

Minutes for PGTAG Back to School Night held on 10/10/06

The PGTAG back to school night for the 2006-2007 school year was held on October 10, 2006 at 7 pm in the auditorium of Eleanor Roosevelt High School in Greenbelt, Maryland. There was a huge turnout to this event, with close to 600 people in attendance.

The agenda included:

1. Welcome and opening remarks by Laura Carriere, President of PGTAG
2. Address by Dr. John Deasy, CEO: PGCPs
3. PGTAG suggested activities.
4. Ways to become part of the network to support your student.
5. Overview of the TAG program by Ms. Theresa Jackson, TAG Supervisor: PGCPs

Ms. Carriere began with the introduction of the PGTAG officers, and the recognition of administrative personnel and principals present, followed by the introduction of the night's special invitee, Dr. John Deasy. She also requested, by a show of hands, to see the number of elementary, middle and high school parents present. Just as predicted, most of the parents were from the elementary school students, followed by the middle school and the least coming from the high schools.

Dr. Deasy's address was a twofold one. His comments were directed to first, the parents and community members and secondly, to the youths in the audience.

He noted that children come first, and shared the belief that every student can succeed at a very high level. He would like to bring to fruition the opportunity for every child to achieve at a very high level.

He stated that one of his goal was to reach everyone who can participate in the TAG program to strengthen and grow the TAG program, since there was currently an under-representation of TAG students.

Dr. Deasy also pointed to the fact that TAG students were under-performing, and was committed to doing a better job with these students.

He spoke about plans of building new, and renovating existing schools.

He pointed to the issues of:

- Rapidly increasing Advanced Placement (AP) classes in High Schools,
- Introducing International Baccalaureate (IB) to more schools, including middle schools (currently in 4 schools)
- Differentiating instruction, since not everyone learns at the same rate.

He addressed the youths in the audience directly:

- He urged the youth in the audience to be strong role models for their peers.
- College should be a certainty; they should be public about it and never allow anyone to deter them from going to college.
- He encouraged them to find their voice if they were not experiencing the best and most rigorous education.
- He reassured them that their voice was very important, it mattered and that it counts.

In closing, he urged everyone to work together and there should be a strong outreach in the community in strengthening the TAG program. He welcomed questions from the

audience.

Parents and teacher comments included:

- Concern with the reduction of Art and Music in the schools, to which Dr. Deasy stated that he is aware that the Arts have receded while other demands have taken the place, but he does recognize that the Arts are a valuable component and he intends to have the Arts as a central part and not as an add-on.
- Concerns about the background check policy for volunteers, which is costly and time consuming. Dr. Deasy stated that their sons and daughters were entrusted in the system's care and the reason for the checks was to ensure their safety. He plans to look into ways to financially support the background checks.
- Outreach with the community to benefit schools. Dr. Betty Green's office handles business outreach with the schools.
- Teacher inquired about the non-verbal assessments for ESOL students. Dr. Deasy is currently looking at the assessments.
- Concern about measuring future assessment on the potential student achievement; Formal system to evaluate Principal/Administration and Teachers of TAG programs. Dr. Deasy responded by stating that there are plans to look at this at a county level, and at the level of the administration in the schools.

PGTAG suggested activities included:

- October, 16 - Lecture by Dr. Susan Baum on GSLN
- Gifted Reception in Annapolis
- MD summer centers camps
- JHU-CTY programs
- Physics is "Phun", March, 30 at the University of Maryland
- April - Math night and Educators Award
- Advocacy for gifted training for teachers

Ways to support your student included:

- Join PGTAG and becoming member of PGTAG yahoo group
- Visit special education website
- Participate in Destination Imagination
- Join your school's PTA
- Invite TAG office to do in school training
- Attend MD state gifted conference, Oct 19-20.

Ms. Theresa Jackson gave an overview of the three (3) types of TAG programs. They are TAG Contextual Learning Program (CLE), TAG Pull out Program, and TAG in the Regular Classroom (TRC). Entry into TAG is based on multiple criteria and TAG services start in the second grade.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by,

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