

Portland Public Schools TAG Advisory Council (TAGAC)
September 17, 2013 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes¹

Attending Members: Terese Bushnell, Amy Doan, Mark Feldman (Chair), and Brenda Ray Scott

Attending Guests: Shawndell Albright, Johanna Colgrove, Deborah F., Gabrielle Josephson, Virginia LaForte, Susan Latimore, Rachel Lee, Michael McGarry, Miriam Zellnik

Attending PPS Staff: Roxanne Coleman, Kimberly Matier

I. Call to Order and Preliminaries

After brief introductions and welcome by Kimberly, Mark described four priorities for the year:

1. Fill membership (as appropriately and diversely as possible)
2. Facilitate committees' research & production of concrete and measurable recommendations. Encourage more discussion and distribution of work materials between meetings, since TAGAC meetings only 90 minutes a month.
3. Exchange more information in a timely way with PPS
4. Promote the theme of parents advocating for appropriate rate and level for their children

II. Old Business and Unfinished Action Items (AI)

1. Motion to approve minutes (Amy?), seconded (Terese) and passed.
2. Applications to work on TAG Dept website were approved and after training, Brenda and Mark will be able to assist editing the website. Mark is working on getting minutes and agendas posted to website at least a week before meetings.
3. Kimberly explained the application and need for TAGAC members. Applications were passed out and should be turned in to Kimberly by Sept 30.
4. Although several members had been consistently serving on TAGAC last year, they had not been formally appointed. Kimberly officially appointed Terese Bushnell, Amy Doan, Mark Feldman, and Brenda Ray Scott as members with 3 year terms, retroactive to the 2012-13 school year.
5. Mark reported receiving the data on High School dropout rates from Roxanne. A link to this is included in a footnote in the Sept 2013 minutes. (**Action Item:** Mark will put link on website.) Data was for HS cohort students through HS. PPS was .5% for TAG students and about 3.5% overall for PPS. There was a comment that this appeared small compared to the commonly reported low HS graduation rate. (**Action Item:** Mark will investigate the difference.)
6. The NYT article on grouping was distributed via a link to attendees of the last meeting. The link is included in the minutes.
7. Mark has seen the draft of the SSA process and has given input to Kimberly, but the question is when will it appear on the website. Kimberly has asked the content TOSAs for final input and hopes to get approval and placed on website by Friday, 9/20. She is also running it by the CAO and Melissa Goff to get approval. (**Action Item:** Status of posting this on website from Kimberly.) The SSA policy is not only for math and can also be used for acceleration in English Language Arts.

III. Conversations with PPS

1. Kimberly shared a powerpoint on the changing role of TAG coordinators, the school TAG budgets and TAG enrichment options in schools.² The TAG Coordinator role will no longer be primarily clerical. Clerical responsibilities have been shifted away to other staff. The TAG Coordinator will now be seen as an Instructional Leader in the schools who works with the principal and will attend five mandatory professional development (PD) meetings on how teachers are expected to meet TAG students' learning rate & level needs in the classroom. The TAG Coordinator will also help teachers write individual instructional plans and help with the Fall TAG Parent meeting. Kimberly also noted that she is beginning to integrate parallels between TAG and Special Education compliance into all instructional language. Roxanne will teach the 5 meetings which will be focused on Rigor and Relevance. These meetings will be on Sept. 26, Oct. 24, Jan. 23, Feb. 27 and April 24. The TAG Coordinator will then share this information with all teachers at school staff meetings. Someone asked if parents can observe

¹ After being approved, modifications were requested and approved. Deletions and additions are shown.

² Thanks to Amy for contributing her own well organized writeup at <http://alamedatag.blogspot.com> used in preparing these minutes.

the school staff meetings when TAG PD is presented? (**ACTION ITEM**) Kimberly will check on that. Another question was whether there also be an expectation of coordinators that they serve for more than 1 year? The answer was that is a good idea but it depends on staffing plans at the individual school.

