

Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted (VACEG)
Maggie Walker Governor's School
April 22, 2016

Present: Donna Poland, Lesley Hunley, Patty Griffin, Sarah Haywood, Dornswalo Wilkins-McCorey, Valerie Tuck, Laura Kelly, Beth Andersen, George Fohl, Kevin Kendall, Melissa Powers, Melanie Daniel, Sandra Cole, Kimberly Waite, Janice Robertson, Kirsten Maloney, Teresa Ellison

Welcome and Introductions

- Lesley Hunley called to order at 10:09
- Guests: Ann Hayes (Maggie Walker parent), Ravi Myneni (parent from Fairfax County)
- Approving today's agenda – Sandy Cole made motion. Janice Robertson seconded. Motion to approve today's agenda passed.
- Nominating slate for next year: Patty Griffin as chair for next year, Cheryl McCullough for vice chair, George Fohl as secretary. Motion by Sandy Cole to accept the slate as presented. Seconded by Sarah Haywood. Motion to accept slate passed – will be voted on by online vote in fall.

Department of Education Report from Donna Poland

- Donna presented Lesley a certificate and thanks for serving as chair. Elizabeth Schupp will also be leaving committee. Robert Hundley and Jan Robertson have asked for a second appointment.
- Web Page Changes: On the VDOE gifted page, there has been a restructuring of the web page. Donna will be updating soon to highlight other things happening across the state; periodic updates will be on-going. Let Donna know if there are features you would like to see or what would be helpful.
- Data Availability: Donna met with gifted and governors school administrators to determine data that would be helpful for directors of Governor's Schools and gifted coordinators. Data will be in Excel format with templates that can be used to populate charts. This will be developed by EIM department of VDOE and probably won't be available until the Fall.
- Academic Year Governor's School: Funding changes came from the General Assembly, but it was not what the governor had recommended. The original funding formula was kept except an additional \$50 per student/per average credits taken was provided. Directors determined the average credits taken during academic year. Evening and on-line credit-bearing classes did count, but summer courses did not. New information will be used to adjust funding based on qualifying average course loads.
- Summer Residential Governor's Schools: Letters have gone out and over 400 of 710 replies have been received. Over \$100,000 funding increase was given by the General Assembly to fund the 7 summer programs. This is second increase in past several years that the General Assembly has

provided – the past increase was about 3%; this year’s increase was about 7%. However, average yearly increases for room and board costs have increased between 11% and 14% a year.

- Summer Regional Governor’s School for Career and Technical Advancement: An interdisciplinary program with a community-based problem will be operating this summer. It is a Regional Governor’s School with a residential component and will be housed at the University of Richmond. A \$100,000 planning grant is also available to the Roanoke area for a similar program.
- NAGC sent early registration for next year’s conference – November 3-6, 2016, in Orlando/Disney.
- Virginia Consortium of Gifted Education Administrators will be September 15, 2016 for new coordinators and September 16, 2016 will be the meeting date.
- VAG: This is seminar year and the dates have not yet been determined.

Charge from the Board of Education

- George Fohl compiled our notes from school division interviews. Our next task is to look at the notes and determine if any of the systems warrant a visit.
- One group met to review the data that was already entered; another group met to enter data still needed.

Subcommittee Reports and Develop Timeline for Follow-Up

- Lesley shared the discussion about school systems that would be good to note in the report or to visit – practices are highlighted on the spreadsheet. Special considerations made to include diversity of divisions in terms of size, geography, demographics. Site visits would allow teams to see activities in action, to speak with focus groups of staff, parents, and/or student, or to delve more in depth regarding paperwork or policies of the division. Visits seem appropriate for the following:
 - Rockbridge (Sandra, Teresa, Kevin)
 - Alexandria (Sarah, Valerie, Dorn)
 - Virginia Beach (Sandra, Laura, Kim, George, Beth)
 - Henrico (Melanie, Sarah, Dorn, Kim)
 - Fairfax (Dorn, Laura, Sarah, Patty)
 - Lee (Sandra, Teresa, Patty)
 - Isle of Wight (Jan, Melissa, Valerie)

Other divisions from the group listing but not mentioned above, should have a brief write-up about a particular well-done component of the identification process. The interviewer of the division is responsible for the write-up that highlights that particular component of the identification process.

