

I urge your support for SB 934 to clarify that referrals for assessment for TAG may not be limited to educators.

I am the parent of three adult children who were identified as gifted and participated in GATE programs in their schools in CA. Two of them live in the Portland area and are the parents of my four grandchildren. I knew nothing about talented and gifted when my oldest child came home with a note asking permission for testing for the GATE program. That was the beginning of my education on the subject of academic giftedness.

The majority of teachers have no training in the characteristics of gifted. They often do not understand that the development of gifted children is different from the typical child. The youngest of my three children was not recommended for assessment by her teachers. As a parent I was able to request assessment, and she was identified by test scores over multiple years. It was only as a high school junior that we discovered that she has a form of dyslexia that makes finding words when speaking or writing difficult. Her knowledge and vocabulary were extensive, but her ability was masked by the disability. She had many of the other characteristics of giftedness that her teachers didn't know well enough to consider because they lacked training in gifted education. She earned a PhD in and is currently a lecturer at UGA.

As my experience shows, if referrals for TAG assessments are only from teachers, it is likely to have the unfortunate consequence of overlooking many students who need the modifications required by the TAG mandate. The clarification by SB 934 is needed to make sure that referrals for assessment are made with relevant input from those who know the student, not just educators.