

Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted**Friday February 6, 2015**

Maggie L. Walker Governor's School in Richmond, VA

Minutes

Present: Patty Griffin, Jan Robertson, Cheryl McCullough, Kimberly Waite, Melanie Daniel, Melissa Powers, Catherine Ingrassia, Donna Poland, Elizabeth Schupp, Carol Horn, Lesley Hunley, Sarah Gross, Reginald Johns, Sandra Cole, Stephen Keith, Teresa Ellison, Kevin Kendall, Jennifer Sublette-Williamson, and Margee Greenfield

Absent: Beth Andersen, Robert Hundley

10:04—Call to Order: Motion to approve agenda: Moved Margee Greenfield; seconded Lesley Hunley.

A. Updates:

1. Donna Poland: There has been activity in legislature in relation to the funding model for Academic Year Governor's Schools. The report on the AYGS funding formula was presented to the Senate finance committee; incorrect information was provided regarding the hours student spent in class for 5/6 day programs (relative to half vs. whole day programs) so changes were made to the report; funding options were calculated presented to Secretary of Education; still under review; not public until reviewed by Secretary.
2. VAG update. Meeting next week to continue planning the conference in October; deadline will be March 15 for awards for this cycle. All information available on website.
3. Carol Horn—Asked whether adjudications for summer residential programs can be done electronically rather than purely via paper; subsequent discussion of advantages of moving to electronic notification.
4. Carol Horn—Asked whether a sortable school column be added to the VPA nomination sheet (typically due at end of November) so that it is possible to sort that sheet by school.
5. Carol Horn-Asked whether it is possible for those applications to be differentiated by program/ discipline to alleviate potential student confusion.
6. Donna—In the last budget round, GA awarded 100K for development of a model for governor's career and technical school that would be located in Hanover County. It wouldn't be a residential program, rather summer regional program. Still have to be funded by GA.

B. Changes to Middle School Document—divided into work groups at 10:30. The objective is to incorporate all the significant changes yesterday related to the MS document; need to be able to finalize document by the end of this meeting.

Individuals worked in groups on different sections of the document (not one on which they originally worked), marking the changes on the hard copy as well as electronically.

C. Reconvene to discuss document at 1:05. Donna will put together all the changes and send updated document to the group. If, in reading, you find changes, send them via email, replying to the entire group. After the document is completed, Donna will give to VDOE staff for review; they will review for about four weeks; submit a request to present to the Board of Education (BOE); and then Carol and or/Lesley will present the final version to the Board of Education at the selected BOE meeting.

D. Brainstorming for next project.

1. Carol's suggestion: a document that would look at assessing students for academic growth through performance assessments rather than working purely on multiple choice tests. Ensuing discussion explored the elements and objectives of this kind of assessment. Designed to give parents and gifted coordinators an idea of what they can do to assess academic growth of gifted learners. Might help to advance the need to continue to provide information about gifted. Might also provide an opportunity to assess growth of students who potentially aren't making gains because they're already above grade level. Patty provided information about Henrico's efforts to assess growth over the last year and its use of NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment administered three times a year. Measuring growth is challenging and multiple measures should be used. Sarah noted the state conversation about K-12 general population is a desire to measure student growth generally. Sarah wondered whether it's an opportunity to provide an add-on to what appears to be a state-wide initiative. Discussion ensued regarding the ways in which the SOLs (which are possibly available in December) are sometimes being misused as an instrument to measure growth; it is, rather, a benchmark measure of baseline knowledge. Discussion of MAP v. SOLs and the similarities and differences between the two might be included in the document. Need to remind parents that one can't use one single measure for growth.
2. Melanie suggested writing a handbook for elementary gifted (to parallel the middle school and high school documents previously prepared). The group suggested that an abundance of gifted information at elementary level already exists and that the need isn't as great at that level. However, Sandra noted that although there are a lot of resources for elementary, it is the largest population and the approach is often fragmented. She suggested a guidance document to help elementary gifted teachers understand what some possibilities are.
3. Lesley expressed interest in visiting sites where best practices are being implemented to provide models for other localities. Kevin suggested that we might want to visit sites regionally and then use meetings to report out on our experiences to the entire group. The outcome for that plan might be a

- report, especially if the committee wanted to do a more in-depth look at a specific theme or topic. Janice suggested underrepresentation as a possible topic. Scholars could present to the group and provide useful information to provide a basis for discussion. Jan and Patty mentioned work done by scholar Joy Lawson Davis at Virginia Union and how she might provide a resource. Could also have Carol Horn come and discuss the Young Scholars program. The committee held a discussion of the impact of under-representation in small, rural schools. Kevin suggested that, should we do the measurement of growth project, an important part of that would need to be measuring growth in underrepresented populations. Margee expressed the consistent challenges as well with identification in her locality (and others).
4. Possible to combine two suggestions? Maybe even with the elementary document. Donna noted that the issues of identification and assessment are particularly relevant to elementary.
 5. Margee also suggested that at some point the committee might look at career and college advising at the high school level, and the limitations of that advising for gifted children. She expressed concern about the sense that gifted students, because they are gifted, need less guidance. The better option for students, sometimes, is to guide gifted students to think about both undergraduate and graduate school simultaneously.

