

Britt Despenza
Principal

Orlando Gifted Academy

1121 North Fern Creek Avenue
Orlando, FL 32803
(407)897-6410

<https://orlandogiftedacademy.ocps.net>



May 20 @3:30pm
SAC Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order / Determination of a Quorum (51% of members)

- 3:39pm called to order by SAC Chair, Jennifer Vose
- Attendance
 - Quorum was established

Member Name	Position	Attendance
Jennifer Vose	SAC Chair	Present
Jeremy Siegel	SAC Vice Chair	Excused
Raegan Smythe	SAC Secretary	Present
Sarah Courtney	SAC Parent member	Excused
Jenn Mandelion Chrisman	SAC Parent member	Present
Martha McCormick - Watson	SAC Parent member	Present
Melonie Sexton	SAC Parent member	Present
Jami Valentine Miller	SAC Parent member	Absent
Melissa Vaughan	SAC Parent member	Online
Annamarie Cherolini	OGA Secretary	Present
Ericka Scheid	OGA Behavior Specialist	Present
Britt Despenza	OGA Principal	Present
Theresita V.	Community Representative	Absent

2. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings (March & April 2021)

- Annmarie Cherolini moved to accept minutes. Seconded by Ericka Scheid.
- Passed unanimously

3. Principal's Report

- 2021-2022 Project Enrollment: 321
- Enrollment as of May 20, 2021: 346
 - 175 in middle
 - 171 in elementary
- Discussion
 - Ms. Vose asked if there are any available spaces are left.
 - 2nd grade is full.
 - 14 students are moving to Howard. 3 students to other Magnet schools and 1 student back to his/her home school for sports.
 - Ms. Scheid said that offer letters went out last week. Another batch is going out next week. And the final batch will go out June 30th.

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- Ms. Scheid asked that anyone who is interested to please apply so we can judge interest in the future.

- School Improvement
 - Fund 145: School Improvement Funds: \$873.20
 - Fund 211: School Recognition Funds: \$16.40
 - Renzulli Learning
 - Costs \$4,200
 - RLS Site Learning \$3000
 - RLS Online PD Daily Rate \$1200
 - Administration is looking for Partial payment for Renzulli Learning

The power of the **Renzulli Profiler** brings personalized, interest-based learning into the hands of your students every day, without sacrificing your required curriculum and standards.

Renzulli Learning prepares students by asking them to apply, deepen, and extend their learning through differentiated assignments that enhance critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Renzulli Learning assignments encourage students to think outside the box and apply what they've learned in engaging activities that match students' learning style, expression style, and interests. Personalization and differentiation—constructed around a student's interests, learning styles, and expression styles—inspire learning.

A profile is generated, students and teachers may use it to guide their exploration of the 40,000 online educational resources in the Renzulli database. Students can engage in self-directed learning by exploring safe, fully-vetted resources that have been specifically matched to their individual profiles, and teachers can browse the database of resources to find activities that align to specific objectives, skills, or state and Common Core Standards.

Renzulli Learning System place a strong emphasis on the problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking skills that are often neglected in a “drill-and-kill” environment. This helps ensure that learners become college and career ready while developing the thinking and reasoning skills

For students-

- The 3 E's! Enjoyment, Engagement and Enthusiasm for learning
- Accurate, easy to understand **student profile** of interests and learning styles
- Personalized series of enrichment activities based on profile results to challenge and engage students
- Opportunities to engage in research and independent study
- Exciting on-line virtual field trips
- Creativity Assessment and Development
- Challenging critical thinking activities
- [Creative thinking and problem solving](#)
- Personalized selection of books and activities

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- Safety Net for young students researching on the Internet
- Increased self-confidence: they will feel empowered as they direct their own learning!
- Increased Achievement

For teachers-

- Time-saving creation of **differentiated lessons** for assigning to students by groups or individuals
- Independent study and project activities for children to complete in school and at home
- Support **school-wide enrichment** across levels and disciplines
- 6 hour training for teachers

Discussion-

- Mr. Painter said that students can get a 90-day free trial. The thought is to test the system first. It also has vetted Research projects which is convenient for teachers.
- Ms. Despenza said that Dr. Renzulli is the Guru of Gifted. OGA sends teachers to his conference.
- Ms. Scheid informed the group that OGA had a subscription in its first year. The program has an interest analyzer to explore areas of interest for each student.
- Ms. Despenza said this leads toward individualized instruction.
 - Individualized instruction is a possible SIP item from the CCC subcommittee.
- The Renzulli system can also be used at home by students.
 - Martha McCormick - Watson made a motion for the Fund 145 money to go toward the purchase of the Renzulli Learning Program. Seconded by Melonie Sexton.
 - Passed unanimously
- First Day of School - August Tuesday, August 10th
 - As of 5/20/21
 - Normal operating procedures
 - No school based virtual options

4. Old Business

- CCC subcommittee report, presented by Martha McCormick - Watson
 - Before starting, it needs to be noted that everyone wants what is best for the children. Subcommittee met four times, with the final meeting lasting 4 hours.

