

TAGAC Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2016

Attending (members names bolded): **Deborah F.**, J. Grab, **Nicole Iroz Elardo**, **Mark Feldman**, David Wood, **Meghan Whitaker**, **Mike Marsden**, Jessica Colby, Tamberlee Tarver, **Megan Robertson**, **Natalie Hval**, Eric Houghton, **Scholle McFarland**, Andrew Johnson, Jim Baldwin, Andrew Johnson (TAG Dept.), David Wood (ACCESS administrator)

March 8, 2016 minutes: motion to approve, seconded, approved. (Deborah F and Megan need to be added to attendees)

Announcements:

- [OATAG](#) conference will be at Reed next year - Susan Weinberger speaker, in October
- Handout on new federal government policy, [Every Student Succeeds \(ESSA\)](#), and how it relates to TAG. (See handout at [here](#).)
- At May 3rd School Board meeting Nicole and Scholle have two spots to give testimony to board about TAG budget. Hoping people will turn out in support.
- Next meeting we vote on TAGAC officers for 2016-2017 school year.
- Next meeting we will announce new TAGAC members starting 2016-2017 school year. Please apply if you're interested.

Guest: David Wood, ACCESS Academy Admin

Presentation about ACCESS Academy to help TAGAC research potential recommendation on ACCESS' future growth.

- Currently: 1 section of 1-2 blend, 2 sections each 3-8 = 350 students
- Last 3 years, grown by 1 section of 6th and 1.5 sections of 3rd each year.
- This year, we are completely out of room at RCP. As we look for space and DBRAC, for 2016-2017, we will have to be the same size
- Middle grades programing - as DBRAC determined, 3 sections per grade at the MS provides scheduling equity that is very challenging at 2 sections. ACCESS has the same challenges as any K-8; it is the exact same formula used for everyone else.
- Unique to ACCESS is the need to offer many more math classes--all the way through AP Calc and AP Stats. To stretch a fixed number of kids across those math classes is ACCESS' most challenging FTE and schedule issue.
- 2016-17, we will not grow. The 1.5 sections in 3rd will be the most obvious with a handful in other grades (2-4 students in other grades). This is a pause year. Last year had a waitlist close to 190.
- Going forward, Superintendent Smith has proposed ACCESS move to Humboldt. Principal Wood has had initial walkthrough and will tour the building on Friday, staff will visit next week. It appears there is some growth options. 20-21 classrooms. That is large enough to add 1 section at each MS level. That would create scheduling opportunities not previously seen.

- Opinions within the community differ (where and how fast), but there is agreement that growth is important and too many children are not able to access ACCESS. Some even asked if we could move this fall to help, but central has said budget/logistics are not possible.
- There is some belief that a highly gifted is so much of an outlier that they need alternative ed. There are differing opinions and challenges that come with that including keep K-8, etc. He acknowledges that many of the waitlist have just as compelling story and sometimes it does come down to also making a good and varied student body.
- No recs yet, working on it.
- The district as a whole is looking at alternative programs across the district and we have been asked to give our vision of size and mission. Personally, he will continue to tell the stories of some of the families who are waitlisted. But also sees tradeoffs between 350 and 700 students which is a real.
- Question: What is the distribution of the waitlist and how does that square with the potential growth plan of mid-level? Cluster at 1/2nd, 4th/5th. So adding the MS section does not quite get at that.
- Question: Is there a disadvantage to the experience of someone entering 6th? No. We've been adding a 6th grade section for 3 years, the data is strong. We are doing a little work on building that community.
- Question: Proximity to Jefferson - are there opportunities to to take off some of the pressure on the math needs? Perhaps. Jeff does have some courses, but we aren't sure. Haven't really gone that far. But we are thinking about PCC and Jeff. We also have kids as young as 4th grade in HS equivalent math. Maybe we welcome some Jeff kids onto our campus.
- Question: What about job share to cover FTE? Haven't got that far.
- Comment: Jefferson cluster has had numerous K8s, so there might be some who are making the transition anyways to 6-8 who might now consider ACCESS.
- Comment: Peninsula has talked about a short term FTE reduction and may want to jump over it.
- Question: What did you say for the option review process? I clearly documented the size of the waitlist and that the community strongly supports growth. I did not specify a target size, but did include the waitlist
- Question: how are you preparing to deal with pushback from the existing community in the neighborhood? Listen to the voices of skeptics and bring them to staff and site council meeting. For instance, brought in [Kairos](#) [nearby charter school that has requested to share space with ACCESS] today. We have some courageous conversations to have about coded language and/or false perceptions. Will have an open house in May to get families to the Humboldt building. David needs to better inform himself about and revisit dialogue from earlier Jefferson cluster rebalancing efforts when King was proposed as a potential location for ACCESS. It is difficult with a highly gentrifying and changing community to understand "who" everyone is. But I know that is as big of an issue as the logistics of moving. We have to do more work to understand who we serve and what opportunities we can do to reach out to the

