

I support SB 487 because none of the recommendations in The Quiet Crisis report from the Task Force on the Instruction of Talented and Gifted Children [SB 330 (2011)] have been implemented and all of the “troubling trends” identified in that report have continued or accelerated.

The “troubling trends” indicated then that Oregon education was falling behind other states. The closure of schools because of the pandemic has revealed even more starkly the inequities that affect the identification and services to talented and gifted children. These inequities are the result of nonexistent TAG funding which is one area of the proposed study in SB 487.

The “troubling trends” affect my family. My three adult children were identified as gifted and participated in programs in their schools in California. Two of them now live in Oregon and are parents of students attending public schools. My oldest grandchild, 15 years old and a 10th grade student, was identified as TAG and accelerated one grade level from K to 2nd grade. He was also accelerated in math in middle school. These accommodations for other equally talented students are not generally available. My youngest grandchild, now in 1st grade, also shows a talent for math. He is a highly active child who is easily distracted when the curriculum is not engaging and challenging. Because he is in a different school district than his cousin, he may or may not be identified as TAG and have an opportunity to learn at the rate and level he is capable of. That could affect his future as a student and as an adult. Oregon’s lack of investment in education, including services for TAG, is more than a “troubling trend”, it is a reality. It has the potential to undermine the economy of Oregon for generations to come. The study required by SB 487 would be a first step in addressing this problem.