SAC Subcommittee Proposal

The following are recommendations from the subcommittee's work after four subcommittee meetings during which we examined the data and explored the issues at hand.

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Subcommittee Purpose

SAC created the subcommittee in response to concerns about Communication, Community, and Curriculum. The subcommittee included administrators, teachers, and parents.

Part 1 - Recommended Action

This section presents the action steps the subcommittee recommends. First, we propose a SIP goal that we believe will lead to the greatest progress towards addressing the issues. Then we propose additional steps to address the remaining issues.

1 - Recommended 2021-2022 SIP goal

Recommended SIP goal for 2021-2022: *Consistently provide a high-quality gifted education by resourcing teachers to deliver an evidence-based gifted lesson and differentiated instruction for every unit in each class.*

- OCPS Objective for this area: High Expectations for Student Learning
- This is written as an outcome goal. It would involve numerous actionable, measurable, process-oriented sub-goals.
- This outcome goal could be measured by # of units with gifted lesson plans taught divided by # of total units taught for each class; the same measurement could be used for differentiated instruction. The idea would be for both measurements (gifted lessons and differentiated instruction) to move from x% at the start of the year to 100% by the end of the year.
- In order to protect Teacher autonomy, there should be no restrictions in how they accomplish this goal, rather Teachers should have access to a variety of resources and systems of support.
- This may require significantly increased resourcing to teachers in terms of extra planning time, coaching, and lesson plan and differentiation assistance (vetting available lesson plans and developing new ones from scratch).
- Two purchased gifted curriculum sources are already reportedly available, though other support is needed (see above) to implement their utilization if the Teacher chooses.

Benefits of adopting this SIP goal

The issue of Curriculum is a high-leverage issue. If OGA can excel here, many positive things will result:

- Parents will experience greater satisfaction and will feel that OGA is worth the investment.
- Parents will spread the word, encouraging other parents to enroll their children.
- Teachers will experience high job satisfaction because they're more easily doing what they came to OGA to do, teach with excellence, and will help recruit other great teachers to fill openings.
- Administration will experience reduced parent frustration and will find parts of their jobs much easier -- especially recruiting students, teachers, and positively engaged parent-volunteers.

2 - Additional proposed actions for SAC and/or the school

If any of these items are already on the school's action plan, then the item here can be used to inform that action item.

Communication

- Establish email and Connect Orange (voice and texting) as the official communication channels. Decide on one other channel such as Class Dojo that OGA teachers may choose to use as a supplement to email.
- Develop and implement a rhythm of proactive and timely school-wide communication that focuses on important issues and dates and builds a sense of community.
- Develop and implement a rhythm of proactive classroom (or grade level) communication that informs of upcoming modules and of important dates (tests, project due dates, class activities).

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- Respond to all parent emails within 48 hours, including acknowledging receipt of emails that do not lend themselves to an actionable response.
- Develop a standard template for Canvas; instruct teachers in best practices; and train parents in its use. Train parents on the use of Skyward.

Community

- Support PTA's effort to create a school directory.
- Provide lots of opportunities for families to connect at the school.
- Explain to parents how they can participate in the school starting in August. Proactively invite them to participate with lots of advance notice. Remind them multiple times through multiple channels.
- Notify parents of steps to take when issues arise; assist parents in differentiating a system issue (such as schedule or curriculum) from a classroom issue.
- Promote a culture of mutually respectful communication between parents and staff.

Curriculum

- Clearly define and continually communicate the nature of the gifted education that OGA provides and what differentiation means at OGA. Clearly communicate what makes OGA different from gifted programs at OCPS neighborhood schools and, therefore, worth commuting to.
- Ensure teachers have adequate planning time individually and as grade level and vertical teams.
- Provide students new to OGA (or veteran students who need it) intervention such as an "OGA Preparatory Academy" to ensure they are ready in terms of skills and attitudes for the education OGA offers.
- Educate and encourage parents to utilize the IEP/EP review process in a new student's first semester at OGA in order to align the 'inherited' IEP/EP with the students' current needs and goals prior to the end of a three-year cycle.

