

Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted
Minutes for December 6, 2013

The Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted met on December 6, 2013 at Maggie L. Walker Governor's School in Richmond, VA.

Members present: Margee Greenfield, Sandra Cole, Janice Robertson, Sarah Gross, Rebecca Akers, Lesley Hunley, Chiraag Khemlani, Patty Griffin, Carol Kennedy-Dickens, Elizabeth Schupp, Reginald Johns, Catherine Ingrassia, Joanne Funk, Beth Anderson, Carol Horn, Dr. Donna Poland.

Members absent: Stephen Keith, Gena Keller, Hunter Routt, Robert Hundley

Rebecca Akers opened the meeting at 10:05 AM.

Approval of the Agenda: Catherine Ingrassia moved approval of the agenda, Margee Greenfield seconded. All were in favor.

Approval of the September minutes: Joanne Funk moved to approve minutes with revisions (spelling of names), Patty Griffin seconded.

Statement from Executive Director of Virginia Association for Gifted: Introduction by Lori Lenz, Executive Director. VAG is one of four entities serving gifted students including Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Consortium of Gifted Education Administrators and Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted. VAG is happy to assist in research and collaboration. VAG is still committed to advocacy efforts for gifted education. VAG has published 5-year strategic plan which can be found on its website: www.vagifted.org.

Academic Year Governor's School Board of Directors: Introductions by the Chairman Brian Pace and thank you for the support of the VACEG. Donna Poland distributed new brochure for Academic Year Governor's Schools which highlights what AYGS schools are doing above and beyond regular classrooms.

Department of Education Report - Dr. Donna Poland

- Update on AYGS Expansion Grant: Grant for current AYGS to expand to a full-day program. Rebecca Phillips, AYGS Director, applied and received this grant for Southwest GS. The planning team has outlined fantastic opportunities for students in their school and collaborated with Radford and Northwestern Universities to craft college level courses for high school students. The school is planning to go from part-time to full-day program for 11th and 12th graders, with the intent to accept 10th graders the following year. The planning team is still in planning stages of grant--need to work out details with participating school divisions. As part of the team, two consultants were hired to look at social and emotional aspects as well as academics. This planning grant should be final in the May/June timeframe, with information presented to the BOE sometime after that date but before the end of September.

- Update on STEM grant in Hampton Roads: Original grant between Norfolk and Portsmouth. Virginia Beach has signed on to be part of the participating school divisions.
- Shared Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning (4 year olds) document. Donna was asked to review and add components for gifted students. Available on DOE website through the early childhood webpage.
- Governor's Schools for summer: First summer residential governor's school directors meeting was held October 1, 2013. The meeting was very collaborative and directors had a lot of information to share. The Life Science/Medicine program changed oversight and therefore the name was changed to Medicine and Health Science GS. Oversight moved from VCU to MCV. This program has the most applicants for a small number of available slots – it is the most sought after program. It is hard to increase the numbers in the program due to the limited number of summer placements available at MCV.
- Agriculture Summer Residential GS program (at VA Tech): Donna attended a governing Board meeting for the summer Agriculture GS. The governing Board talked about how to restructure program – to gear the program towards a problem--based learning environment with student teams. Students would learn about agriculture and supporting components so that they would be able to offer possible solutions to the presented problems. Donna will work with the Director on problem scenarios. Students will come up with solutions and present those solutions at the conclusion of the program. The intent is to start the problem-based learning next summer - 2014. The Board also discussed ways to market the program to more schools in Southwest VA and ways to assist school divisions with funding a student to attend.
- Regulations for professional development: the Regulations that govern gifted education endorsement and competencies were presented to the BOE and are in the legislative process. The community is waiting for government sign offs so that public comment period may begin.
- Funding for Fort Monroe STEAM Academy: The funding not specifically listed in the recent release by the Governor on funding for Fort Monroe (12-6-13). Most of funding listed was to maintain roads, buildings and infrastructure on the fort. Patty Griffin indicated that she will forward the STEAM newsletter to the committee (see link below) – the newsletter indicates they are moving forward with the school but does not offer specific details about funding. Donna indicated that it was also unclear at Senate Finance committee meeting exactly where the money will come from (\$19 million operating budget). The founders have been saying that the money will be raised privately and some funding will come from state basic aid that follows the student. There is some indication that the program may operate like School for the Blind in terms of governance – a separate line item on the General Assembly budget and governed by their own statewide board. The point has been noted that STEAM would graduate 250 students for \$19 million vs. over 2,000 students graduated each year from Governor's Schools for approximately 12 million.
- www.vasteam.org and click link to fall newsletter.

Work on BOE Charge - Middle School document:

Intent was to identify and work on program models (Academics, Guidance Counseling, Enrichment). Group asked to discuss whether Guidance Counseling fits into the realm of program models. We may not be qualified to work on counseling issues although it is important component for middle school students. The committee agreed not to address guidance counseling as a separate subject and to address/mention counseling as a support mechanism for the applicable program models.