Jefferson cluster. PTA is trying to do family to family outreach by culture, race, language, and income. So we are getting better, but we still have an intense gap to bridge. And the one good thing about Fall 2016 being off the table is to give us time to do that work.

- Question: is there a community partner? It might help smooth short run, but then we wouldn't have room for another 3 MS sections.
- Question: Common spaces - what does Humboldt offer? Common wishes of K-8s are science lab, athletic facilities (does have a full size gym/cafeteria and covered play areas). My one walk-through was the missing stage/performance. We might have to partner with Jefferson or PCC for that. Does acknowledge that using those extra spaces for expanding MS does also put pressure on those common spaces. I believe this is a district wide conversation. It is an issue everywhere and it is an issue everywhere.
- Comment: maybe we should also be partnering with nearby middle schools? For example, can we partner with Ockley Green for those spaces and also get take off pressure for OG kids to come take Geometry at ACCESS for the SSA.
- Comment. 350 students now, 170-190 on the waitlist=520. Do you think there are even more? 700? Others have shared with me that there is that if just counting 99%tile. And I'm sure there are some pent-up demand. Would all 99th%tiles come? - Probably not because some do like their neighborhood. Commenter cites 2008 PPS report has 1,320 qualified 3-8; 1,700 if you go to 1-8.
- Question - how is the staff feeling of 1/2 split? The controversy is equity mismatch and variability of pre-3rd testing. And many are coming to 1st grade applications w/ private testing. We will need to take that on in the alternative program review, but there are certainly kids there that need to be there. And there is an issue of K-1 getting tested through PPS. If PPS would test and screen more appropriately, then they wouldn't need outside testing.
 - Comment - we really should be asking for follow-up on the Kinder entrance exam. This should be a flag.
 - Note that for every 1/2 grade slot that is there, there is not a 3rd grade spot available to all. Equity.
 - The blend is the widest range and really hard to teach - so ACCESS will probably ask for those to be split.
 - Concern that ignoring the private testing in young grades misses the better cognitive assessments (WISC vs CogAT) and/or the twice exceptional kids (TAG and learning disabilities)
 - Why doesn't the TAG department have a psychologist to deal with this? We are starved for resources that create inequities and then ACCESS gets blamed.
 - Has weighting for SES helped? Yes. the younger grades are about 2 times more diverse and have representation from another 20 schools and have evened out the gender imbalance in most grades, and we have increased the African Americans in 1-3, but have not been very successful in attracting English Language Learners. But it is demonstrably true that the last 2 years' incoming students have been more diverse than ever before.

