

**Portland Public Schools TAG Advisory Council**  
**June 11, 2013 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.**  
**Meeting Minutes**

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

**Attending Guests:** Shawndell Albright, Gretchen Erikson, Deborah F., Virginia LaForte, James Ollerich, and Daphne Plaut

**Attending PPS Staff:** Roxanne Coleman

I. **Called to Order:** 6:35 p.m.

II. **Introductions / Announcements:** Everyone introduced themselves.

III. **Advocacy, Media, and Other News**

Brenda distributed a page of assorted news and links.

IV. **Elections:**

a. Roxanne reported that Kimberly would like to use a membership application similar to what Mark Feldman suggested by email, but she would like to postpone elections and appointing of new members until September. Members discussed and unanimously decided to hold the election for Chair today to remove uncertainty for summer planning. Consensus was that the Bylaws and attendance over the past year meant that five members would be eligible to vote. The by-laws state that anyone running for office needs to have been a member of the TAGAC for at least 1 year. We have 5 members who have been members for the last year:

These members voted via written, secret ballot on the Chair position.

- i. Both Mark and Brenda Ray nominated themselves to be the Chairperson for next year. They both communicated why they would be a good chairperson for next year. There were no nominations for Vice Chair, which remains unfilled.
- ii. The results were that Mark will become Chair for the 2013/14 school year. Per the bylaws, his term of office officially begins on the first Monday in September.
- iii. As specified by the bylaws, Brenda Ray Scott will continue on the Council as past Chair focusing on relationship building and leading communications efforts.

V. **Minutes (4/9/13 Meeting)**

1. The minutes approved conditionally with clarifications offered by Mark Feldman, a few small corrections, and pending Kimberly's approval.
2. The TAGAC agreed that the minutes should be posted on the website to be more widely available.

VI. **Committee Reports:**

1. **Communications – Brenda Ray Scott:** Brenda reported on having had two separate meetings with the Communications Director for PPS during the past few months. Her report focused on the second meeting (Mon. 6/10) with Erin Hoover- Barnett, Sr. Manager/Comm. & Staff Engagement and the fact that she would be working to make the TAG website more user friendly. Brenda reported that she and another member of the TAGAC will be allowed to apply to get Red Dot accounts and will be able to work with the website once they complete online training. Any work done by Brenda or other volunteers on the website will have to be approved by a PPS administrator, Kimberly Matier, to be final. She also reported that potentially the TAGAC could have its own separate website beyond what is offered by PPS. Brenda's goal is to have the changes made so that the website will be ready for launch prior to the beginning of the school year. The work on the website is a component of a larger communications plan being developed for the TAGAC.
2. **Curriculum- Cathy Biber:** TAG Dept. does not recommend curriculum to HS principals. The group feels that the TAG department should be able to give input to high schools for curriculum for TAG students. She also suggested that the HS forecast guide be a tabular guide for easier understanding by parents. Cathy will be leaving TAGAC next year. She will try to find time to document her ideas and findings so far but will not have time until later in the year.

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Roxanne said that she had found a public document on TAG student dropout rate in PPS. For the HS cohort in the document, it was small. She will forward to the group. There was discussion about really needing the neighborhood capture rate, i.e. the percentage of neighborhood TAG students who attend PPS schools rather than going elsewhere.

**Action:** Roxanne will send link for document to the group<sup>1</sup>.

3. Equity- Mark Feldman: Nothing to share. Will still focus on getting a better representation of parents throughout the district. There was discussion of how to make more parents aware of TAGAC and make meetings more accessible. Ideas and comments included
  - Must get info into backpacks (sealed letters) to get to all parents. Nothing else works.
  - Have every other meeting at lunch so parents can attend while children are at school.
  - We should also provide childcare for night meetings. Why does SACET get it but TAGAC does not?
  - Maybe we could have a representative from TAGAC attend cluster Fall TAG Parent meetings to spread word about the TAGAC work and goals. How about 2 cluster meetings, one at 3:00 (with childcare.)
  - Get parents to “opt-in” so we can collect emails. Maybe we need to have another district opt-in TAG listserv to send information out to parents.
  - Its often political that principals do not want parents organizing, so need to change that attitude.
4. Differentiation- Terese Bushnell: Will present information at next meeting about what are the best practices for differentiation.
  - i. Daphne would like more discussion on SSA next time. Let’s make it a priority. Roxy explained that TAG is working with the math department to finalize specific criteria for both SSA and whole grade acceleration that will be posted on the TAG website. She also brought a New York Times article about a resurgence in ability grouping.  
**Action:** Mark will scan and distribute.<sup>2</sup>
  - ii. Roxanne was asked whether there was any policy prohibiting cluster grouping in elementary schools and she replied there was definitely no policy stopping a principal from doing it. She noted that PPS did a survey of principals 2 years ago to see what options for teaching TAG student were actually being used in schools, i.e. SSA, cluster grouping, ability grouping, etc. rather than just being “available” in the building TAG plan. Discussion suggested suspicion that some principals were less than straight forward and simply checked all boxes or made similar misrepresentations. Any future such survey would need to be structured to try to discourage this.
  - iii. Mark moved that we officially ask Kimberly when we can expect to get the revised criteria and process for SSA and Grade Advancement. It was seconded by Amy and approved. We would like Carla Randall copied on the request. (*The correct contact is Sue Ann Higgens.*) Motion was approved by vote.  
**Action:** Mark and Brenda will follow up on the request to Kimberly.

VII. Other

1. As meeting ended, Mark asked all present if anyone would object to sharing their email address with others for offline discussion. One guest said she would not like her last name put on the website. No other objections.

**Next Meeting:**

September 17, 2013 Mazama Room 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

BESC (District admin. building) at 501 N. Dixon St, 97227 Mazama Room (second floor)

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2644>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/10/education/grouping-students-by-ability-regains-favor-with-educators.html>