Part 2 - Background: How we arrived here

Communication

- We learned that there is a desire for the school (teachers and administration) to use a consistent, reliable communications channel, namely email and Connect Orange (voicemail and texts). There is room for improvement in school-wide and classroom communication as well as email turnaround times.
- We learned that there is a desire for Canvas/Skyward to be utilized effectively and consistently in ways that help parents keep up with their students.

Community

- We learned that parents experience inconsistency in feeling valued as significant partners in the school and in having their suggestions and concerns heard and/or acknowledged.

Curriculum

- We learned that parents observe inconsistent instructional experiences in different classrooms. Parents are not clear on what the school promises to offer regarding gifted instruction and differentiation and ask themselves whether OGA is "enough better" than their zoned school to warrant the time and expense of commuting.
- The committee recognizes that many teachers go above and beyond, providing evidence-based gifted practices in their classrooms. Unfortunately, the school at large seems to lack both clarity around a definition of gifted education and a strategy for implementing it universally. Though gifted education is the

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stated goal of the school, the school is currently unable to guarantee that gifted education will happen in every classroom and lacks measures by which to assess this goal.

- We learned that teachers want to be coached in the existing gifted curricula; desire more time and resources to develop gifted lesson plans and to differentiate; and desire more time for vertical planning.
- We learned that teachers face the challenges of having students with a variety of academic and emotional maturity levels including a wide variety of items on IEPs and EPs that must be addressed. Solutions are needed to support teachers in teaching beyond the standards in every classroom in spite of these challenges.

Final thoughts

The committee was created to seek recommendations around issues brought to SAC's attention. During our meetings, we discovered that these issues were difficult to discuss for various reasons. We recommend that the school continue to explore these dynamics in order to improve relationships between parents and the school.

Ultimately, we believe all stakeholders desire for OGA to fulfill the mission for which the OCPS School Board created it on October 24, 2017: "The focus of the Elementary Gifted Magnet is to provide opportunities for gifted students district-wide to explore a challenging, project-based, and extended curriculum. The Magnet will promote student academic growth and provide access to a full-time gifted educational opportunity. Students will be engaged in differentiated learning experiences with a strong academic focus which will continually maximize their potential."

Discussion-

- The Renzulli Learning System would assist toward the recommended SIP goal.
- Mr. Pratt asked how this SIP goal would be implemented.
 - Next year's SAC committee will need to work on this goal in the Fall.
- Ms. Vose said to accept the CCC subcommittee today. The next SAC committee will review this and ultimately decide on new OGA Annual Goals.

5. New Business

- Review SAC bylaws
 - Current bylaws were read.
 - Most duties cannot be completed until Fall, without Spring testing or survey data.
 - The SAC Retreat can't be done until Fall, for the same reason.
 - Annual budget will be reviewed in the Fall

6. Public Comments

- There will be a SAC recruitment table at Meet-The-Teacher.
- Current members, please consider leadership positions for next year.
- The Social Emotional curriculum an feature that includes families next year.
- Annmarie Cherolini said that this was the hardest year in her experience, but with great admin and great teachers, it has been a great year.
- Jennifer Vose - Thank you to our parents, our teachers and staff, especially the CCC subcommittee
- Ms. Despenza- thank you to the SAC committee members. Especially coming F2F for meetings. The hard work and sacrifices are greatly appreciated. We needed the input and

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feedback in real time to make adjustments. Can't wait until next year to go back to normal. Seeing our kids back on campus is amazing. It's a joy to watch them interact, work and be happy. Wax Museum class yesterday, students and teachers all dressed up...it was awesome! Thank you to the virtual parents and especially the CCC subcommittee.

7. Next Meeting Date

- August 26, 2021. 3:30pm

8. Adjournment

- Martha McCormick - Watson moved to close the meeting. Seconded by Melonie Sexton.
- Passed unanimously
- Jennifer Vose, SAC Chair, closed the meeting at 4:38pm.

The Orlando Gifted Academy School Advisory Council (SAC) is a team of individuals from various segments of the community: parents, teachers, students, administrators, support staff, business/industry people, and other interested community members. The sole purpose of the SAC is to "assist in the preparation and evaluation of the School Improvement Plan." [Florida Statute 229.58]