- Is the Humboldt with 20-21 classrooms a done deal? What about portables or building? As PPS starts to go back into growth mode, maybe we should also be planning that growth including for ACCESS? Answer: I've already been assigned a facilities person. That suggests this move is going forward unless the Board makes a change when they vote.
- Question: What is TAGAC role?
 - Generally, we need a long-term growth plan
 - More specificity
 - East-west?
 - Certain size?
 - [Summa model](#) like Beaverton?
 - Any other specific ask?
 - Answer: my dream is not to have to choose between highly qualified and needy kids. And that could be that we are better in getting services into the schools. If we build a really good program and drop testing barriers and do better about offering differentiated TAG learning in neighborhood schools, what is the net direction? It is hard to say. But we will never want to serve all TAG kids at ACCESS. We serve kids with demonstrably different social/emotional needs. (Which I'd love to have more support for that.)
 - Answer: we continue to do a better job of reaching out to underserved communities. Our growth over the past 3 years has been purposeful. And want to continue on that path.

NEXT STEPS: Move the recommendation for ACCESS offline. Mark to lead, Nicole w/ pay particular attention to equity.

SSA Update (Andrew Johnson, TAG Department):

- Last time we met, goal was to get everything finalized and put online
- Requests coming in
- Deadline for applications is May 6
- Testing is at end of May
- We want to have a process that is holistic and efficient
- We want SSA to really reflect Compacted Math (which is going to be more holistic than in the past) and we want SSA to also move that way
- Went to senior directors to get their support as they are the “operational” aspects - quite a few concerns/question about logistics. Will be going back in couple of weeks to follow up.
- How is this being advertised? Website, emails to all principals and TAG facilitators. Then the building hopefully is sharing.
- Question about the “parent transportation” line in documents. - It has always been there, and yes, it remains the biggest barriers and has not been resolved. Knows it needs to get better, but made the decision to stabilize the rest of the policy and process and make that the next steps (looking for alternative, creative solutions)

- Clarification about the earliest opportunity to test for SSA? What do we do about Kinders? Or 1st graders? What Andrew is telling his team is that we have to have structures in place to make sense. So right now, 1st grader can test (to move into 3rd grade math when in 2nd grade) is the first main opportunity. But Andrew is a real believer in flexibility and will address case by case.

TAG Pilot Program Update

- Took “pilot” descriptor off documents. It sounded too temporary. So it is now the “PPS Scholars Program”
- We are now asking schools to have a full commitment to the program
 - Differentiation
 - Professional development around depth and complexity
- (Does TAGAC see some kind of requirements/expectation of once in, always in? What if kids fall below the 70th%tile? And then what are the access points?
 - Example, do we require the Scholars at a AP high school, do we ask the take X AP classes and take the assessment and score as a 3? We don’t have anything like this right now.
 - If we believe a “growth” mindset, then how do we incorporation?
 - Compete in one “event” each year? (restarting spelling bees, math contests, etc)
 - Question: having a requirement implies consequence? Maybe we incorporate an honors or scholars diploma. Or is it a red-flag that something is going on so that the child isn’t working to potential?
 - This is just a for future thought conversation.
- So we need to think through what the scholars program looks like K-7, vs K-12, etc.
 - This the type of framework questions Andrew has to be looking at.
- Andrew is seeing the culture shift for TAG in the buildings that he is working in. There is much more intentional and coordinated focus (rather than a piecemeal, enrichment approach). Principals are saying they want to continue, that most teachers are wanting to continue. ODE coach at King has given feedback that it is the best PD teachers have had in years.
- Trying to Establish the “expo” K-5. Like a science fair. Take a theme “innovation makes the world a better place” and then kids can take a position using any way of knowing and you share out with parents.
- Profile of a scholar - each school is defining 5-7 characteristics of a scholar for TAG students to try and work at incorporating into their behavior. It is really changing the way the kids are behaving and pushing themselves.
- Helping building admins think through what do you have in terms of enrichment right now and what you can do to have more (and more thoughtful)
- Question: How are you pushing this info out of families? Nothing seems to be getting out (or getting out consistently). Can we more formally incorporate the communication plan

TABLED for next meeting:

- Discussions of TAG program in High School

- Clarifying TAGAC online collaboration and voting policy