilot our recommendations.
 - e. At Scott, I went to the 1st grade team who worked with the school improvement specialist to do differentiated math. Got more differentiation but still needs to do at grade level.
 - f. At our school, only the 4th grade does flexible grouping.
 - g. Will there be TAG questions on the survey in January and March? How about SpEd questions? **(AR: Mark)**
 - h. Can we talk to the Ombudsman about getting attention on TAG in these processes. Has no power except to talk. Reports to John Isaacs.
2. ongoing boundary review and lottery We agreed to set up a shared folder and doc on google docs to try to come up with ideas about what we would like to say about the SACET report, upcoming recommendations for changes to the lottery, etc. **(AI: Mark:** Create shared folder and doc and email to all.) Everyone can add ideas to the file about what we would have said to SACET if they had come to talk with us. Scholle agreed to try to edit it together into a coherent position that we might use for comments at a Board meeting. **(AI:Scholle)**
3. Ideas for new members were already addressed. Note that there are still 6 member spots being held open to increase diversity on the TAGAC.
4. Mark is working on a simple bulletin board for TAG parents at www.ppstag.org. Mark implemented many (but not all) changes suggested by Johanna on structure. The idea is to provide a “local community” for parents at each school to hold discussions. For now it will be very simple, but in the future may provide blog and wiki if such add-on software becomes available.
5. Division 22 report to ODE. Mark said that Margaret brought this to his attention. Last year PPS submitted a document to ODE saying, basically, that they were in full compliance with Oregon TAG laws. No one talked to us and apparently no one took the comments from the survey seriously. Affirming to ODE something we believe not to be true is very disturbing. We should consider whether we want to respond to this in some way. Margaret noted that her concern is that ODE is changing the OAR on Division 22 process so reports will be collected only every 3 years and they will only ask about 3-4standard in between. She does not think this is a good idea and TAGAC should care because they will not be held accountable again for 3 years. She would like people to write their legislators about this. They control ODE's budget and could pressure them using their budget.

VI. Questions and Comments from Guests

VII Adjourn

8:00

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday Dec 9, 2014 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

BESC (District admin. building) at 501 N. Dixon St, 97227 Mazama Room (second floor behind cafeteria)