**GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024 | 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM  
LOCATION: VIRTUAL/ONLINE ONLY

### **members**

**Council Members**

Dr. Katharina Elbert, Kenya Guerra, Isha Hassan, Dr. Albert Johnson-Mussad (Vice Chair), Kari Morse, Tyrone Mowatt, Courtney Perdios, Magalie Pinney, Donna Potter Astion (Chair), Juan Rodriguez, Dr. MaryGrace Stewart, Dr. Heny Taraz, Darnell Williams

**DESE Liaison**

Thomas Zorich

### **agenda**

1. 4:00- 4:10 |Call to Order and Roll Call

10 members were present, counting MaryGrace Stewart, who arrived after the roll call.

Absent: Darnell Williams, Kenya Guerra, Darnell Williams, Magalie Pinney

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

II. 4:10 – 4:15 PM | Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes 1/18/24

The minutes were unanimously approved. 9 “yes” /9 members present at the roll call

III. 4:15-4:30 PM | DESE Updates

Liaison Thomas Zorich provided three updates.

1. The hiring process for an Advanced and Accelerated Learning Manager is ongoing. Over 40 potential interview questions were received from GTAC members. Interviews began this week, and the process should end by the end of the week. Liaison Zorich commented there are excellent candidates, both from within Massachusetts as well as from outside the state. Twenty-four applications were received and 5 candidates will be initially interviewed. Within the next several weeks, the goal is that the new staff person will be hired.
2. Continuum of Services training with CTD is underway; 6 districts are currently involved. The districts have received a lot of information and are now mapping assets and resources to create the Continuum of Services for their districts and DESE review.

Acceleration and best practices are a consideration when creating their drafts, to find budget-friendly solutions. A clarification was provided that the CTD work with districts is not available for public viewing as it is internal work within districts, but that future informational webinars may be recorded and shared with other districts. Adjustments will be made to the process as it continues. Other districts have indicated an interest in the training.

1. Moving forward, public comments related to ongoing GTAC work can be delivered in person or in writing to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, according to the Board’s posted guidance. Anyone can request the comments from the Board. Liaison Zorich stated that he can retrieve comments sent to BESE and he can share them with the Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Council. The public comment process is not up for voting by the Council. A Council member voiced a concern that this adds a layer of difficulty to hearing directly from the public.

Regarding the pilot program and training on the Continuum of Services model, two district leaders on the Council were asked for their opinion if the model, as presented, might be successful across the state.

The answers indicated that funding, equity issues, and opportunity at all grade levels are paramount. Some districts may need to build capacity to provide services and many will need to be creative in thinking how to offer these opportunities to all in a tight budget climate.

It was also suggested that site visits to districts that already offer advanced programming could be helpful.

IV. 4:30-5:45 PM | Phase 1, Draft definitions discussion.

Three draft definitions were offered for discussion.

Vice Chair Johnson-Mussad captured feedback and comments from Council members regarding language, conceptual aspects, and equity issues.

After discussion, it was suggested that Version 1 could serve as a foundational draft to revise with the feedback from Council members.

The revised draft will be shared at the April 25 GTAC meeting.

V. 5:45-5:50 PM | Adjournment unanimously approved

8 “yes”/ 8 members present at adjournment

**Documents Referenced During Meeting**

Draft Council Minutes: Jan. 18, 2024

Draft definitions of giftedness and advanced talent