

The
Quiet Crisis



in
Talented and Gifted Education
in the State of Oregon

Report to the
Interim Legislative Education Committees
October 1, 2012

Submitted by the
Task Force on the Instruction
of Talented and Gifted Children
as required by Senate Bill 330 (2011)

October 1, 2012

For the sake of Oregon's Talented and Gifted learners, those who are currently identified and those who are yet to be identified, members of the Talented and Gifted Education Task Force request the Interim Legislative on Education Committees' full consideration of the "Findings" and "Recommendations" contained within this report. The report is designed to build a much-needed statewide infrastructure to support the Governor's state initiatives for educational improvement for all learners. The Task Force on Talented and Gifted Children on behalf of the 42,375 Talented and Gifted students in Oregon, respectfully requests the Interim Legislative on Education Committees' full consideration of the designated educational needs determined in the findings and recommendations outlined in this report. Members of the Talented and Gifted Education Task Force look forward to discussing the contents of this report with committee members during Legislative Days in December, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Ricki Schuberg-Myers, Chair

Task Force on the Education on Talented and Gifted Children

Senate Bill 330, 2011 Legislative Session

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The futures of over 42,000 Oregon students are in jeopardy. As our state's most able learners, these students have extraordinary potential, high ability, and a willingness to contribute to Oregon's society. Oregon must show that it understands and values these learners by providing the resources to meet their educational needs. The lack of funding to support their needs dims their bright futures, denying them the first class education they require. Even though this population of learners could be an easy success story under 40-40-20, Oregon fails to provide them with the services they need allowing many to fall through the cracks and some to fail to graduate from high school. Talented and Gifted students comprise a large population of students who can graduate from college and contribute greatly to Oregon's intellectual capital. The Task Force on the Instruction of Talented and Gifted Children requests the Legislature to fund boldly the proposed program to provide infrastructure and direct support to help these students achieve their highest ability and meet the 40-40-20 goal.

1. Establishment of the Task Force on the Education of Talented and Gifted Education

Senate Bill 330, 2011 directed the establishment of a "Task Force on the Instruction of Talented and Gifted Children" through the 76th Oregon Legislative Assembly, 2011 Regular Session. Senators Hass, Bonamici, and Devlin, and Representatives Harker and Read sponsored the legislation. Members of the TAG Task Force were appointed in September 2011 by then Superintendent of Public Instruction, Susan Castillo. The members were selected from among Oregon educators, parents, higher education institutions, and affiliated education associations. Oregon Department of Education representatives served as expert specialists and provided administrative support to the task force.

2. Purpose and Responsibilities of the Task Force on Talented and Gifted Education

The purpose of the TAG Task Force was to determine the answers to specific "charges" outlined in SB 330. The TAG task force was to determine:

- (a) The resources needed to provide instruction to talented and gifted children.
- (b) The appropriate level of funding for instruction of talented and gifted children, including potential methods of providing funding.
- (c) The number of children who would benefit from instruction of talented and gifted children.

3. Findings are based on both troubling trends statewide and Task Force Charges

Four troubling trends reveal these effects on our most able learners:

- Sustained under-identification of TAG students for the last six years
- Equity and access issues, resulting from districts not identifying TAG students
- The Oregon Education Investment Board determined Oregon's education is systemically falling behind
- Oregon has its own Talented and Gifted Achievement Gap

Findings Aligned to the Task Force Charges

Resources for Instruction and Services to Talented and Gifted Children

- Appropriate instructional services to TAG students are affected statewide by the lack of any funding source.
- Districts struggle to comply with the TAG Mandate in these difficult financial times.
- Instruction and services are inconsistently delivered across the state.
- The federal legislation of No Child Left Behind skewed priorities for districts often ignoring the attendant learning priorities for identified TAG students.
- There is no teacher state licensure in Talented and Gifted Education currently available through the Oregon State Teacher Standards and Practices Commission.

Appropriate Level of Funding for Instruction and Services

- Oregon's 197 school districts receive no direct funding to support TAG learners.
- There is no federal funding to support TAG nationally; TAG is a state initiative.
- Talented and Gifted students comprise 7.3% of the state's learners; a total of 42,375 students.
- Major inequities exist across the state in districts' abilities to support identification and services.
- The current funding structure perpetuates prevailing myths about the needs of TAG students.

