

TAGAC Review of Measure 1 April 14, 2015

TAGAC Measure 1. Place Elementary and Middle School Students in Appropriate Level Math and Reading Classes

This measure guarantees that every pre-High School student whose math or reading level is 1 year above their age-based grade, will be placed into appropriate level math and reading classes.¹ The placement is a data-based process that is accessible to all students (not just TAG identified students) because it is initiated by teachers at schools rather than requiring parent advocacy.

- A.** Require all schools teaching K-6 math and K-6 reading to align math and reading classes so that any qualified student can study those subjects at their appropriate grade level, by joining another classroom for that period. Immersion and focus schools are not exempt. Middle Schools must schedule math classes in such a way that it is possible for qualified 6th grade students to take 7th grade compacted year 1 math and for qualified 7th grade students to take compacted year 2 math. This institutionalizes proper placement and improves equity of TAG Services because parent advocacy is not required for proper placement.
- B.** Require all K-5 schools to provide 6th grade math and reading so that 5th graders can be placed at least one grade level above their chronological grade without needing daily transportation to a Middle School. There could be a cost for K-5 schools (K-8 schools already have this available), so principals should try to find innovative solutions and compare the cost against alternatives such as itinerant teachers serving several nearby schools, busing students from nearby schools to one school, etc.
- C.** Require all K-8 and Middle Schools to provide one year of High School math so that 8th graders can be placed at least one grade level above their chronological grade without needing daily transportation to a High School.
- D.** At the beginning of the school year, every student should receive comprehensive assessment of skills for both reading and math. The assessment should reflect the Common Core Standards and the reasoning skills actually expected of students. Students scoring 85% or better proficiency at their grade level should be placed in the math or reading class at the next higher grade.² Students scoring close to that should be evaluated along with other available information, such as the previous year's state test, TAG identification status, etc. We do not intend to require the development of new sets of exams, but it is our understanding that many PPS schools already do such a beginning of year assessment, so such exams already exist.³ If these tests are not already standardized for all schools, we strongly suggest the District do so.
- E.** Students who demonstrate above grade level proficiency on the beginning of year open ended comprehensive assessment or who have tested up for a second year, should automatically be evaluated for multi-grade Single Subject Advancement and should be tested to see if they qualify for admission to ACCESS Academy. Determinations for SSA and/or ACCESS should be completed before parent-teacher conferences.
- F.** All PPS students should take the Oregon State assessment test for a subject in the grade level they are actually studying rather than their chronological grade level. If a student does not meet or exceed the standards for that test, the student should repeat the same math or reading class the following year.
- G.** Provide ongoing evidence and status to parents on whether or not their child is being challenged in the classroom. This could be done by Elementary School teachers entering math and reading pre-assessment and post-assessment scores into the ParentVUE (or a similar) system or by simply sending those scores/sheets home in backpack mail. The first such evidence and status should be available to parents early in the year, significantly before the parent teacher conferences..
- H.** Develop a process for parents to request re-evaluation of level during the school year, after consultation with the teacher and principal.

¹ One highly respected school district in the area, Lake Oswego has a similar program where, based on comprehensive test results, it provides 6th grade math at every Elementary School and buses students if required to meet a level 2 grades or higher. They have reported to us that approximately 10% of their students are working at least 1 grade level ahead..

² Of course there is some leeway for teachers and principals to set the exact percentage, but please note that "The majority of teachers [in a study] (80%) identified a specific proficiency standard by which to evaluate whether students had mastered the regular curriculum. The criteria for determining proficiency ranged from 80%-100% and the most frequently used standard to document student proficiency was 85%." This quote is as excerpted by the author of [Reis, Sally M., Deborah E. Burns and Joseph S. Renzulli, "Curriculum Compacting: The Complete Guide to Modifying the Regular Curriculum for High Ability Students," Creative Learning Press Mansfield Center, Connecticut, 1992.] and presented at <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/siegle/epsy373/fcompact.htm>

³ Many such exams are commercially available for both reading and math, such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Measures of Academic Progress (MAPS), etc.

PPS Response to TAGAC Measure 1

RESPONSE: PPS works diligently and thoughtfully when considering appropriate placement for all students. Many factors should be considered when making such a determination. PPS may use a variety of assessment tools such as: Iowa Acceleration, DRA, DIBELS, STAMP, CAR, Grade level By-Pass, OAKS, Smarter Balanced, Woodcock-Johnson, WIAT, grade level assessments, end of term content assessments, performance tasks, work samples, grades, and or student portfolios. Each campus relies on the expertise of their staff and an understanding of each student to guide the decision making process in terms of best fit. Campuses are encouraged to dialogue in grade placement committees, using formal and informal data to make grouping decisions. When it is appropriate and necessary, the TAG and Instruction Curriculum and Assessment departments endeavor to support campuses and TAG students in the decision making process. We must be very careful about the social/emotional impact of segregating students into cohorts and the possible negative, unintended consequences of “accelerating” students beyond their proficiency level- namely conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and an ability to apply.