

Minutes

York County School Division

Gifted Education Advisory Committee

Tuesday, October 22, 2019 at YCSD School Board Office

I. Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting began with GEAC members, school administration staff and visitors introducing themselves and their current roles in the gifted and education communities. Ms. Sarah Haywood expressed her appreciation for the attendees' participation and advocacy.

Committee and Consulting Members in Attendance

Lindsey Cook – Coventry Elementary School
Meg Storey – Dare Elementary
Leanne Seguin – Grafton Bethel Elementary School
Miki Fett – Magruder Elementary School
Laura Stephens – Mt. Vernon Elementary
Lindsey Leach – Seaford Elementary School
Alison Phillips – Tabb Elementary School
Dr. Sayward Duggan – Yorktown Elementary School
Jessica Diebler – Grafton Middle School
Margaret Harned – Queens Lake Middle School
Beth Brauner – Yorktown Middle School
Stacie Lohr – Bruton High School
Danielle Way – Tabb High School
Michelle Haskiell – York High School
Sarah Haywood – Gifted Education Coordinator, EXTEND
Kristin Spires, EXTEND
Christina Head, Associate Director K-12 Academic Services, School Board Office
Angela Seiders, Director of Secondary Education, School Board Office
Candi Skinner, Director of Elementary Instruction, School Board Office

Visitors in Attendance:

Cecilia Herget
Jessica Lienard
Vanna Upchurch
Dave Forrest
Nate Brauner
Gina Frataiani
Laurel Arnett
Brooks Taylor
Monica Ott

II. Gifted Delivery Model Committee Overview

Ms. Christina Head presented some of the background leading up to the formation of the upcoming Gifted Delivery Model Committee (Committee). This Committee will examine the service delivery model for gifted education and is in response to Dr. Callahan's evaluation report on the YCSD gifted programs. The presentation included historical (2012-2017) feedback on how students and parents perceive PEP/EXTEND meets the needs of the gifted students at the home school and at the EXTEND center. She also highlighted some parent comments from surveys as well as instructional programs the school division has implemented in response to the comments. Example programs

include Jr. Great Books, Number Talks and Math Exemplars. The presentation can be found on the division website under gifted education at <https://yorkcountyschools.org/parents/specialtyPrograms/giftedEducation.aspx>.

Christina Head also discussed the makeup of this Committee. The Committee will include parents of elementary gifted students, educators, school and administrative staff, and the EXTEND Center Coordinator so that multiple stakeholders will be involved in the discussion and decision-making process.

III. Parent Concerns and Comments

Parents raised many questions in regard to the Gifted Delivery Model Committee being formed as a result of Dr. Callahan's evaluation and report of the YCSD gifted program.

School office administration stated that the process will be quick so that it can be completed prior to budget season so that budget placeholders may be set. However, if some items need more time, then the calendar and due dates for the committee will be adjusted accordingly.

Mr. Nate Brauner raised a question about transparency. Specifically, he asked if the committee meetings would be open to all persons interested in the process. Additionally, he asked if the names of the members would be posted. Christina Head stated that the committee would be roughly 20-25 members only to keep it at a reasonable working size, and Ms. Candi Skinner agreed that too large a group would not be effective in ensuring all members had all of the information to help make decisions. They also stated that typically names are not posted and member's permission would be needed to do so. The plan is to provide updates periodically online once the committee starts meeting.

Ms. Stacie Lohr raised a question about why GEAC was being excluded from the Committee. Christina Head stated that GEAC's only role was to provide an update for the 5-year Local Plan. Stacie Lohr disagreed and pointed out the GEAC is also supposed to collaborate with staff and school divisions. Christina Head also said many committees do not have an advisory representative on them. Lindsey Cook asked for an example. Ms. Margaret Harned stated that we would like to be able to give feedback and input during the process.

Nate Brauner asked why the committee is eliminating knowledgeable parents and showed concern for having only one parent's input from a school as well as no parents who have students past the 5th grade. The committee will not be looking at the middle school program. Margaret Harned stated that she had joined GEAC in part to have access and input during discussions such as the committee will have. In addition there was concern that GEAC was not informed of the Committee formation.