- Funding at the current level is inadequate to support monitoring, evaluation, and oversight of this population of learners, despite current state funding to the Oregon Department of Education to support one TAG Specialist for the entire state.

The Number of Children Who Would Benefit From Instruction as Talented and Gifted Students

- Only 62.56% of Oregon districts identify at the target level. The identification drop shows districts can no longer absorb the lack of funding for TAG. Racial and ethnic TAG identification also lags.
- 37.4% of the total Oregon districts are under-identifying TAG students.
- Monetary reasons drive districts to use limited qualifiers for TAG identification.

4. Task Force Recommendations

Create “The Oregon State Plan for Talented and Gifted Education,” a uniform plan for Talented and Gifted Education statewide to which districts can align in practices and purposes to benefit the growth of TAG students in their schools. The TAG State Plan would define the following topics setting a rubric for compliance on the following five elements:

1. Student Assessment requirements
2. Service Delivery
3. Curriculum and Instruction matched to students’ varied and diverse needs
4. Professional Development in: Identification, Services, Curriculum and Instruction, Special Populations, Professional Teacher Proficiencies, and Teacher Licensure through the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission
5. Family and Community Involvement

Districts would be required to comply with the elements of the State Talented and Gifted Plan to access funding for Talented and Gifted programming at the district level.

5. Funding Recommendations

Creation, design and implementation of the Oregon State Talented and Gifted Education Plan would occur in four successive years, with designated due dates assigned for each year of implementation.

First Year: Design the Oregon State TAG Plan with key educators. Results include a data collection system, and teacher/administrator professional development tools to support implementation of the statewide TAG Plan.

Estimated Funding: \$500,000 to fund necessary state resources.

Second Year: State design continues, outreach to districts to create their own TAG Plans aligned to the statewide TAG Plan, maximizing district's abilities to provide services to TAG students, continued development of data systems, and professional development tools districts.

Estimated Funding: \$500,000 outreach to district from state resources.

Third Year: Build state and district infrastructure by creating competitive grants in aid to a limited number of districts for implementation, data collections, and development of evidence-based practices.

Estimated Funding: \$1,000,000.

Fourth Year: Maximize implementation in districts with TAG Best Practices Models, Professional Development tools, continued district development of range of services for TAG students, parent involvement, investment in measurable student data outcomes.

Estimated Funding: \$5,500,000.

On-going: Continued implementation and state financial commitment to continue improved infrastructure for TAG students statewide:

Estimated Funding: \$5,500,000 yearly.

BACKGROUND

The Task Force on the Instruction of Talented and Gifted Children was established through Senate Bill 330, enrolled in the 76th Oregon Legislative Assembly, 2011 Regular Session, in legislation sponsored by Senators Hass, Bonamici, and Devlin, and Representatives Harker and Read. Members of the Talented and Gifted (TAG) Task Force were appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction in September 2011 and began serving a year-long term on the Task Force on the Instruction of Talented and Gifted Children in October 2011.

A link to Senate Bill 330, 2011 is provided below:

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/11reg/measpdf/sb0300.dir/sb0330.en.pdf>

Purpose and Responsibilities of the TAG Task Force

The purpose and responsibilities for the Task Force on the Instruction of Talented and Gifted Children were to determine answers to the following questions, as outlined in Senate Bill 330 (2011):

- (a) The resources that are needed to provide instruction (to) of talented and gifted children,
- (b) The appropriate level of funding for instruction of talented and gifted children, including potential methods of providing funding; and
- (c) The number of children who would benefit from instruction of talented and gifted children.

Assumptions that Guided the Work

To understand and to create the most accurate documents for the Interim Senate Education Committee's review, the Task Force engaged in multiple conversations about the meaning and intent of each of the statements in the original legislation, taking apart and defining the proposed meaning and intent of the language in the categories "a through c." Finally, the task force determined the "working change of language" better relayed the definitions and terminology under which the group could function to arrive at a more appropriate answer.