- Timeline for follow up:

- Write ups can be done as homework assignments and a due to Donna by July 1 – All research should be done by end of May in case coordinators are not 12-month employees.
 - Visits in the fall with write-ups due to Donna by November 15.
 - Donna will compile to send out about one week before our December meeting.
 - February meeting will be an opportunity for the VACEG to approve the document and give time for Donna to submit to Board of Education for the review process.
 - Report may go to Board of Education in May-June, depending on the other items on the BOE’s agenda.
- Categories for Write Up/Highlights:

Referral Process and Talent Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Charlottesville – Talent Development (Valerie) ▪ Chesterfield – Inventive Thinking Lab and Project SOAR (Kim) ▪ Goochland – Monitor Status (Melissa)
New ID Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brunswick – Case Studies (Dorn) ▪ Martinsville – New Test (Sandra)
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chesapeake - Grab and Go (Kim) ▪ Newport News - Data Collection (Sarah) ▪ Montgomery – Professional Development (Laura) ▪ Stafford – Schoology (Patty)
Parent Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Norfolk – Parent Ed (Kirsten)

Public Comment

- Ravi Myneni (provided a copy of remarks)
 - The definition for appropriate differentiated curriculum in the Regulations. The line between gifted curriculum and general education curriculum is not as distinct as it once was in the past.
 - In one example, when there is in-class differentiation in the form of ability grouping, it is more of a natural working in the classroom. In the second example, when there is pull-out, it is more apparent as falling under the gifted regulations. Parents should be provided an opportunity to be aware of curriculum and advocate for their student. No matter the form of differentiation, the parent should be notified.
 - See Attachment A for Mr. Myneni’s handout

Meeting Dates for Next Year

- Meeting 1: Site visits (to be facilitated by Dr. Poland as per the teams schedule.
- December 9, 2016
- February 17, 2017
- April 28, 2017

Member Reports

- Kirsten Maloney – Fairfax: Planning for summer institute – 3 days of professional development on curriculum. Finished screening files for full-time program and moving into screening for school-based services. Saw a big increase in teacher referrals with work that was done with cultural proficiency and teacher advocacy. Gearing up for Young Scholars summer school program in 40 classes. Several teachers have won grants to do environmental projects or theatre experiences with students.
- Jan Robertson - Amelia: Local plan approved by board in December. Part-time coordinator being hired. Shared thank you letter from Dr. Jean Peterson regarding how helpful the middle school document was, especially the social emotional component – was very user friendly.
- Kim Waite -Middlesex: Board of Supervisors have concerns about upcoming budget. OM team made it to world competition – going to Iowa in a couple of weeks. Summer Regional Governor’s School is a project based Governor’s School for grades 3-7. School divisions are currently making student selections. The program will be held in West Point.
- Sandy Cole – Buchanan: Southwest Virginia Consortium – summer professional development – extended to Region 6. Division experiencing a budget crunch. Now they have a new grant writer.
- Melanie Daniel – Stafford: PSATs *administered to all 8-11th* graders. SAT school day next year – seniors will take a digital pilot in October. Nathan Levy will be doing a training in August for Stafford teachers and parents using his books to increase engagement and purpose in writing. C⁵W (community, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, citizenship, and wellness) is an emphasis of development for student and teacher growth in Stafford. Exploring Schoology online PD – differentiated instruction and characteristics and ID have been done so far. Academic Year Governor's School – over 150 applicants for 90 seats. More students accepted this year for SRGS than ever before. Six teams for DI Global Finals at Univ. of Tenn.
- Melissa Powers - Brunswick: hosted gifted elementary night featuring student created projects and a program recognizing students. Eligibility meetings coming up.
- Kevin Kendall – Destination Imagination team from Bath moving forward in competition.
- George Fohl – Chesterfield: K-1 identification – redesigned LA project for kindergarteners – includes oral and written component. Two schools were represented at Future Problem Solvers. Middle school eligible students experiencing taste of program to make a choice if it’s right for them or not. Four secondary sessions in August and four elementary sessions in August for professional development. Project SOAR in 3 title I schools – will wrap up at end of May. Cohort of teachers for endorsement – filled quickly – paid by school board.
- Beth Andersen –Prince George: Comprehensive plan for system – evaluating goals and seeking community input for the next five years – looking to strengthen continuum of services at middle school level. A proposed elective course at middle school would strengthen the curriculum to support independent study in high school as one of the students’ class options. Community event – Coffeehouse at the Courthouse. Looking to add elective course at 8th grade level to prepare students for the event. Looking into levels of services model. Celebration of Louise Thornton – teaching for 50 years at high school – and honored as county teacher of year. One

of her former students is a legislative aide who put forth to have her recognized by legislature. She is a government teacher and wants to teach at least one more year to be able to teach during this year's election.