A parent asked if gifted cluster teachers would be on the Committee. Additionally, it was asked whether each grade level will be represented. Christina Head responded "yes"; however, she was not certain yet as to the representation from each grade on the Committee. She did state an administrator would be on the Committee. Ms. Beth Brauner asked if the meetings would be open to observation. Candi Skinner said there had not been enough interest in past committees but that they will take a look at this possibility citing the exam committee as an example. Beth Brauner also asked why changes were already made to the Waller Mill Elementary School (WMES) and Magruder Elementary School (MES) delivery of service. Candi Skinner stated that due to the travel time to the EXTEND Center that keeping the students local seemed best for more instructional time. A follow up question was asked regarding the equality of services and resources.

Nate Brauner asked how are we integrating the new schools. He asked also if there are any assessment criteria for the change. Candi Skinner said it is in the local plan that is evaluated at the end of the academic year. Christina Head stated the resources are the same although it was stated that the classroom space is not and first and second grades are combined. In addition, the teacher is alternating units. Also, if parents like the change then that is good, but, if not, it can be revisited. Mrs. Diebler asked if it was possible that EXTEND would be eliminated. Christina Head said "no", but she did not guarantee the EXTEND Center would be the same. Another question addressed why we are forming this Committee. Ms. Head stated that parents of gifted students indicated in the data, from 2012-2017, that respondents wanted to see more gifted education.

A parent asked about the capacity at other schools to move services in-house like WMES and MES. Specifically, he stated that nine out of 10 elementary schools are already above capacity. Candi Skinner acknowledged that the consideration for classroom space would need to be addressed. Lindsey Cook asked how the Committee could be effective without including personnel from groups such as transportation, finance, and other stakeholders. Periodically “consultants” attend the meetings to provide input and knowledge.

Ms. Lindsey Leach asked if GEAC members could get information from our school’s representative on the committee so we can share info with the parents. Christina Head said they will take into consideration the openness of contacts. Cecilia Herget asked how the representatives could effectively represent the parents and students from their schools if no one even knows who they are. Nate Brauner asked to clarify the Committee composition. Specifically, if there would only be one endorsed gifted educator on the Committee. At this time, the Committee will include one parent from each of the 10 elementary schools (selected by each school’s administration), one cluster teacher or administrator from each of the 10 elementary schools, Sarah Haywood, EXTEND teacher and coordinator, lead division gifted contact/counselor, Candi Skinner, and Christina Head.

The county has roughly 16 gifted endorsed teachers, including EXTEND center staff. Not all of these teachers teach cluster or gifted students at the elementary school level. In addition, not all of our cluster teachers are endorsed. However, we could provide more training. This is something that may be worked on and come out of these meetings.

A parent asked if there is a schedule of the upcoming meetings. Candi Skinner stated that they need to talk a little bit more and will get back with an answer. A follow-up question was asked about the timing of the Committee meetings which are scheduled for mid-afternoon and overlapping with the end of school day for elementary students. Candi Skinner said that they used the same times as the Committee for the 5-year plan; tried to minimize lost instructional time by the teachers; and tried to alleviate child care concerns with schools stating they can help with childcare.

Jessica Diebler asked what the Committee will be deciding. Christina Head said that they will be looking at the delivery model for Gifted Education to maximize instructional time.

Laura Stephens asked if there was a final copy of the Dr. Callahan’s report. She had trouble finding it prior to the meeting. The report is located in Board Docs. Lindsey Cook followed up and asked which report is the final one, and Laura Stephens asked if they can make both versions available. It was stated that the 28-page report and not the 34-page report is the final one. Both reports will be posted to Board Docs.

Another parent stated the short time for the Committee to do its work. Candi Skinner agreed the timeline was ambitious.

A parent commented they would love to have EXTEND teachers on the Committee, since they have the experience and knowledge.

Lindsey Cook also asked if we ever got any feedback from Dr. Callahan regarding factual inaccuracies in her report or if we had obtained clarification from Dr. Callahan regarding some areas of her report. Sarah Haywood had not and Christina Head said they had not had those items changed in the document. She also indicated that she would be meeting with Sarah Haywood soon to discuss the EXTEND teachers’ response to Dr. Callahan’s report and the factual inaccuracies cited in their response. But it was indicated that the EXTEND teachers’ response had not been sent to Dr. Callahan in order to enable her to make any necessary corrections to her report. However, it was indicated that Dr. Callahan’s report will not be the guiding document for the Committee to move forward with recommendations for the gifted program.