Janice Robertson stated that several national counseling/guidance programs are offered in Virginia but the social-emotional component is intertwined with the enrichment activity (MENSA, for example). Perhaps we can reference programs within text of document.

Margee Greenfield mentioned state mandate for career counseling at the middle school level.

Donna organized past meeting discussions into Table of Contents - aligned with high school document. The index incorporated career and academic advising into introduction since students must be aware of opportunities. The recommendation was made to include a general discussion of social and emotional issues, as supported in literature, for gifted middle school students.

Counselors overwhelmed and resources are scarce so perhaps this is an advocacy issue that might be presented to VAG – as a request for appropriate funding for training of counselors in social/emotional issues of gifted students. In addition, many parent groups with gifted students are looking for ways to get their kids started on prep classes or involvement in a particular discipline/activity as a lead-in for college interests.

Suggestion was made to include a section on specific needs of middle school students -- unique to gifted and to include additional resources into end of document. Perhaps the document could incorporate a quote and then reference the source. The learner outcomes question could also incorporate the counseling piece.

Clarification of Virginia View - interactive program for career counseling with middle and high school component. Not as expansive as Naviance. Many schools use Virginia Wizard. Remove VA View, VA Wizard and Focus on the Future from the index list.

Remove the “Educational Career Options” section in the index and move only Mentorship Programs, Summer Regional Governor’s Schools, Magnet Schools and Specialty Centers, Career Readiness Preparation to the “Enrichment/Beyond the Classroom” section. Include “differentiated opportunities” in the list.

Move CTY/Johns Hopkins from “Accelerated Content” to “Distance Learning” and add others to the list.

Groups split up for committee work.

Differentiated Opportunities members:

Sandy Cole, Joanne Funk, Carol Horn, Elizabeth Schupp

Accelerated Content members:

Beth Anderson, Catherine Ingrassia, Reginald Johns, Carol Kennedy-Dickens, Chiraag Khemlani

Enrichment Beyond the Classroom members:

Rebecca Akers, Margee Greenfield, Patty Griffin, Sarah Gross, Lesley Hunley, Janice Robertson

Member Reports:

Patty Griffin, Henrico County – The division made major changes to the gifted plan and will continue to evaluate and make any necessary adjustments. Paying close attention to diversity and underrepresented groups as changes are made. The school division is continuing to send people through gifted certification.

Chiraag Khemlani, Business Representative - pass

Joanne Funk - pass

Lesley Hunley, Mathews County – Currently working on recruitment and selection for Chesapeake Bay GS. Curious about whether others are administering the PSAT before 10th grade for dual enrollment with community college. Students can opt out of community college test if passing scores are achieved on the SAT or PSAT. Several schools said they give PSAT to gifted students in middle school.

Rebecca Akers, Brunswick County – Participated in technical review of regional plans and recommends getting involved if possible. Donna mentioned that she got feedback from other coordinators that it was a beneficial learning experience to be able to view other gifted plans.

Sarah Gross, VAPTA – Indicated that PTA is willing to assist programs and schools in communicating programs, deadlines, etc. to PTA members and units. Mentioned National PTA work in engaging rural families, schools and students.

Jan Robertson, Amelia County - Working diligently to improve gifted program in Amelia.

Margee Greenfield, NASA/VIMS Summer Governor's School - Frequently contacted by parents and some students about how to apply for her program. Concerned about how to get information out to parents and whether students are getting it at all. A comment was made that if the program was not in the division budget, counselors are not able to publicize the program to students.

Sandra Cole, Buchanan County - Region 7 (Galax group) found company to publish children's work in magazine which is free if you sell ads. Children did artwork, poems, and tributes.

Sandra was invited to speak to Tazewell County Parent Advisory Group about various activities for gifted students. She talked about school board support to identify musically gifted students to participate in community college children's choir.

Beth Anderson, Prince George County -- Gifted coordinator has set long term goal of having all gifted students participate in independent study program before they graduate.

Catherine Ingrassia, VCU and Hanover County Advisory Committee - Hanover following surrounding counties to begin implementation of Advanced College Academy starting 2016.

Reginald Johns, Hampton City - pass

Carol Kennedy-Dickens - pass

Elizabeth Schupp – Amherst County has students doing independent study in science and may be able to get it written into curriculum. Gifted Advisory Committee just finished rewriting local plan. Parents are doing a survey -- all feedback/input welcome.

There was no public comment.

Next Steps:

Small groups asked to research area of discussion as it relates to questions.

Next meeting:

February 21, 2014 at 10:00 AM at Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

On a motion by Sandra Cole, seconded Catherine Ingrassia; the meeting adjourned at 2:25 PM.