

Hello, legislators ~ I'm writing to ask that you take TAG kids and their education very seriously. There's a mistaken impression that TAG kids have everything going for them - they are "bright" and therefore everything must be rosy for them. This isn't true. There is a correlation between TAG characteristics and difficult problems including mood disorders such as anxiety and bipolar disorder (measured among TAG-type adults, as well as older kids).

We need to show them more compassion and give them more help. Our educators should meet their specific needs, just as we would put in the effort to meet the needs of a student with autism or a physical disability.

I come from an Oregon family with two TAG children. One was a little too old for TAG, once the school finally brought in a real TAG program. The older kid has suffered from mental problems, drug abuse, the opioid crisis, and being unhoused. The younger child received some TAG education. While also struggling with mental health issues, that child went on to a world-class university for undergraduate, then earned a graduate degree. Did TAG education make the difference? We will never know.

But I know my own child has tested TAG, and I want him to be appropriately challenged at school. I want to see his creativity engaged, and for teachers to understand that these kids require a different approach than their peers. If their overactive minds are not given enough to chew on, they won't just go hungry -- they'll search for stimulation any way they can, including disrupting the classroom.

Please help TAG kids become the bright future of our state, rather than relegating them to an unfunded mandate. Please make forward strides toward a more active and equitable TAG education for every Oregon kid who needs it.

Thank you.

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