Therefore, question (c) which originally was stated as follows:

- (c) "The resources that are needed to provide instruction **of** talented and gifted children" was changed to the following as the *revised working language*:
- (c) "The resources that are needed to provide instruction **as** talented and gifted children."

In addition to that minor change in terminology, the task force also grappled with how integrated the topics are. In trying to separate and ultimately define a course of action, the task force determined that while each topic was separate, each conveyed a unique need which supported a related topic in a similar, but different category. Thus, this analysis was completed very thoughtfully, triggering a response that resulted in members of the task force ultimately determining very integrated findings and recommendations.

Procedural Alignment of the Task Force

In the establishment and functions of the Talented and Gifted Education Task Force, the task force as a public entity aligned to all Oregon public meeting obligations and rules, including accepting public comments at each meeting. Meeting notices were published well in advance of the meetings. Minutes of the meetings were created.

Membership of the TAG Task Force

Membership of the Task Force was determined by recruiting a broad spectrum of educators and citizens who had professional interests or personal stakes in the education of Oregon's students who are identified as "talented and gifted learners."

Despite the lack of funding to manage and support the TAG Task Force as defined by the enabling legislation, each member who was asked to serve on the statewide Talented and Gifted Education Task Force agreed to do so as her or his own expense. Members received no reimbursement for their travel and parking expenses and spent at least four hours per month for one year in meetings grappling with Oregon's issues concerning Talented and Gifted Education.

The membership included representation from both small and larger districts, parents from districts with extremely functional talented and gifted education programs and professionals who served integral roles in support of talented and gifted education in districts. The membership includes parents, professionals and Oregon Department of Education staff as outlined in Appendix 1.

Topics of Study and Research

The Task Force studied multiple topics involved in Talented and Gifted Education both broadly and in depth. A list of the topics reviewed at each task force meeting is outlined in Appendix 2. Guest speakers and presentations are noted.

The Quiet Crisis

INTRODUCTION

The status of education for Oregon’s most highly capable students, our Talented and Gifted (TAG), is in a quiet crisis. Despite our state’s sporadic attention over the years to the needs of our brightest students, many of them are now learning and working well below their capabilities. Rather than ensuring continuous challenge for these learners at an appropriate rate and level, as required in Oregon Laws, our state’s approach could be more accurately characterized as providing “random acts of gifted education” for only a small number of our most highly capable students. Our most able and our most capable, these students could be contributing their remarkable intellectual capital to our state’s most urgent needs. However, their current educational options are thwarted or limited at this critical time in our state. And yet, the crisis insidiously grows among us.

The quiet crisis in gifted education exists because so little attention and discussion is devoted to the needs of talented and gifted students. For the past decade, in the United States and in Oregon, efforts have centered on addressing the learning needs of struggling and lower performing students, a noble cause. However, the state’s guiding belief that students from all economic and cultural backgrounds can and must reach their full potential has not been consistently extended to our most talented students. As a result, many of our TAG students are forgotten or under-challenged and therefore, quite often, underachieve. Too often, academically talented students are “left behind” in our schools, due to a lack of identification in some cases, due to a lack of instruction in some cases, and due to the lack of dedicated state funding in all cases. The emphasis derived from the national legislation through the implementation of “No Child Left Behind” has essentially resulted in a corollary for gifted learners that is simply put: “No Child Left Ahead.” We have quietly failed our talented and gifted learners.

Aligned to Oregon’s quiet crisis, the co-authors of *Genius Denied, How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds*, the Davidsons address the national crisis for our most able learners, “America’s ambivalence about talent leads to schools and society asking less and less of bright children, so over time they develop their talents less and less, and shrink into a shadow of the people they could be. This is genius denied.”¹

TALENTED AND GIFTED EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF OREGON

A Guiding Question:

Can the national structure of education be blamed for the general ambivalence toward Talented and Gifted students?

Across the nation, parents and gifted children, attempt to resolve the disconnect between gifted identification and gifted services.