A parent pointed out that most of the people on the delivery model Committee are from the home schools where the surveys indicated students were not being sufficiently challenged, while the gifted resource teachers who are providing a rigorous curriculum for our gifted students are all being represented by one person (Sarah Haywood). He asked why the people who are “getting it right” are not part of the Committee? Those successfully meeting the

needs at the EXTEND Center should be part of the discussion. It was added that we should be fully leveraging their experience.

A parent brought up the percentage numbers from the survey results on the slide show. Home schools 33-38%, EXTEND 84-89% indicating that the area that needs to be improved for gifted students is the regular classroom and the EXTEND teachers have the experience that should be fully leveraged. Candi Skinner says that Sarah Haywood has lots of experience and could provide this (w/o the other gifted education teachers.)

Then we viewed the student results slide again and Stacie Lohr pointed out the dates of the survey results and Margaret Harned and Stacie Lohr reiterated that those students are now in middle school and high school. Stacie Lohr suggested that the new committee have a focus group with those students. Either Candi Skinner, or Christina Head indicated that a focus group with the aforementioned students was a good idea, and those are the kind of ideas that they hope the new Committee would generate. It was pointed out that it will be difficult for the members of the Committee to recommend these types of ideas, because the parents chosen to serve on the Committee have elementary age students and parents of gifted middle and high school students were not asked to participate.

Margaret Harned asked for us to move on respecting the time & remainder of the agenda. Stacie Lohr brought up the booster club guidelines again and explained the background in response to a question from Ms. Angie Seiders. Christina Head said she would call Stacie Lohr the next day.

Meeting dates on the agenda were reviewed and the group was in agreement with the dates and that we should conduct one meeting at an alternate location. Sarah Haywood also stated that the GEAC representatives need to email out the meeting dates with the approved minutes and future agendas.

IV. Secretary's Report – Stacie Lohr for Danielle Way

The committee electronically approved the minutes from the June 6, 2019 meeting on June 26, 2019.

V. Gifted Education Update – Sarah Haywood

During the summer, one of our gifted resource teachers, Ms. Kala Cespedes, attended a workshop presented by the Virginia Department of Education related to serving “2E” students. This term refers to students who are either “twice exceptional”, or have a gifted identification and also another label (e.g. a specific learning disability or an autism diagnosis). This workshop helped provide information and ideas to incorporate when working with these students.

In August, three gifted resource teachers participated in a math conference in Williamsburg. This provided them with ideas and resources to use with high ability and gifted students and for sharing with cluster teachers.

At the start of the school year, our gifted education staff processed nearly 50 referrals and tested those students before the start of school. Another cycle for placement is currently in progress with approximately 120 students referred, which is in-line with last year's numbers. Gifted education staff will meet for eligibility in the next few weeks to determine student placement for the 2nd unit of study.

There was a parent orientation meeting held at the beginning of September, and approximately 150 parents/family members attended.

Three gifted resource teachers and the program coordinator, Sarah Haywood, attended the Virginia Association for the Gifted's conference in Richmond last week. This was a great opportunity to learn more about Virginia gifted “happenings” and network with peers.

A whole-grade screening for ability is taking place during the beginning of November. We are very excited to continue with our second year of screening all first graders. Students who do well on this first assessment will then be referred for full gifted evaluation during the next testing cycle.

Sarah continues working in several state groups related to gifted education. One is the Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted, and this group's focus is on a "charge" from the Virginia Board of Education. It is to develop updates to current state regulations and policies related to gifted education. The regulations will soon be open for public comment, so parents will be notified about this opportunity.

Other upcoming events:

The gifted resource staff is working to create and will present two professional development sessions on November 5, 2019. One is at Bethel Manor Elementary School and related to both math and reading strategies, and one will be held at Seaford Elementary School to be focused on math strategies for high ability and gifted learners.

The gifted resource teachers are participating in a workshop on November 11, 2019 with Ms. Barbara Kennedy, who is a retired gifted coordinator from Virginia Beach. This is a continuation of the gifted research teachers' work to use Kaplan's Depth and Complexity thinking prompts in the EXTEND units of instruction.

