**GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**
Thursday, June 15th, 2023, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting

**COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Dr. Katharina Elbert (Co-chair), Albert Johnson-Mussad, Tyrone Mowatt, Takeru Nagayoshi, Courtney Perdios, Donna Potter Astion (Chair), Juan Rodriguez, Dr. MaryGrace Stewart, Dr. Heny Taraz

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dr. Carol Cavanaugh, Isha Hassan, Kenya Guerra, Magalie Pinney, Darnell Williams

**DESE REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE**

Thomas Zorich (Liaison), Dr. Regina Robinson

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**Call to Order and Roll-call**

Quorum is reached at 4:30pm, and Chair Astion calls the meeting to order.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Council members unanimously approve the minutes of the May 18th, 2023 council meeting.

**DESE Update**

Liaison Zorich shares the department’s plans for council membership for the coming year.

* DESE plans to fill a few seats on the council. A call for new members will be posted in the Commissioner's weekly update and also be emailed to current council members, for them to share this opportunity with their networks.
* DESE wants to increase student voice by adding another student council member.
* Liaison Zorich will send emails to current council members to inform them about their membership status and ask if they want to continue as a council member next year.

Council members ask if there is a minimum age for the students, and if other advisory councils also will have student members. Liaison Thomas will check with DESE’s legal department on any minimum age requirement, and reports that Dr. Regina Robinson wants to incorporate student voice into advisory councils, so that all councils will have student representation, not only the student advisory council.

Liaison Zorich will share with council members via email the final report of the National Working Group on Advanced Education convened by the Fordham Institute: “Building a wider, more diverse pipeline of advanced learners”.

**Review of Draft Annual Council Report and Vote**

Chair Astion introduces the final council report draft for council member comments and approval. Council members review the report section by section, give their feedback and discuss edits, and Co-chair Elbert revises the report accordingly in real time.

After revisions, council members unanimously approve the 2023 Council report.

**Introduction of Motion regarding upcoming MCAS contract renewal**

Dr. Stewart introduces a motion regarding the MCAS contract renewal DESE is imminently sending out for bids. The motion states that “Equity for advanced and gifted children, from every demographic, requires that any new version of the MCAS assessment be administered as a computer-adaptive assessment. The current MCAS doesn’t provide relevant data for students achieving above the grade-level. For serving students, MCAS must have a ceiling no lower than the 12th grade learning standards, and a floor no higher than the Kindergarten learning standards. The GTAC strongly urges the Commissioner and BESE to solicit proposals for MCAS assessments that are computer-adaptive only; and not to solicit proposals for assessments that are tied only to identifying competency of one single grade-level of learning standards.”

After the motion is seconded, voting by roll call starts. After three “Yes” votes and one “No” vote, voting is interrupted due to a member expressing concern that the council can not vote on a motion that is not a stated part of the posted agenda and that there is not enough time given to allow members to fully understand and discuss the motion. Chair Astion seeks the advice of the liaison in regards to the possibility of adding an item into the agenda. Based on his interpretation of Open Meeting Law, which he would not want to be understood as legal advice, Liaison Zorich recommends staying within the posted agenda, and voting is stopped.

**Next steps - Council Members’ Thoughts on Next Year’s Charge**

* The suggestion is made for the council to meet monthly instead of bi-monthly. Two other members voice agreement, and liaison Zorich notes this feedback to be considered for future meeting times.

As topics for next year’s council charge, council members make the following suggestions:

* Use of adaptive assessments as tools to provide more relevant student data,
* Accountability/accountability system to encourage advanced students’ growth,
* Working definition of the student population the council is aiming to serve,
* Council to be informed in a timely fashion about DESE initiatives relevant to the gifted/advanced/high-potential student population (such as MCAS redesign, IEP form redesign) and be asked to provide input.

**Adjournment**

Meeting is adjourned at 6:31pm, with six votes Yes, and two votes No.

**Documents Referenced During Meeting**

* Draft Annual Council Report