

# Gifted Education Advisory Committee (GEAC) to the Norfolk School Board

## November 9, 2021- Meeting Minutes

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Governor Northam's Executive Order Number 53 (2020), effective March 23, 2020, this meeting was held via Zoom communications, in accordance with the Code of Virginia §2.2-3708.2.

### In attendance:

#### Members:

Vicky Greco	Co-Chair, Parent
Jessica Huntoon	Co-Chair, Parent
Dr. Jori Beck	Co-Vice Chair, Community
Dr. Maury Howard	Co-Vice Chair, Parent
Hollis Simodynes	Secretary, Parent
Tom Ambler	Community
Christina Ohlrogge	Parent
Kathleen Shambo	Teacher at Southside STEM Academy
Karla Stead	Sr. Coordinator, Gifted Ed & Academic Rigor Services/GEARS
Dr. Andrew Sytsma	Gifted Resource Teacher
Abbie Watson	Principal Academy for Discovery at Lakewood

#### Guests:

Zaiya Argueta	Guest
Sarah Martins	Parent
Norika Stuvaints	Community
Jeff Craig	Parent
Kimberly Pitts	Guest
Anna Smith	Parent
Kimberly Travers	Parent
Kimberly Walsh	Gifted Resource Teacher
Christopher Webb	Parent

**Welcome:** Ms. Vicky Greco called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and read the purpose of GEAC.

**Introductions:** Members and guests introduced themselves from 6:05-6:09.

**Review of minutes:** At 6:10, Ms. Greco asked the members if they had reviewed the minutes of the last meeting, which occurred on October 12, 2021, and were previously provided via email for members to review. Corrections were made to include Dr. Sytsma's title, the status of Ms. Shambo as a GEAC Member (vice guest) and to correct the month of testing in first grade (to every February). At 6:10, Karla Stead made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. It was seconded and all members were in favor of approving the minutes.

**Announcements:** Ms. Greco noted the upcoming school board meeting information, available at:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/nps/Board.nsf/Public>

- November 17, 2021, School Board Business Meeting, (Workshop, 4 p.m.), Business Meeting, 7 p.m.

- December 1, 2021, Gov. Training, TBD, School Board Work Session, 4 p.m.
- December 15, 2021, School Board Business Meeting, (Workshop, 4 p.m.), Business Meeting, 7 p.m.
- January 12, 2022, 4 p.m., School Board Work Session, 4 p.m.

Ms. Watson asked if anyone knew when the Ward 4 NPS school board seat, recently vacated by Christine Smith, would be filled. Ms. Greco responded that School board will appoint someone to fill the vacancy. Local news reports stated that the school board said it would need to talk with an attorney about the process for filling the vacant seat.

Ms. Ohlrogge asked about the process to renew her proof of background check card she received as a volunteer for NPS. Ms. Greco referred her to LaEunice Brown, NPS Community Engagement Coordinator.

**Public comment:** At 6:18, Ms. Greco opened the public comment portion of the meeting for stakeholders wishing to address the GEAC on the topic of their choice regarding gifted education. Stakeholders may also choose to complete a form to submit questions, concerns, and comments in writing. No public comments were offered prior to or during the meeting.

**Gifted Education & Academic Rigor Services (GEARS) Update:** Ms. Stead stated that this week she had her first meeting with collaborators from the College of William and Mary, who have been hired to consult on the revised local plan, focusing on developing professional development and messaging for the new plan.

Ms. Stead announced:

- Governor’s School for the Arts will have an open house on November 10, from 6-7 p.m.
- Specialty Program Showcase Night will be held virtually on Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. for middle school programs and 6:00 p.m. for high school programs on Channel 47 and streamed live on the NPS Youtube channel
- October CogAT Makeup Test Scores resulted in 43 eligible for processing out of 600
- November Gifted Referral testing was conducted for 394 students, an increase from last year
- Revised Gifted Local Plan Technical review will take place in December 2021, and will be posted in January 2022
- In February 2022 there will be First Grade Universal Screening under the new local plan including revised benchmarks, emerging scholars services available to top 15% scorers in every school, and increased focus on enrichment and exposure for all students.

Ms. Watson asked how long the contract with the College of William and Mary was for. Ms. Stead answered the current agreement ends in June 2022. Ms. Stead noted that she included a budget request for an additional \$15,000 to renew the contract for the 2022-2023 school year, so that they could evaluate the implementation of the local plan. Ms. Watson noted that educators and staff were very busy meeting the social and emotional needs of students in our current environment and stated she was happy to hear that there would be continued assistance possible. Ms. Stead agreed and said her vision is that the first year is about communicating the new plan and roll out and the second (proposed) year of the contract would focus on evaluation.

Christopher Webb said his student was in middle school, and is interested in receiving gifted services. Ms. Stead stated she would contact the GRT at his student’s middle school and assist with providing more rigor and challenge for his student.

**GEAC Recruitment, Engagement and Advocacy:** Ms. Greco noted that NPS budget meetings and the strategic plan were opportunities for advocacy. She noted that the final 15 minutes of this meeting, attendees would be asked to complete the Strategic Planning Stakeholder Survey:

<https://forms.gle/RfSaEyUoBvW4Sgm5A>

Ms. Greco noted that areas of interest to GEAC are academics and instruction, communication and engagement, NPS culture, operational effectiveness, infrastructure and technology, teacher and staff recruitment.

She asked attendees to think about how we could get more voices at the table and ensure representation at GEAC reflects the population of NPS. She would like to encourage principals, parents and teachers from all schools to participate. She stated that recruitment and engagement of our stakeholders will increase our ability to advocate at local and federal government, because both are funding sources.

Ms. Stuvaints asked if there are gifted teachers at every school. Ms. Stead responded that every school has a GRT assigned, but some schools share a single GRT. As we work towards getting a GRT in every school, full-time GRTs are assigned to elementary schools with historically low gifted education enrollment and will be in place to work with emerging scholars under the new plan.

Ms. Greco noted that there are twice exceptional gifted students who have a learning differences and stated the VDOE Indicator 8 parent survey is open.

Jeff Craig asked for more information on whether to refer his student for gifted services in secondary school. Ms. Stead responded that secondary school services are indirect. This is in contrast to elementary school services, which are direct (pull out services). She said that the pros would include the GRT being able to offer enrichment opportunities to identified students. Additionally, the screening test results are sent to the parents and may provide insight onto strengths and areas to improve. Any NPS student can take any course in secondary school. However, the Summer Residential Governor's School programs only accept students who have been identified gifted.

Ms. Watson recommended GEAC consider reaching out to Michelle Washington, Director, Communications and Community Engagement in order to strengthen our messaging and improve our outreach.

Ms. Greco reminded everyone to take the Strategic Planning Stakeholder Survey now or before Friday 11/19/21.

GEAC meetings will be conducted virtually until further notice. There will be no general membership meeting in December. The next meeting is Tuesday January 11, 2022 at 6 p.m. Members may submit agenda items via email to Ms. Greco and/or Ms. Huntoon.

At 7:11, a motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Ohlrogge, which was seconded. Ms. Greco thanked everyone for participating, wished everyone a safe holiday season and adjourned the meeting at 7:11.