

TAGAC Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2016

Attending (members names bolded): Andrew Johnson (TAG Dept.), **Mike Marsden**, Eric Houghton, **Mark Feldman**, Jessica Colby, **Deborah F.**, Margaret De Lacy (OATAG), **J. Grab.**, **Meghan Whitaker**, **Scholle McFarland**, Jane Chaddick, Kevin Stone, Megan Robertson, Scott Bailey, Susan Rosenzweig

Announcements:

- [OATAG](#) conference will be at Reed - Susan Weinberger speaker, in October. There will be no childcare at the conference this year.
- OATAG needs board members to work on state TAG funding. If you're interested, you can submit an application online at http://www.oatag.org/OATAG_Board_Application

Old Business and Unfinished Action Items:

- Group needs to approve May, 2016 minutes by email

TESTING QUESTIONS

Start with some questions for Andrew Johnson (TAG Director) about testing:

"What is up with using SBAC as a TAG test? Totally inappropriate." [TAG newsletter said that SBAC scores could be used to qualify for TAG in math and reading achievement.]

Not using SBAC as the only universal measure. CoGAT is the universal test for cognitive ability given to all 2nd graders. SBAC is an additional way to "universally" screen for math and reading achievement in 3rd grade or later, since SBAC is already administered to all students.

This year is transition. Next year, default will be SBAC for 3-8 graders; IOWA by request for K,1,2,3. However, parents who opt out can ask for Iowa test of achievement instead at any grade, by nominating their child for TAG in reading or math achievement. This is the same situation as now so using SBAC does not eliminate any existing path for TAG identification.

"Please explain how the SBAC is being normed."

The state TAG department sanctioned SBAC for TAG identification in March 2016. The OAR previously allowed districts to use the OAKS test for identification in academic achievement in addition to nationally normed tests of achievement. Here is the link to the revised OAR (Oregon Administrative Rule) now allowing the SBAC:

http://www.ode.state.or.us/superintendent/priorities/3.f_1-tag-oar.pdf

"What is the instrument for older kids?"

Any parent can request that their child is testing using the CoGAT test of intellectual ability by nominating the child for TAG in Intellectual ability. They can do this any year, not just in 2nd grade when this test is administered to all students.

“This test is not designed to identify TAG students. Psychometrically that’s bad policy. Like giving voting test to see if you can drive.”

Other participants wonder why it isn’t relevant. “Isn’t it supposed to test achievement? Isn’t achievement a relevant measure?” “It doesn’t do any good to identify children if there are no services to serve them. At some point you have to make the most out of your resources.” “Using SBAC does not make the situation worse, compared to current policy.”

“Through SBAC there will be false negatives and positives versus Iowa tests of achievement.”

Andrew: All tests have limits. Paradigm shift away from idea of fixed intelligence. Right now most testing catches high SES white kids. We have a new educators’ guide for ELL and 2E. We want educators to view students through multiple lens. Behaviors that appear SpEd may actually be TAG. We have noticed that previously identified students do well on SBAC in those achievement areas. There’s a match there. If that child hadn’t been identified, s/he would have been through SBAC. We are also watching Tualatin. They have done away with a TAG cut score. Score is a data point to be considered but not the be all end all. Watching them to see what happens. So far every time we try to expand testing, we just catch more high SES white students.

Problem with CoGAT not catching 2E or very high IQ students.

Could be opportunity this year for TAG department to ask for money for a department psychologist to do IQ testing under certain circumstances as that has been shown in some studies to identify Latino and African American students at higher rates. (Margaret De Lacy notes the department used to have its own psychologist).

One participant suggests that kindergarten teachers be briefed on characteristics of gifted children so they can encourage parents to nominate ones that show signs for testing early.

TESTING CHANGES UPDATE FROM TAG DEPARTMENT

All universal 2nd grade TAG testings will happen in October this year. The TAG department has reached out to teachers to proctor, which means fewer hired proctors and less TAG TOSA time spent on proctoring. This will save money, but the total won’t be clear until they finish. Lots of support from teachers and lots of volunteers. (Can’t require teachers to proctor without going through contract process.) 4,000 second graders will be tested this year--all of them in October.

Testing data will not go to Riverside. Will be graded by PPS data group (Sarah Singer/Joe Sugg) who have volunteered to grade and norm all of them and believe they can have everything back by mid-November.

