

Submitter: Judith Smith

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure: SB595

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Webber, Members of the Committee:

I am the parent of three adult children who were identified as gifted and participated in programs in their schools in CA. Two of my children live in OR and are parents of TAG identified students in public schools. I have been learning about gifted characteristics and needs and advocating for services for nearly 40 years. The brains of gifted students process information differently from neurotypical students. This difference requires that they have access to instruction that differs from what is usually provided for grade level students of their same age.

Support SB 595

For over three decades Oregon has mandated identification and services for talented and gifted students. However, there has been no state funding to districts for TAG. As a result, Oregon schools are neither excellent nor equitable. Excellent schools would strive for achievement gains for all students, including TAG, and be inclusive of diverse populations.

A decade ago, the Task Force on the Instruction of Talented and Gifted Children (Senate Bill 330 – 2011) reported: “Funding is inadequate to support implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and oversight of a large population of learners with diverse needs.” Since then, TAG spending has declined even further. It represents just one tenth of one percent today.

Investing one percent of the total education budget is not too much to ask for the 7 to 10 percent of students who require opportunities to have their need for advanced instruction recognized and addressed.

Respectfully,
Judith Smith