“Parents and students express confusion about the disconnect between the student’s identification as *gifted* and the lack of understanding what it means as it is developed or not developed in the continued low expectations attached to identification and the alignment of gifted education services. Students are equally confused about what happens in the classroom. We can’t blame them for their confusion. The country as a whole hasn’t made up its mind about gifted education. Educators and policy makers balance so precariously between concerns about equity and a desire for excellence that no one has made a compelling case why nurturing the country’s brightest students should land at the top of the educational to-do list. . . The regular school curriculum matches the needs of 50 percent of so our children. It will be too difficult for a quarter of the students and too easy for the other quarter.”²

In a New York Times article, “Young, Gifted and Neglected,” Chester Finn, President of the Fordham Foundation, addressed the national malaise about gifted education, defining the systemic neglect of gifted education by outlining the elite private high school educations of President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney. “Both are undeniably smart and well educated and owe much of their success to the strong foundation laid by excellent schools. . . Every motivated, high potential young American deserves a similar

“For a nation that likes to be the best in everything, we are awfully ambivalent about intellectual achievement.”³

opportunity. But the majority of very smart kids lack the wherewithal to enroll in rigorous private schools. They depend on public education to prepare them for life. Yet that system is failing to create enough opportunities for hundreds of thousands of these high-potential girls and boys Mostly, the system ignores them, with policies and budget priorities that concentrate on raising the floor under low-achieving students. A good and necessary thing to do, yet, but we’ve failed to raise the ceiling for those already above the floor.

Public education's neglect of high ability students doesn't just deny individuals opportunities they deserve. It also imperils the country's future supply of scientists, inventors and entrepreneurs."⁴

Why a Task Force on the Instruction of Talented and Gifted Children?

In 1987, the state of Oregon mandated Talented and Gifted education. However, while statutes and rules structured Talented and Gifted Education within the state, there was no state funding attached to the initial legislated mandate for Talented and Gifted Education. Proceeding at an uneven pace, the state relied on the national grants from 1988-1991, commonly known as the Javits Grants, named after Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York who championed the causes of high ability learners. Since that time, Javits gifted education funding has waned, and in this last year only minor stipends were available to states who applied to participate in very specific, narrow programs. Finally, in the most recent national focus on gifted funding legislation, the "TALENT Act" was denied funding by the U. S. Congress during the last legislative session.

In the last 25 years, the state haltingly implemented Talented and Gifted Education identification and programming. At one time state-supported grants in aid were available at about \$200,000 for six regional planning groups at state universities. That funding is no longer available. Oregon has not funded Talented and Gifted Education to districts since 2004.

Efforts to move Talented and Gifted Education forward have appeared in multiple efforts by advocacy groups. Recent legislation in House Bill 2180, 2011, currently in its implementation stages in school districts across the state, requires districts to clearly define their Talented and Gifted Education Plans and to submit those TAG Educational Plans to the Oregon Department of Education by October 1, 2012. Despite the requirement to submit the district plans to the Oregon Department of Education, the plans are limited to the districts' interpretation of what can be implemented on a limited budget in dire economic times across the state. Plans submitted thus far indicate a trend that puts TAG instruction clearly in the hands of classroom teachers who have had limited opportunities for professional staff development on teaching this specific population of TAG learners. And it is not their fault. Teachers are complying, despite the fact that Talented and Gifted Education has never been fully addressed monetarily, and despite their lack of training on TAG.

“According to Paula Olszweski-Kubilius, President of the National Association of Gifted Children, “Without properly trained teachers able to spot and support gifted students, our system is like a sieve with an untold number of kids falling through the holes. The acute need for appropriately trained teachers is particularly critical given that most of these students spend the majority of their time in regular classrooms.”⁵

As a greater emphasis on “college and career readiness” gains footing in Oregon through the initiatives of the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), the emergent population of Talented and Gifted learners should be due more attention in the state of Oregon. These are, after all, a population with a high potential for success in college who could be instrumental in achieving the Governor’s 40-40-20 goal. These students cannot do this alone. They, too, need direct instruction tailored to their abilities. Equally, highly able learners require opportunities that match their abilities and needs. Their success should be because of the first class education that the state of Oregon guaranteed to them in the 40-40-20 OEIB emphasis.⁶

This Task Force on the Education of Talented and Gifted Children, as defined by Senate Bill 330, has made every effort to write a plan that is strategic, aligned, and implementable. The plan is one that could transform Talented and Gifted Education within the state. By serving on this committee and in submitting this report, members of the TAG Task Force fervently hope to assist the state of Oregon in eliminating the quiet crisis in Talented and Gifted Education.