E. Updates from Localities

Kim Waite, Middlesex County. In the process of student selection for Chesapeake Bay Governor's School

Patty Griffin, Henrico County. Henrico is 1) working on reaching out to under-represented populations using classroom observations and targeted talent development 2) developing 'Good to Great', a program targeting under represented males—starts in third grade working in partnership with VA Union and will follow kids through high school. Start date this summer. 3) In response to data obtained through growth measures assessment, the division will be using new gifted instructional materials in math and language arts to advance instruction in fourth and fifth grade.

Lesley Hunley, Mathews County. The division will be naming new superintendent February 17. Region 3 gifted coordinators partnering with VAG to present gifted seminar on March 21st at Essex High School—also pulling in Region 1 and 2 as audience. The school division is looking for a replacement for Stanford 10 as a screener for achievement for the gifted program.

Sarah Gross. No updates

Janice Robertson, Amelia County. Assistant superintendent retiring; he also had responsibility for gifted education. New superintendent is supportive of gifted education.

Margee Greenfield, Summer Residential Governor's School Director, Harrisonburg. She is preparing to hire staff of three for summer program. Seeking exemplary teachers in school divisions who want to make connections with NASA and marine sciences.

Melissa Powers, Brunswick. Currently accepting apps for regional Governor's School. Holding gifted gallery days in April to share the work of elementary gifted students; hosting gifted night when parents come out, allowing parents to connect with each other. New superintendent is very supportive of gifted services.

Melanie Daniel, Stafford County. Stafford has five high schools, each school is offering distinct academic content. Outside consulting firm is currently doing an evaluation of programs. Stafford has over 2000 student gifted population staffed by Melanie and a ½ time staff person. In coming month, Melanie is providing info nights for all the high school options coming up. Stafford County is hosting Destination Imagination for Northern VA; Stafford has more than fifty schools participating. Stafford County is undergoing redistricting at elementary and middle school. Number one reason people say they don't want to redistrict is because they are concerned they will lose services they currently have. Also upcoming in March is the 'Agents of Change' Day. It's a day to celebrate the use of 21st Century Skills to give back and/or make a difference in the areas of academics, health/mental wellness, and/or our local and global communities. It brings together schools, community partners, and families for a free morning of fun and education.

Cheryl McCullough, Arlington. The school division is going through a program evaluation right now. Seeking suggestions for new measures; COS-R from William and Mary was used last time. CLASS is also used as a county, but looking for something different than either of those. This is the second year of using professional learning communities. Cheryl states she is trying to get community to understand how gifted fits into larger education. County has committee on twice exceptional.

Cheryl McCullough also provided updates on VAG. VAG is having a conference in October (Monday and Tuesday) Oct 26/27 in Richmond; dates changes to Monday/Tuesday with hope that it will be less expensive on those days of the week. Planning continues for that event with a meeting next week. VAG has consistently desired to do outreach to parents and increase their attendance/participation in the event. CFP and deadline for Awards March 15 (says March 2 on website but really will be 15th). Regional event in March attempts to do more outreach for smaller schools.

Sandy Cole, Buchanan County. Local advisory group hasn't met. Financial challenges within the locality.

Elizabeth Schupp, Amherst County. One of only two staff persons (herself and long-term sub) for all schools. Looking to hire another person for next year but a limited number of faculty with endorsements within in the county makes that challenging. In the process of redoing the whole grading policy for the county, attempting to make sure kids are challenged. Makes it more challenging to differentiate for higher ability students. (Cheryl noted that Fairfax County changed report card while she was there.)

Jennifer Sublette-Williamson, Albemarle. The division is still updating the local plan. They are trying to front-load K-2 supports as an attempt to identify underrepresented populations. Committee met for the review of Governor's School applications this year; noted how the essay prompt provided interesting insight into the psyche of current high school students and the academic pressures they feel.

Kevin Kendall, Lexington City Schools. New elementary principal from Loudoun County has a strong interest in gifted. Middle School principal will move into superintendent's role. Gifted Advisory committee has been stagnant; the division will put out last year's survey to parents and students; the division assumes there is no undue academic pressure in Lexington but will seek to measure that on the social-emotional front. The division plans to get the survey out before March 1.

Cheryl as an aside: VAG is thinking about asking members to pay more so that members would have access to webinars from NAGC and that would be a way to provide access to communities that would benefit from professional development opportunities. Kevin reminded us that if teachers were seeking small grants from VAG, to remember that they must be member of VAG to apply.

Donna. Tomorrow, she is speaking at Focusing on the Future at William & Mary. Put together a list of things that are going on in the state—competitions, university-run programs for gifted, other programs for advanced students but suitable for gifted. Some are scholarships, NAGC scholarships, and national talent search information, several pages of material—event: time frame; grade level; applicability; etc. Donna will give it to VAG so it can then be posted on their website. Then anyone can pull it down.

For those whose terms end at end of year, Donna will contact you. If you haven't reapplied or signed up for a second term, you are eligible to do so.

Usually application process for the committee comes out in late March.
Consider who would be a good contributor and encourage them to apply.

The meeting adjourned 2:45. The executive committee met briefly following the meeting.