

Suffolk Public Schools
Gifted Advisory Board Minutes
Tuesday, October 17, 2023
6:00 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.
Creekside Elementary

Call to Order: Russell Terrillion, Chairperson

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Terrillion at 6:05 p.m.

Charge: The charge was delivered by Dr. Maria Lawson-Davenport on behalf of the School Board.

- Reviewing the Local Plan for the Gifted and making recommendations for its implementation
- Promoting communication between the parents of students receiving gifted services and the school administration
- Disseminating information to the community about gifted education and sponsoring programs of interest to parents

Board Attendance Report

Present in-person: Russ Terrillion, Christina Havlin, Duanne Hoffler Foster, Elizabeth Joyner, Jennifer Hazer, Kathleen Coyne, Katie Seibel, Ryan Karle, Teri Kerns

Present online: Kertesha Artis

Absent: Bonnie Tran, Cenora Hollis, Dacia Smith, Erin Jones, Heather McGee, Jamie Tordoff, Kimberly Folston, Kirsten Gamble, Maegen Kelish, Melissa Douglas, Tiana Spells

An introduction was given by new board members present and other guests, including ASL students providing interpreting services for the meeting. Several gifted resource teachers and other teachers were introduced, some recently joining and many with 10, 20, and 30 years of service to the school system. Appreciation was given for their service to our community shared through applause by all in attendance.

Minutes:

The members present read over the minutes quietly. A motion for the adoption of the minutes with no corrections was made by Ryan Karle and seconded by Katie Seibel. The minutes were approved.

Purpose:

The purpose of the board was made available in the presentation and reviewed by Mr. Terrillion. This information was previously shared verbally during the delivery of the charge.

Election of Officers:

- **Katie Seibel**, nominated and elected as Chairperson
- **Kathleen Coyne**, nominated and elected as Recorder

Gifted Education Updates:

Keisha Melvin, Ph.D. introduced herself as the new Coordinator of Advanced Instruction and World Languages, then opened gifted education updates with the introduction of middle school gifted resource teacher Elizabeth Zartman.

Middle Schools: Elizabeth Zartman, Gifted Resource Teacher

Mrs. Zartman discussed Tidewater Regional Governor's School and Fall testing. Mrs. Zartman announced opportunities with Jefferson Lab working with Science classrooms.

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Elementary Schools: Megan Farabaugh, Gifted Resource Teacher

Ms. Farabaugh shared QUEST updates and described activities students participated in showcased in the photos shared.

High Schools: Keisha Melvin, Coordinator of Advanced Instruction and World Languages

Dr. Melvin shared presentation slides with upcoming events including the GSA Open House on Oct 25 at 6 pm in Norfolk, the October 25th PSAT 8/9 testing date, the October 27th AP exam registration deadline, several Specialty program event dates: 8th grade presentations in November and the Open House for the public on Nov. 13, the December 8th GSA application deadline, the December 18th Specialty program application deadline, and Summer Residential Governor's School information. Dr. Melvin asked the board to approve posting of the updated calendar to the SPS website with additional dates of interest.

Board Updates/Action:

Elizabeth Joyner offered to contact Dr. Melvin to add dates for STEM NASA to increase awareness in Suffolk, since most attendees come from northern VA, as well as the VA Air & Space program at Langley, and the VA Earth Science Scholars program. Ms. Joyner shared information about VA Space Coast Scholars, Mr. Terrillion made a motion to approve the calendar, seconded by Mrs. Hoffler-Foster. The motion was accepted by the board with approval of the calendar to be posted.

Old Business:

Mr. Terrillion shared the recommended changes from the last board meeting to include adding sub committees for Communications, Elementary School, Middle School, and High School, and change the constitution requirements for a quorum to only require two thirds majority of the voting members in attendance. Mr. Terrillion drafted the constitution revisions, however was unable to obtain working emails or other means of contacting the entire board to open a vote for approval of the constitution revisions.

New Business:

The board discussed options for obtaining absentee votes. Dr. Melvin said one current board member does not have an email address. Ryan Karle asked if we could contact members by phone, however Dr. Melvin said the sharing of any additional contact information such as phone numbers without the permission of each board member is not allowed. Mr. Karle offered to prepare and share information with the board on how to submit a proxy as he has experience with this situation from an HOA. Dr. Melvin offered to follow up with the SAO (School Administration Office) to distribute letters and proxy forms through postal service to each board member.

Ms. Seibel asked if there is anything the board can do to help teachers. Some teachers suggested inviting speakers to the meetings and asking the School Board for an increase in the gifted budget. Some mentioned asking for grant funding, and Dr. Melvin agreed to help find information about grants. A "STEM Career Night" theme suggestion was well received. Ms. Joyner asked what board members can do for the kids that don't see the benefit of working hard, and trying to do better. Another idea was to ask businesses for opportunities to invite gifted students on a field trip to see their work, and give students opportunities to witness successful businesses achieving great things. Offering food at meetings may help encourage in-person attendance. Some suggested the board members should try to meet in advance to better prepare for the meetings. The board should use a shared calendar and set deadlines for each other. The board should create a member directory with a bio and introduction, with expertise and "what I bring to the table." Some suggested starting a new Remind app classroom dedicated to the GAB members only, separate from the Remind app class open to the public. There was a suggestion to move the GAB meeting to a round-table format to encourage greater participation and collaboration.

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Questions or Comments:

Final comments were stated with regard to accountability: holding the GAB members accountable to be present and meet obligations, and holding the school board and the school system accountable.

Adjourned:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

Russell Terrillion and Kathleen Coyne