

## **TAGAC Meeting Minutes**

### **May 10, 2016**

Attending (members names bolded): Andrew Johnson (TAG Dept.), **Mike Marsden**, Eric Houghton, **Mark Feldman**, **Johanna Colgrove**, Jessica Colby, **Deborah F.**, Margaret De Lacy (OATAG), J. Grab., **Natalie Hval**, **Meghan Whitaker**, Kinnari Shah, **Scholle McFarland**.

#### **Announcements:**

- [OATAG](#) conference will be at Reed - Susan Winebrenner speaker, in October.
- April 12, 2016 minutes: motion to approve, seconded, approved.

#### **Old Business and Unfinished Action Items:**

##### **Single Subject Acceleration (SSA) Update (Andrew):**

56 applicants this spring.

TAG web site updated (<http://www.pps.net/Page/2886>) to include parent guide, process flow chart, application.

- Question: why are parents still not hearing about SSA?  
Andrew: Need help getting information out. Flyer about OMSI competition not widely distributed either. Still work to do around ambivalence to TAG as part of system. It makes it difficult. Will continue to need help. Trying to figure out how to communicate changes when there are so many. Not only does [NAGC](#) (National Association for Gifted Children) advocate for acceleration, but educators do too. How can we get advocacy to acknowledge ambivalence but serve kids needs?
- Question: If principals and TAG facilitators are pushing back, it's worrisome. How do we get buy in? Many schools are clearly not communicating about SSA. There's a resistance to even telling parents.  
Andrew: TAG Department is meeting with TAG facilitators six times per year now. Teachers are paid for extended responsibilities. Want more meetings, but can't contractually ask for more. Trying to encourage full participation with appealing extra professional development to reach the facilitators once a month.
- Question: How are TAG facilitators selected?  
Andrew: School decides. Person must be willing to help with assessment coordination.
- Question: SSA is not just for TAG students. Need this information out to all students, not just on TAG web site. Can there be a link on the PPS math page and other places where parents might be looking for information about math acceleration?
- Question: Do you all prefer whole grade acceleration because it's easier than single subject acceleration? It seems like at some schools that's easier to do.  
Andrew: No, but looking for other indicators. Consider whole grade more often than not. Part of considering the whole child.
- Question: But what about this problem of obstruction by administrators?

Andrew: This policy is not new. It's been around since 2010. TAG Department has met several times with facilitators and emails principals. TAG Department can't make principals do anything.

- Will the window for SSA in math reopen in the fall?

Andrew: We plan to open it in January for the following year.

- Question: What's happening with the TAG newsletter? Suggestion that monthly TAG announcements directly from the TAG Department would give it a direct line to parents and avoid some of the communication problems. Send to facilitators a week before for feedback. "Force issue in a collaborative way." Can make it available online, through email, and on paper on the TAG boards.
- Question: How can we help schools with the technical problems of SSA? Could the middle school workgroups [created by the superintendent to help with switch away from K-8s] help figure out what to do with SSA students at transition points?

Andrew: TAG Department would like to invest in FTE around itinerate teachers to travel to schools. TOSA could be math itinerate.

- Question: Some teachers worry about how their students will behave in someone else's class. (Another member asks: Is there implicit bias training for teachers around this?) There are socioemotional aspects around acceleration. Kids might say they don't feel connected or they don't belong. Parents may not want child to accelerate and be with older kids, but still need to meet his/her needs. Some brainstorming about how schools could adjust the environment instead of the kid.

### **Budget Update (Andrew):**

Teaching and Learning Committee will meet on Wednesday 5/18 at 4:30.

TAG Department will present and discuss what the price of TAGAC budget requests would be.

4-5 TOSAs (to reach one per cluster) would be \$488,000 fringe and benefits

1 itinerant teacher for SSA would be \$75,000 to focus on 5th to 6th grade transition.

- Question: Will it be possible for 1 person to support 5th-6th grade transitions at all the elementary schools in the city? Maybe ask for 1 itinerant teacher per cluster?
- Question: What about TAGAC's request for curriculum extensions for teachers?  
Andrew: We haven't asked for money for this, but think additional TOSAs would give the capacity for Department to support it. Think the TAG Department with Math Department could develop extensions.
- Question: Might explore online tools like Front Row (<https://www.frontrowed.com/school-edition/>) or Aleks (<https://www.aleks.com>). These can help all students.
- Question: Might explore other options (other than itinerant teachers) like middle school teachers who taught first period at nearby elementary schools. Bus from each cluster to middle school and then bus home with middle school.
- Question: Also consider transfer to one school for all the kids doing SSA to get economy of scale?
- Question: What if only 4-5 kids qualify for SSA? Discussion that more will appear when this is a clearly offered and supported possibility.

- Question: What is more expensive--buses, extra time for middle school teachers, itinerate teachers? PPS would need to know this to make good choices.
- Question: What about distance learning? Hub where groups are watching teacher live. Maybe at the middle school level? (When middle school student accelerated 1 year would need to take geometry.) Discussion brings up concerns about technology being alienating. Other attendants suggest that a librarian or another person could supervise. Some argument over whether district is legally required to provide instruction and can't pass off instruction to technology. Others say that a live teacher and then that person coming in a few times per week could be a middle ground. We need to approach this with the intention that this is a service that must be provided. Innovation might be necessary.

Andrew says there is a potential for budget savings (\$40,000) if 2nd grade teachers will proctor universal TAG testing. PAT is needed for this and district may have to go through negotiations to get it. Some schools are refusing. Also, savings in TAG TOSA time if they are not responsible for 4 months of proctoring--estimate \$23,000.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Vote for TAGAC officers**

Motion to vote on next year's Chair and Vice Chair as a slate, Scholle McFarland and Nicole Iroz Elardo running. Seconded, none opposed, 6 in favor. So moved.

##### **Announcement of new members:**

J. Grab (Rosa Parks)

##### **Questions from Guests:**

- Question: Can we move TAGAC meetings to Wednesdays so they do not conflict with school board meetings? [Tonight's meeting started late because of Board Budget Discussion happening downstairs.] Group agrees to move to second Wednesdays.
- Attendant/member Question: The former Grant principal is now in charge of PPS high schools. Concern about TAG at high school level. Very serious communication hurdles. Concern about freshman academies locking students into courses that may not be appropriate for all of them. How do we create opportunities for rigor earlier? "Making all students take AP English as juniors isn't equity." How do we support kids at every grade in terms of measurable outcomes? Andrew comments that the TAG Department is now in charge of AP. Attendant asks for data on TAG kids in AP and IB classes. Want to see what is actually happening and see if more deliberate support is necessary.