

Citizens Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education  
Meeting Minutes  
January 6, 2013

Members in attendance: K.Guilbault, David Bongiovanni, Pam Deem-Hergan, Yvonne Golczewski, Pamelyn Lindsey, Kit Watson, Cheri Wilson, Flossie Rosser, and Jeffrey Beck.

Guests: Beth Pelletier, Alysson Krchnavy, Panache Mutombo, and Hillary Doherty.

The meeting was called to order at 6:06PM. We began with introductions and an update on report to school board and charge for 2013 by the Coordinator of Accelerated Learning Programs. Clarification on the process for decisions on CAC charges was shared. In October, all CACs report to the school board. In November, the board meets to review and discuss reports. In December, charges/requests are submitted by the board and CACs to Bill Lawrence, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for review. In December, Mr. Lawrence shares these with superintendent, Dr. Tomback. In late January, the school board issues charges to CACs. CACs may suggest 1-3 charges they are interested in pursuing but it is the decision of the school board and superintendent. Charges suggested by CAC may or may not be approved based on needs of the district and other pertinent issues.

Ms. Alysson Krchnavy, school board member, offered the suggestion that CACs include the charge (or several ideas) during their October presentations. Our committee did include three recommendations from which our suggested charge was offered to Mr. Lawrence and the board in December. We are interested in creating a parent handbook.

Discussion followed about the state GT awards celebration in February. The governor proclaims February Gifted and Talented Education month. The state Gifted and Talented Advisory Council holds a celebration on the last day in February where districts are recognized for accomplishments and support of gifted students. This year, Jessica Hoover, former GT teacher at Meadowvale and Hickory Elementary, will be honored with the Outstanding Educator Award- GT Teacher as Leader. Ms. Hoover was very recently promoted to Assistant Principal at Fountain Green Elementary. We are awaiting news of the EGATE school award as well for Hickory Elementary. EGATE stands for Excellence in Gifted and Talented Education and is a rigorous yearlong process that schools go through to apply for this prestigious status as a school of excellence in GT education. Currently, HCPS has two schools that have received EGATE status- Halls Cross Road in 2011 and Prospect Mill in 2012. Invitations and directions to the Feb. 28 reception were distributed and all were invited to attend.

In conjunction with the February GT month, it was suggested that our committee submit a resolution to the school board to recognize Feb. as GT month as it does for other groups. Ms. Krchnavy provided input on the process. Committee chair Yvonne Golczewski and Co-Chair Pam Deem-Hergan will draft a resolution and submit to Terri Schmid. If this is submitted in the next week, it may be possible to have this approved by this February. It will also be an opportunity for the board to recognize Jessica Hoover for her award as well and if Hickory receives the EGATE award. Ms. Krchnavy also suggested that we contact the county council chair and executive board with the resolution. Once approved, our CAC will send a copy of the Governor's proclamation and a flyer about the Top 10 Myths in Gifted Ed to all PTAs and school principals in February to increase awareness of the needs of gifted learners. Yvonne Golczewski provided an update on work that the state GT advisory council is conducting. Ms. Golczewski has taken over the office of President of Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education and serves on the state GT advisory council. CAC members and parents of GT students are

encouraged to join the state NAGC affiliate group MCGATE and also MCGATE is seeking volunteers for several appointed positions. If interested, contact Yvonne. At the state level, the GT advisory council has two main goals for the year: 1) to encourage all local school districts to implement COMAR with fidelity and 2) that parent representatives speak at each local school board about COMAR to increase awareness. Draft speeches have been prepared by the council and are available to any parent who is interested in assisting this effort.

Finally, the meeting ended with an overview of the work that has been accomplished this school year and the upcoming plans that are being updated for HCPS master plan in GT. Dr. Guilbault shared information about professional development, identification and programs and services- three main goals that are aligned with the COMAR. There has been a significant increase in the available professional development for all teachers this year. GT Teachers meet once a month to collaborate and receive training aligned with the GT certificate, and there has been additional training for cluster teachers at various elementary schools, for middle school teachers (1 from each middle school attended the MEGS-Maryland Educators of Gifted Students conference in October) and 15 teachers in grades K-12 have joined the HCPS cohort with Notre Dame of MD Univ seeking their Masters, masters + 30 or certificate in Gifted and Talented Education. Plans are in place to provide additional training to middle school content area teachers and department chairs in the spring of 2013 as well as school counselors in the fall of 2013.

A sample parent notification letter of Level 4 services was shared with the group. These were distributed to all GT teachers in August and they were required to send some form of parent notification to all students identified for Level 4 services this school year. Schools were able to modify the template or use their own form. Discussion followed by CAC members stating none of them had received notification letters this year and therefore were not sure if their children were receiving level 3 or Level 4 services. Parents were advised to contact their school GT teacher to find out which services their children qualified for this year. Additional discussion followed about the current practice of students being re-evaluated on a yearly basis for services and how sometimes a child receives GT services one year and not the next year. This is confusing for students and their parents. Students who are identified for Level 4 services should be working several years above grade level and therefore that small percentage of GT students should remain identified for services for their elementary years, it is very unlikely that children working that far above grade level would not qualify from one year to the next, however, students receiving level 3 services (who may be working one year or more above grade level), may fluctuate on MSA and other school assessments and for this reason, may or may not meet criteria from year to year. District-wide identification guidelines will be developed for consistency with some flexibility for local norms for schools that vary significantly from the district norms. Committee members emphasized the need to provide clear definitions for schools on what Level 3 and Level 4 services are and what identification criteria to use. It was also recommended that parent meetings and report cards or progress reports be used to communicate student progress in gifted education programs.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM and followed by question and answer session for guests on individual or specific school issues.

The next meeting will be held on Feb. 7th from 6-7:30 PM at the Bel Air Pubic Library.