**Gifted Education Advisory Council January 7, 2020**

**Meeting Minutes**

**In attendance:**

*Members:*

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| --- | --- |
| Jessica Huntoon | Chair |
| Baseemah Cumberbatch-Smith | Vice Chair |
| Dr. Patricia Costis | Gifted Resource Teacher, Parent, Recording Secretary |
| Karla Stead | Sr. Coordinator, Office of Academic Rigor |
| Vicky Greco | Parent, Nominating Chair |
| Diane Wishart | Parent |
| Christina Ohlrogge | Parent |
| Lewis Jordan | Parent |
| Tom Ambler | Parent |
| Katie Humphrey-Morgan | Gifted Resource Teacher |

*Guests:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dr. Karen Nelson | Gifted Resource Teacher |
| Tanya Bhasin | School Board |
| Bruce Brady | Acting Executive Director, Curriculum and Instruction |

Mrs. Huntoon called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm

**Review of Meeting Norms:** focus on beginning and ending on time, and staying on topic. Mrs. Huntoon introduced the agenda for the evening

**Review November meeting minutes:** At the November 12, 2019 meeting, Mr. Kinnison moved to declarethe meeting a work session, due to the work being undertaken at the time. Motion passed. GEAC members worked in small groups to discuss the five recommendations made to the School Board in June, 2019. Groups reconvened to discuss next steps: GEAC voted to address Recommendation #2 first, with the intention of expanding this recommendation and including it in the NPS Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted, due for renewal in 2021. Recommendations 3 and 5 are reliant upon decisions made regarding Recommendation 2.

Further discussion determined: Recommendations 1, 3, and 4 fall outside the purview of the School Board, and can be addressed by GEARS. (Please see the Norfolk Public Schools Gifted Education Advisory Committee 2018-2019 Annual Report for details). Mr. Ambler moved to add a January meeting to the GEAC calendar, due to the amount of work currently undertaken. Motion passed.

Mr. Ambler also moved that a short summary of the November 12, 2019 work session be accepted in place of formal minutes, and be included in the January 7, 2020 meeting minutes. Motion passed.

**Public Comment:** Mrs. Huntoon reminded everyone present of the procedure for the Public Comment portion of the GEAC meeting. She further noted that the norms were printed on the meeting’s agenda. Norms for the Public Comment portion:

1. speakers, please limit comments to 3 minutes
2. responses from GEAC members are expected at a later time
3. Personal business should be addressed directly to the appropriate party, rather than during the Public Comment forum.

Stakeholders may also choose to complete a form to submit questions, concerns, and comments in writing.

**Old Business**

**Senior Coordinator’s Report**

Mrs. Stead summarized GEAC’s work on Recommendation #2 thus far:

* GEAC’s focus is on updating NPS’s definition of *gifted*, the identification process, and services offered to gifted students in NPS. These are the foci, in anticipation of updating the NPS Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted (“local plan”).
  + Discussion is currently: Should NPS continue to use the term *gifted*? What does the term and definition encompass for stakeholders?
  + GEARS is struggling to provide all of the services specified in the current local plan. Currently, we identify students as gifted, but we do not necessarily serve them once they are identified.
    - GEAC may consider offering enrichment only. GEAC may also choose to examine Fairfax’s County’s *Young Scholars* program.

Discussion on the points summarized:

* The current CogAT benchmark score of the 70th percentile does not improve equity for gifted students. However, working with students does improve equity. Teaching critical thinking/problem solving in PK-2 will help to improve overall performance on the CogAT.
  + Cost considerations for additional staff may be an obstacle. Mrs. Bhasin advised working from a programming standpoint rather than a fiscal one.
  + Mrs. Wishart asked whether principals have too much discretionary spending and distribution of human resources. Perhaps these liberties should be more restricted than they are currently.
* Mr. Jordan asked for a report on all five Recommendations made at the conclusion of last school year. Mrs. Stead reported:
  + Recommendation #1: GRTs send a monthly report to parents and other stakeholders in their buildings. The GEARS website is updated regularly by one of the GRTs.
  + Recommendation #4: GEARS is currently working with the Counseling department, addressing areas of need stated in a counselor survey disseminated at the beginning of the school year.
  + The remaining Recommendations were being addressed in an order conducive to updating our local plan, as decided at the November meeting.

**New Business**

* GEAC members examined, analyzed, and compared multiple Gifted Local Plans’ definition of gifted, including Norfolk, Newport News, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, and Williamsburg-James City County. General discussion ensued. GEAC revised the NPS definition of gifted.
* Next steps: GEAC will review the current local plan Part II: Program Goals and Objectives. Mrs. Huntoon will upload the document to Google Drive so GEAC members can access, and add comments and suggestions.

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.

**Formal Recommendations to the School Board (2018-2019)**

**Recommendation #1: Communication -** GEAC recommends NPS allocates additional resources to Gifted Education Academic and Rigor Services (GEARS) focused on improving communication/education efforts.

**Recommendation #2: Gifted Referral Benchmark-** GEAC recommends the current NPS gifted referral benchmark be increased from 70% to 90% incrementally over a three-year period.

**Recommendation #3: Centralized Management of Gifted Services-** GEAC recommends centralized oversight of the Gifted Local Plan to insure fidelity of services, versus the current site (school)-based management system.

**Recommendation # 4: Guidance Counselor Training / School Counselor Collaboration with Gifted Resource Teachers-** GEAC recommends guidance counselors be mandated to complete gifted education training.

**Recommendation # 5: Increased course options-**GEAC recommends NPS increase opportunities for appropriate electives available to targeted students, students, especially within specialty programs geared for gifted/high ability students.