

Submitter: Kimberly Gardner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB596

I strongly support SB595 and SB596.

I am the parent of a highly gifted 5th grader in Multnomah County. For his well-being, he needs not only an advanced-level curriculum but also the support of teachers who understand that his high capability comes with a lot of hidden anxiety.

Every child needs access to educational material that allows them to be challenged and learn. Meeting a child at their instructional level allows them to learn that doing hard work is rewarding. It teaches them how to develop a good work ethic. And it helps them feel part of their school community. All children deserve this.

Being able to understand material beyond their grade level doesn't mean that gifted children know how to study, how to struggle, and how to persevere. They must be given the opportunity to learn these important life skills, as all students must.

My son is in 5th grade and doing college level math. Without receiving daily academic challenge, he begins to develop unhealthy habits. He will stop engaging in class, intensely bite his nails, and become overly obsessive about video games. Since he's been taking advanced math, he is able to engage more in his other classes, he is happier, and he no longer craves excessive use of video games. He's learning how to struggle and persevere through challenges. He's beginning to seek challenges. And he's learning that working hard makes him feel good about himself.

Sadly, so many of Oregon's gifted students don't have access to the advanced-level learning they need. All students deserve an appropriately challenging education that will see them grow and learn.

TAG identification and serving TAG-identified students requires adequate funding. Teachers need training in order to be able to identify and differentiate for students who have demonstrated they need modifications to their instruction.

Please vote YES on SB595 and SB596!