

Meeting Minutes

In attendance:

Members:

Jessica Huntoon	Chair, Parent
Dr. Patricia Costis	Gifted Resource Teacher
Karla Stead	Sr. Coordinator, Office of Academic Rigor
Vicky Greco	Parent, Nominating Chair
Christina Ohlrogge	Parent
Tom Ambler	Community
Katie Humphrey-Morgan	Gifted Resource Teacher
Maury Howard	Parent
Hollis Simodynes	Parent
Abbie Watson	Principal, Academy for Discovery at Lakewood
Dr. Jennifer Martin	Parent

Guests:

Emily Bebbler	Parent
Sierra Johnson	Parent
Karen Nelson	Gifted Resource Teacher
Spencer Jamison	Gifted Resource Teacher

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

Roberts Rules: Mrs. Huntoon reviewed the GEAC bylaws and Robert’s Rules of Order very briefly from 6:09 to 6:11.

Review of minutes: Ms. Simodynes made a motion to change the minutes due to a misspelling of someone’s name. Abbie Watson made a motion to approve the minutes. All were in favor.

Public comment: Mrs. Huntoon noted the public comment portion of the meeting at 6:12 wherein stakeholders may speak to the GEAC on the topic of their choice. Stakeholders may also choose to complete a form to submit questions, concerns, and comments in writing. Mrs. Huntoon noted that public comments would be offered again at the end of the meeting to accommodate new members who might be hesitant to speak up. No open comments at this time.

New applicants: At 6:12 Ms. Huntoon welcomed new applicants and noted how great it was to have so many new faces.

Focus group follow-up: At 6:13 Mrs. Stead noted that the five-year gifted local plan was due to be revised this year. She was tasked to gather feedback on the current perceptions of the services offered. The last meeting afforded the opportunity to gather input through surveys and focus groups and she thanked everyone for their feedback. Some GEAC members participated in a follow-up focus group on March 23rd with 35 parents and staff members. The same types of questions were asked. Both internal and external focus groups were held. The next phase included an outline of proposed changes based on focus group responses to present to administrative team, principals, various department leads, and senior coordinators in curriculum and instruction next Friday. Another presentation will be made to Dr. Pohl the first week in May and then the team will revise the plan for presentation to the school board in June. Dr. Howard asked how the meeting with the parents went on the 23rd—were there differences between the GEAC focus group and the parent focus group? Mrs. Stead noted that there were a few: there were more differences of opinion regarding whether students should be exited from the program in the bigger group. Most felt we should be offering more variety for students’ interests

and career goals in addition to rigorous programming. There was a lot of consensus on the need for more training of teachers. Overall, there were no major differences between the two groups. Emily Bebbler asked how the results of the surveys would be formatted and how they could be accessed. Mrs. Stead noted that results would be shared in graph form on the shared drive.

GEAC cycle: At 6:23 Mrs. Huntoon provided an overview of the GEAC cycle. Dates are set with the advisory committee to try not to conflict with other events or school board meetings. In 2019, the September meeting was used to set goals. In October and November these items were narrowed down to set a focus. The goal is to get about five big recommendations which produces a stronger result. Then committees and teams were created to achieve these goals. Working committees were encouraged to schedule meetings in December and January; February was used for drafting in Google Docs. March and April were used to prepare the final draft. In May and June, we worked to get a slate started: chair, vice chair, and recording secretary and the vote was made in June. Mrs. Huntoon reviewed the templates used for this work. Mr. Ambler noted that we decided to have meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, and GEAC did not meet in spring 2020 due to COVID-19. Mrs. Stead asked Mrs. Huntoon to explain the slate. Mrs. Huntoon noted that there is a chair, vice chair, and a secretary. You can nominate yourself, you can nominate someone else.

GEAC at the federal/state level: At 6:32, Dr. Costis provided an overview of GEAC at the state level. Gifted education is managed and enforced by state law, not federal law. There is no mandate for gifted education. This is where GEAC comes in. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provides regulation for compliances and indicates that gifted students should be served. GEAC monitors the local plan and its implementation. VDOE also notes the procedures that GEAC should develop. Mrs. Stead noted that the state is looking for representatives for its state council and put a link in the chat for interested GEAC members. The state is in the process of revising its gifted regulations, and GEAC is taking that into consideration with our revised gifted local plan.

GEAC in NPS and bylaws: At 6:41, Mrs. Huntoon went over the GEAC application. It's a three-year term, and rosters are updated regularly. The maximum is 24 members. We are at the point in the GEAC cycle where a slate needs to be proposed. Mrs. Huntoon encouraged all members, including new members, to consider serving as officers. Officers have a one-year term and Mrs. Huntoon reviewed the duties of each role. Officers meet for one hour before each GEAC meeting to set the agenda. Dr. Costis spoke about her experiences as the recording secretary and how minutes are posted publicly and become legal documents to account for the work that we do. She then spoke about her role as acting vice chair and supporting the current chair, including assessing our goals as a committee. Mrs. Huntoon also invited Mr. Ambler to share his experiences as chair. Mr. Ambler noted that the chair works with the senior coordinator to facilitate the work of the committee. Mrs. Huntoon noted that all nominations for officers should be sent to Ms. Greco.

At 6:50, Mrs. Huntoon made a motion to adjourn the formal portion of the meeting. Dr. Costis seconded. All were in favor.

Public comment:

Mrs. Stead noted that emails about GEAC are available to the public and could be summoned. This is rare, but we have to let new members know. Dr. Costis noted that we have to comply with FOIA.

Mrs. Stead commended new members. The time commitment includes 90-minute meetings once a month and/or add input to documents (i.e., "homework").

Ms. Simodynes asked about the location of meetings pre-COVID-19. Mrs. Huntoon noted that meetings were at the Academy for Discovery at Lakewood in the library. Mrs. Stead noted that virtual options will still be provided post-COVID-19. Mrs. Huntoon noted that Google Docs also provides an option for online collaboration for GEAC members.

Ms. Johnson asked whether surveys are being conducted to see how virtual learning is going for students. Mrs. Stead noted that the goal of GEAC is advocacy. Some students did better virtually, and there will be a

virtual option next year through Virtual Scholars. A survey was not offered, but it's a great point. Ms. Johnson noted the importance of parents collaborating in the IEP process, as well as in virtual learning.

Several GEAC members provided updates on how kids are doing during the pandemic including Ms. Nelson, Dr. Howard, Ms. Johnson, Ms. Humphrey, Dr. Costis, Dr. Martin, and Mr. Jamison.

Ms. Johnson asked whether time management is taught in schools. Ms. Stead noted that it is taught in some of the leadership courses. Ms. Johnson noted that this may need to be taught explicitly.

Meeting adjourned at 7:29.