

SB 934 A: Teacher referrals for Talented and Gifted assessments

Excerpt from the preliminary order and findings of the Oregon Department of Education Case #2019-mm-10, January 6, 2022 [alleging that Portland Public Schools was not implementing the Administrative Rules concerning TAG]:

“The department’s TAG specialist collected data on district teachers who reported that they did not, or would not, nominate students for TAG eligibility. For classes observed in grades K-2, 11% of teachers answered that they had not received any test result from the district. Fifty percent answered that identification for TAG eligibility takes place in the 2nd grade, Thirty percent answered that they did not believe in identifying students for TAG eligibility at an early age. Twenty three percent answered that they did not have enough information to nominate any students. Nine percent answered that they did not understand the identification process. Finally, one percent of teachers specified that comprehensive distance learning affected their ability to identify students. Overall, these answers clearly reflect – for those teachers who reported that they did not, or would not, nominate students for TAG eligibility – an overreliance on district processes and an unwillingness to identify. A few responses indicated not knowing how to identify students for TAG eligibility.

For classes observed in grades 3-5, 43% of teachers answered that they had not received any test result from the district. Nine percent answered that identification for TAG eligibility takes place in the 2nd grade. Fifty six percent answered that they did not have enough information to nominate any students. Finally, thirteen percent of teachers answered that they did not understand the identification process. Again, the answers reflected reliance on district processes. A larger percentage of responses than those of teachers teaching grades K-2 indicated a misunderstanding of or not having enough knowledge about the identification process. For classes observed in grades 6-8, 44% of teachers answered that they had not received any test result from the district. Seven percent answered that identification for TAG eligibility takes place in the 2nd grade. Forty eight percent answered that they did not have enough information to nominate any students. Thirty six percent answered that they did not understand the identification process. Finally, two percent of teachers specified that comprehensive distance learning affected their ability to identify students. As with previous responses, these answers reflected reliance on district processes and not knowing how to identify students for TAG eligibility.

Finally, for classes observed in grades 9-12, 8% of teachers answered that they had not received any test result from the district, 40% answered that they did not have enough information to nominate any students, and 30% specified that comprehensive distance learning affected their ability to identify students. Unlike previous results, these answers reflected primarily an inability to identify students for TAG eligibility on the basis that teachers had insufficient information to do so.

Finally, the department’s TAG specialist documented teachers’ comments in grades K-8 to identify themes occurring in the district with respect to identifying students for TAG eligibility. Nine percent of teachers teaching grades K-2, 36% of teachers teaching grades 3-5, and 81% of teachers teaching grades 6-8 made comments indicating that they did not understand the identification process. Twenty two percent of teachers teaching grades K-2, 36% of teachers

teaching grades 3-5, and 51% of teachers teaching grades 6-8 made comments indicating that they thought of TAG eligibility as nothing more than a “score.” **Thirty six percent of teachers teaching grades K-2 made comments indicating that they actively discouraged parents from nominating students for TAG eligibility or otherwise beginning the identification process. Thirty two percent of teachers teaching grades K-2 made comments indicating that they did not believe in identifying students for TAG eligibility in Kindergarten. Twenty one percent of teachers teaching grades K-2 made comments indicating that they did not believe in identifying students for TAG eligibility in the first grade. And 21% of teachers teaching grades K-2 made comments indicating that they believed that student performance will “level out” by grade 3.**

As is evident from these comments, a significant percentage of district teachers did not understand how to identify students for TAG eligibility. Further, a significant percentage of district teachers believed that TAG eligibility was based solely on whether a student qualified for TAG services through the taking of tests. And of district teachers teaching grades K-2, a significant percentage of teachers believed that identification of students for TAG eligibility could not be done at a young age. **A large percentage of district teachers teaching grades K-2 even indicated that they actively discouraged parents from nominating their children for TAG eligibility. In short, a large percentage of district teachers demonstrated either a misunderstanding of the legal requirements for TAG identification or a lack of knowledge on how to identify students for TAG eligibility.**

In summary, both reports made by observed district teachers and the personal observations of the district’s TAG specialist provide evidence that the district was not consistently identifying students for TAG eligibility as required by OAR 581-022-2325(2)(e).” (emphasis by OATAG)

Excerpt from “Current research in progress” at the National Research Center on Gifted Education:

“Improving Identification Practices in Gifted Education”

“This study investigates the impact of incorporating teacher ratings in the identification (ID) process on the diversity and academic profile of the identified population.... Our results suggest that teacher ratings of students are not easily comparable across teachers, making it impossible to set a cut score for admission into a program (or for further screening) that functions equitably across teachers. For example, less than 1/3 of students who scored in the top 10% on the cognitive ability measure also scored in the top 10% on teacher rating scales. Even with a lenient teacher rating scale cut score, almost 30% of students who are in the top 10% on ability do not score in the top 30% on TRS [Teacher Rating Scales]. (And in some datasets, almost half of students who score in the top 10% on ability are not in the top 30% on TRS.) Therefore, teacher rating scales should never be used as the sole universal screening instrument to determine which students move forward to a second stage gifted identification process.”

<https://ncrge.uconn.edu/improving-identification-practices-in-gifted-education/>