- Laura Kelly – Roanoke City: Involved in identification process of 2nd graders. Getting ready for summer school enrichment experiences – 6 week program. Professional development for region 6 teachers. Switching from OLSAT/Stanford to CogAT/Iowa online.
- Teresa Ellison – Allegheny and Buena Vista: Getting ready for regional science fair at community college. Jackson River Governor's School has a banquet where students and parents are recognized.
- Valerie Tuck – Norfolk: Identification of first grade students – teachers are now gathering information and creating portfolios. Students are going to nationals for FPS in Michigan. Completed applications for Young Scholars middle school program. Gifted showcase was well-attended – In addition to highlighting gifted services in schools, they brought in vendors and community people to share enrichment opportunities.
- Dorn McCorey – Virginia Beach: Master teacher series planning for professional development – sharing sessions on 2e, mindset, and more. Creating a virtual library from this series to share with parents and teachers about best practices. Summer training for new cluster teachers was funded. Depression – Reframe the Shame – theatre vignettes on dealing with depression were presented by students. Three of staff will be presenting presentations at NAGC in Orlando.
- Sarah Haywood – York: Final testing sessions for identification and annual data collection that will be shared at last parent advisory committee meeting. Local plan approved by school board.
- Patty Griffin – Henrico: Part of CTE Governors School – all three applications were accepted. Local plan will go before board sometime this summer. Starting on Schoology. Advisory committee surveyed parents and 86% of parents are extremely satisfied. Recently adopted Mentoring Mathematical Minds and are seeing significant growth in students.
- Lesley Hunley - Mathews: Proposed budget includes additional academic year Governor's School slot and funds for summer residential Governor's School. Thanked everyone for allowing her to serve as their committee chair this year.
- Donna Poland – VDOE: Endorsement requirements are going through board review. There will be a timeframe of 1-2 years after the Governor's sign-off that universities will be given before they must be in compliance with the new Regulations. There will be time allowed for people who are in process of completing endorsement before they have to be compliant. The core courses (three courses) will be more targeted to the competencies and the fourth course option will align more with the job the endorsee has/will have (administrative, teacher, etc.).

Motion to adjourn – Kevin Kendall; seconded by Kim Waite. Meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM. The 2015-16 executive committee and the slated officers for 2016-17 met following the meeting.

Address to the Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted
Presented by Ravi Myneni
April 22, 2016

Dr. Poland and Members of the Advisory Committee,
Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

1. Appropriately Differentiated Curriculum

Virginia's gifted education regulations require that every student is screened starting from Kindergarten to determine if a student is eligible for "appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction." Once curriculum falls under the gifted category, any restrictions imposed by the school to access the curriculum must follow the gifted regulations.

Back many decades ago, when I was in grade school, there were only two sets of curriculum – one for the general education classroom and one for the gifted education classroom. There was a bright line between "appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction."

Today, the world is much more complex.

2. Two Examples

A Kindergarten classroom teacher divides her class into ability groups where students are grouped according to their mastery of the alphabet and words. One group of students work on the alphabet and simple words. Another group of students have mastered the alphabet, but are filling in their list of 100 words. Still another group of students have mastered over 100 words and are working to further increase their vocabulary.

Is this appropriately differentiated curriculum that is subject to the gifted education regulations?
Take another example.

A 2nd grade classroom teacher divides her class into ability groups where students are grouped according to their mastery of multi-digit addition and subtraction. One group of students are identified as having mastered multi-digit addition and subtraction and these students are pulled-out during a time normally devoted to remedial intervention to work with another 2nd grade teacher who provides enrichment in mathematical problem-solving using GroundWorks and Continental Math League worksheets.

Again, we ask the question – Is this appropriately differentiated curriculum that is subject to the gifted education regulations?

In the first example, all of us may be inclined to answer that such ability grouping in language arts is the natural workings of a classroom where there is a dynamic need to remediate or accelerate instruction and there is no need for the formalism of the gifted regulations. In the second case,

where a student is pulled out for enrichment, we could plausibly argue that the protections of the gifted education regulations should apply. That is to say, a case could be made for the formalism of screening, identification, notice, consent and right to appeal.

3. Parental notice and access

My 2nd grade daughter in Fairfax County is pulled out for math enrichment where she works on problem-solving using GroundWorks and Continental Math League worksheets. She is also in the second highest reading ability group. This is information I learned not from the school or from my classroom teacher, but from my 2nd grader and only in passing. I had no opportunity to learn about this curriculum differentiation early in the academic year and, hence, no avenue to argue for any changes in this assignment if I disagreed with the assignment.

In my case, I had no need for changes in the curriculum for my 2nd grader. But there are parents who are not only confused about the assignment of their child to a particular ability group, but also concerned that they are not provided an opportunity to advocate for enrichment provided to other students.

Clearly a balance is needed between imposing due process requirements on schools for every curriculum differentiation and a need for parents to be aware and be able to advocate for curriculum enrichment.

This committee should consider the merits of the protections of the gifted education regulations (in full or in part) for situations where curriculum differentiation is somewhere between the basic program of studies and the full set of gifted curriculum. However, there should be no question that schools ought to provide notice to students if their child is provided differentiated curriculum – be it ability groups, pull-out classes for enrichment or other forms of curriculum differentiation.

As this committee works on revisions to the gifted regulations, please consider that the world is no longer the simple two curriculum track model and that curriculum may be offered on a continuum of differentiation as it is advertised in Fairfax County. In this brave new model of curriculum delivery, we need our regulations to keep pace with basic parental safeguards of notice and ability to advocate for access to such differentiated curriculum.

Thank you for your time.