Nomination forms for all other grades will be due after conferences so parents have a reasonable heads up. Assessments for other grades will start December 1. State norming will be used.

Feedback from meeting participants:

Must send out letters with scores from TAG department instead of relying on schools. They are unreliable.

Why must parents or teachers nominate students? Why aren't students automatically TAG after getting a qualifying test score?

OATAG representative: Law requires "no one score" can be used to make TAG decisions. Form or some second piece of information required. A building committee looks at the scores and the nomination forms.

Why aren't students at least automatically "nominated" after getting a qualifying score, after which a review by the TAG nominating team or another teacher could count as a second piece of information?

[Notes were sketchy here; clarification from Andrew via email:] Students, in a sense, are automatically nominated. We will continue to need the IDPF (nomination form completed) because it also serves as a placement form. It has a dual purpose, because we are using universal assessments to identify possible TAG students, there is a "back-fill" AND the form has to function as a framework to looking at the student holistically rather than just a score. Remember, the form has an expanded body of evidence that I want the schools to consider. If we simply alert folks to the 2nd grade score or SBAC, then my concern is people won't do that and simply "pass" or "fail" students as talented and/or gifted. This does not mean that an alert is not a good first step.

How do we get around requiring parent intervention? This penalizes kids with parents or guardians who are busy working or have language barriers.

It is a legal requirement; we can't get around it.

Teachers are legally allowed to nominate students too, right? Not just parents? Why not have teachers (or even a TAG TOSA = Teacher On Special Assignment) nominate kids who have a qualifying test score? (Either CoGAT in 2nd grade or SBAC in later years.) Then if they are identified" send an "opt-out" form to parents saying your child will be identified unless you return this form saying you do not want them to be identified?

[Notes were sketchy here; clarification from Andrew via email:] Any teacher, parent, or student may nominate a child.

The TAG Department must check in with schools to make sure they are actually nominating students with qualifying scores. You've told us this was a problem in the past. If TAG Department could identify which schools aren't complying that could be useful information.

Margaret De Lacy (OATAG): The TAG identification process was made to mirror the SpEd process to prevent over-identification. But it would be possible to change it from an opt in to an opt out model.

DISCUSSION ABOUT COMMITTEES

Would like to create targeted committees for projects this year:

- **Data Committee:** To analyze demographic data given to us by PPS and look for questions we should be asking and directions for future recommendations. First project is putting together better data for ACCESS Growth Recommendation
- **Budget Committee:** Will meet regularly with TAG Department through fall to brainstorm and research budget asks. Scott Bailey (DBRAC) suggests that the Budget Committee also look at best case scenario of how TAG should be funded in case Measure 97 passes.
- **High School Committee** (participant suggests): Work on recommendations for TAG at high school level

Members signed up for these at meeting. You do not have to be a TAGAC member to participate. Contact Scholle McFarland to add yourself to a committee: scholle.tagac@gmail.com

SINGLE SUBJECT ACCELERATION (SSA) IN MATHEMATICS UPDATE

Last Spring, 81 students were tested for SSA:

5 scored in 85-89% (maybe accelerate)

8 scored in 90-100% range (yes accelerate)

16% of those tested received a recommendation from the TAG office to be accelerated.

Elementary grades did cumulative growth Bridges assessments; middle schoolers did bypass exams. Participants bring up communication problems: Parents informed very late. Teachers didn't know. TAG facilitators hadn't shared information. TAG Department not sure how to improve communication. All information--dates; parent guide; educators' guide; visual process guide--sent to TAG facilitators, principals, and school secretaries.

Also: "I can't tell people how to meet the 5th to 6th grade transition." Itinerant teachers to support SSA (costing \$600,000) were requested last budget cycle, but not accepted this time around.

There will be no SSA testing window in the fall because of the conflict with universal testing. No staff.

AJ: Thinks that many students don't have both the skills and the concepts required by the common core and this makes it more difficult to pass the SSA test.

Is the problem Bridges? Seems like the % of students passing is very low?

If students were consistently being taught at their rate and level, it seems like more would pass the SSA test.

Participant suggestion: The Budget Committee should include money to send out TAG letters. Could be less expensive to do this through TAG Office then expecting each school to do it. The letter can point to TAGAC to encourage more parents to participate and point to resources, like SSA policy. Take every opportunity to get information to parents.

NEXT MEETING IS WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12, 6:30-8