Sarah Haywood has been invited to join colleagues in Virginia Beach on an upcoming Saturday for a "mini SENG conference." This is a group that specifically addresses emotional needs of the gifted (e.g. perfectionism, anxiety, underachievement, etc.).

Be aware that there will be an informational presentation about the New Horizons Governor's School by its director at Tabb High School, on December 2, 2019 from 6:30-7:30pm. This is geared for 8-10th grade students and their parents. New Horizons will mail invitations to eligible students based on their math and science coursework, although it is open to all interested parents and students. Counselors/math teachers of potentially eligible students will be notified. More information about that program can be found at <https://nhrec.org/gsst/>.

This is also the time of year when 10th and 11th grade students should consider applying for Summer Residential Governor's School or a summer Governor's Foreign Language Academy. Information about these opportunities is now available from the school counselors and it is posted on the VDOE website, and one of the programs has created a new marketing video designed for interested students at <https://www.radford.edu/content/gov-school/home.html>. Our secondary gifted resource teacher, Ms. Kristin Spires, is going to each high school next month to meet with interested students to assist with their planning and application process. Applications and information about each program can be found at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/governors_school_programs/summer_residential/ and at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/foreign_language/language_academies/. One change for this year is that one of the selective mentorship programs has typically been held at NASA and this coming summer it will take place at Jefferson Lab in Newport News.

Odyssey of the Mind (OM): The regional tournament will be held on March 21, 2020 at Churchland High School in Portsmouth. There is always a need for volunteers for both judging and general assistance during the tournament. The state final event will be held in Newport News on April 18, 2020. If you want more information about these events, please let us know and Sarah Haywood will put you in touch with Ms. Leeza Beazlie, our OM coordinator.

The Focusing on the Future annual event for secondary students and their families will be held on Saturday, February 1, 2020 at William and Mary, for students in grades 6-12 and their parents. If you are interested, here's more information: <http://education.wm.edu/centers/cfge/precollegiate/future/index.php>.

William and Mary's Center for Gifted Education is also sponsoring a "2E-Twice Exceptional Conference" on February 28-29, 2020 on its campus. This is designed for both parents and educators. More information can be found at <https://education.wm.edu/centers/cfge/profdev/conferences/2e/index.php>.

Virginia Beach will be hosting its annual regional parent advisory meeting in February, 2020, and the specific date will be forthcoming and shared by Sarah Haywood.

VI. Old Business

We conducted elections for GEAC officer positions for the 2019-2020 school year. The following were elected: Lindsey Cook - Chair, Andrew Duggan - Vice Chair, and Danielle Way – Secretary.

Annual Review Letter – Thank you to the GEAC members who volunteered to write this year’s annual letter. Ms. Haywood stated that it was later than we would like getting it out and hopes for a quicker turn around this year. Beth Brauner brought up the fact that the committee sends the annual letter to individuals at the school division as a courtesy and that this year the letter was sent back to the committee with requested changes and omissions. Beth pointed out that this was not only awkward, but was also inappropriate since the letter is for the school board members and the division superintendent and is representative of the viewpoint of the parents appointed to serve on GEAC.

VI. New Business

Sarah Haywood explained the Annual Welcome Letter and asked for volunteers. At this time, Andrew Duggan will work on drafting the letter.

Sarah Haywood talked about getting a speaker for the spring and recommended Ms. Ashley Carpenter from William & Mary--an expert on twice exceptional students. It was discussed that she could also talk about what it is like to have a twice exceptional student as a classmate. Sarah Haywood asked for the parents to get back to her individually as to their opinion regarding this speaker. She also brought up the issue of providing an honorarium without money, and Christina Head said there is money in the regular gifted budget for that purpose.

A parent requested that the budget be increased for other/more parent education. Sarah Haywood asked for the parents and representatives to send her their ideas for topics regarding parent education.

Future meeting dates for the 2019-2020 school year are 6:30 pm and are typically held at the YCSD school board office. One meeting will be held at an alternate location and that information will be shared prior to the meeting. The dates are as follows:

January 28, 2020

March 24, 2020

May 26, 2020

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Submitted by Danielle Way/Stacie Lohr