2. In the past, school TAG budgets were managed by each school. But school TAG enrichment budgets are now managed centrally and final approval for uses of this money at each school now rests within the TAG department. ~~Since these are TAG funds, schools are not supposed to use the funds for general school wide enrichment/clubs as they have in the past. While TAG services are provided in the classroom through differentiated instruction, schools have received funds to pay for: extended responsibility for the TAG Coordinator, materials/supplies to support TAG activities, and TAG enrichment programs. Students do not have to have a TAG designation to receive services. Students only need to meet criteria for rate and level of learning for that activity or service. If schools neglect to use the funds, which has been a problem over the past four years, they will lose control over how to direct the money, the TAG Department will follow up and may direct the funds instead to something that will advance some of the TAGAC goals.~~ If your principal seems resistant to using TAG money for enrichment classes for TAG students, contact the TAG Department for advice. Several questions concerned how the school TAG budgets were set. How does size relate to whether the TAG Coordinator is a teacher, who is paid extra for the extra responsibilities, or a vice principal, who is not paid extra? The budgets in PPS financial reports seem to vary in ways the questioners did not understand. Kimberly said that budgets were based on size of the school, not the number of TAG students as well as other factors. (**Action Item**) Kimberly will get us the details on how the school TAG budgets are set.
3. Kimberly has negotiated attractive group rates with Saturday Academy and OMSI for differentiated group instruction, which can happen during the school day as pullouts from class. (**Action Item**) Kimberly will share the cost of these classes at the next meeting. Kimberly passed out the TAG Menu of Options list that is being sent to schools as suggestions for use of TAG money. (See Appendix, in a separate file, for this Menu of Options.) They are trying to come up with additional options for High Schools, since those are obviously limited right now. OMSI classes are for about 30 students in blended grade levels and have one session that lasts for 1 hour. Saturday Academy classes are for about 12 students and go for 8 or 9 sessions. Teachers then nominate student working at a higher rate and level to participate. There is no requirement to be TAG identified since some students may be unidentified. This will provide additional support for advanced learning for the students who need it. This explicitly opens up the possibility to have pullouts during the school day. If schools have concerns about doing this, the TAG Department can consult on how to make it happen. But all schools may not be able to have the TAG classes during the day. It really depends on how many empty classrooms there are in the school. That's probably the biggest hindrance in schools that are filled to the brim. The TAG Department can help give them ideas, but can't mandate that a school has these classes during the school day. If additional funding is necessary, parents are free to do fundraising for these.
4. Other questions were:
 - A. At exempt schools, can parents ask for an individual TAG plan to be written? Yes. The questioner suggested that we should get the information out to parents again about what exempt and non-exempt schools and building TAG plans are. An exempt school is only required to have a building TAG plan while a non-exempt school must prepare individual TAG plans for all students. A related question was whether building plans could address the use of the budgets. TAG Building plans are written once a year and parents can have input into them by talking with principals and attending site council meeting.
 - B. Q: How did teachers' unions respond to the changes. A: There are concerns that have been formally reported regarding changes to coordinator shift in duties. ~~There were questions about clerical work hours at bigger schools.~~

IV. Committee Sessions

1. Mark noted that you do not need to be a TAGAC member to serve on a committee. See the handout for a brief description of each committee and the head of the committee to contact about working on it.
2. Brenda Ray: Communications- working on TAG website and making it more "friendly"; would like to look into the possibility of another website for TAGAC, not PPS website. Reminder of the OATAG conference in Woodburn on October 11 and 12.
3. Terese explained the TAG related terminology draft. There were several suggestions for more additions to the list. Terese agreed to give up her time due to the strong interest in the Conversations with PPS, so the TAG related terminology will be back for discussion next month.

V. New Business

1. Amy said that we had a request for childcare, which is provided by several other parent advisory groups. There was discussion (here and in past emails) that different departments across the system have different funding resources that are allocated for specific reasons. The TAG budget is allocated for school services and activities so Kimberly would have to try to find money elsewhere. She suggests that we look at this again if/when we get more people coming to the meetings to see if others do need childcare.
2. Historically, TAGAC has had only 5 meetings per year, although in 2012-13 we had 9 (nine) meetings and it was pointed out that all the other parent advisory groups listed on the PPS website meet monthly. Kimberly and Roxanne (?) are currently only able to make it to 5 meetings this year. Kimberly clarified that it was still OK for the parent to meet every month without her and it was also OK to invite other PPS speakers. Mark said he thought that seemed workable.
3. The only currently available version of the Bylaws are scanned in and therefore not editable or searchable when placed on the TAG website. Mark created an MS Word version and made minor corrections and formatting changes with the intent of there being no change in meaning. The only intentional change was "...last meeting of the year" to "last meeting of the school year." This has been distributed to and commented on by TAGAC members previous to this meeting by email. Brenda (who had to leave early) had discussed ideas for quite a few additional changes by email, but Mark just wants an electronic version to put on the website. He said he will give Brenda time on the agenda to discuss her suggested changes if she requests it. But for now, he just wants an electronic version of the current Bylaws for the website and would like this approved as the new official version. Motion to approve: Amy. Second: Terese. Motion passed.

Questions and Comments from Guests

1. Where does the TAG budget come from and how can we get more money for TAG?
2. How can we promote strategies for higher level learning in classrooms? (Getting teachers to reach the needs of high ability students.)
3. Are there district wide programs for TAG? She came from a state where there were great programs offered for TAG students. Roxanne pointed out that Oregon is one of 3 states in the US where TAG is not funded. TAG funding comes out of each district's general budget.

VI. Adjourned at 8:10