Who are these students?

Definition of Talented and Gifted Learners in Oregon

Oregon’s Definition of Talented and Gifted Learners

Oregon has created its own definition of Talented and Gifted learners which is defined in the Oregon Statutes about Talented and Gifted Education below:

“Talented and gifted children means those children who require special educational programs or services, or both, beyond those normally provided the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and to society and who demonstrate outstanding ability or potential in one or more of the following areas:

- General intellectual ability as commonly measured by measures of intelligence or aptitude.
- Unusual academic ability in one or more academic areas.
- Creative ability in using original or nontraditional methods in thinking and producing.
- Leadership ability in motivating the performance of others either in educational or noneducational settings.
- Ability in the visual or performing arts, such as dance, music or art.”

[Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 343.495 (4) (a) through (3)]⁷

Districts are further required to make every effort to identify ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, and students who are culturally different or economically disadvantaged. A team is required to make the final decision. No single test, measure or score can be used as the sole criterion for identification. Districts should gather a “body of evidence” to support the

identification or non-identification of a student as Talented and Gifted. The body of evidence should include behavioral, learning and performance information. Parents are required to be notified before any individual testing occurs and subsequently if their child has qualified for TAG placement and services. Parents are to be informed of their right to file a complaint.

History of Defining Talented and Gifted Students

In the Marland Report, published in 1972, one of the nation's first hallmark efforts to define national educational issues, a federal definition of the term "gifted," was first enumerated on a national level.⁸ Since that time, the definition has been modified many times. The current Talented and Gifted federal definition is contained within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is:

*"Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop these capabilities."*⁹

In 2010, the National Association for the Gifted published a new definition of gifted, aligned to their beliefs that any definition of learners "must remain consistent with the organization's position that education in a democracy must respect the uniqueness of all individuals, the broad range of cultural diversity present in our society, and the similarities and differences in learning characteristics that can be found within any group of students."¹⁰

As a result, the National Association for the Gifted currently defines Talented and Gifted in the following more inclusive definition of gifted learners:

"Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports). The development of ability or talent is a lifelong process. It can be evident in young children as exceptional performance on tests and/or other measures of ability or as a rapid rate of learning, compared to other students of the same age, or in actual achievement in a domain. As individuals mature through childhood to adolescence, however, achievement and high levels of motivation in the domain become the primary characteristics of their giftedness. Various factors can either enhance or inhibit the development and expression of abilities."¹¹

Talented and Gifted Education at the State Level

For the purposes of this report, it is very important to note that each state has developed its own definition of talented and gifted learners. States also vary widely in their support to these learners, as provided by the individual state's definition of gifted. Because each state also determines whether or not gifted education is mandated, the state also subsequently determines its commitment not only to identification, but also to services, and therefore essential funding for TAG programs.

Essentially, Talented and Gifted Education is defined by each state in this series questions:

- Is gifted education mandated?
- If gifted education is mandated, is gifted education identification required?
- If gifted education is mandated and gifted education identification is required, are services for those identified gifted students required?
- If gifted education is mandated, and gifted education identification is required, and services are required, is gifted education fully funded within the state?

➤ *Is gifted education mandated?*

In the state of Oregon, gifted education is mandated through legislation dating back to the 1987, the Oregon Mandate for Talented and Gifted Education.

➤ *If gifted education is mandated, is gifted education identification required?*

Identification of Talented and Gifted Students is required by:

Oregon Revised Statute 343.407, Identification of talented and gifted students:

The statement: "School districts shall identify talented and gifted student enrolled in public schools under rules adopted by the State Board of Education" serves as the requirement to identify students for Talented and Gifted Education in Oregon.¹²

➤ *If gifted education is mandated, and gifted education identification is required, are services for those gifted and talented students required?*

Services for identified talented and gifted students are required as outlined in the following Oregon Revised Statute, 343.409, Talented and Gifted programs required:

343.409 Talented and gifted programs required. "School districts shall provide educational programs or services to talented and gifted students enrolled in public

schools under rules adopted by the State Board of Education,” serves as the programs and services requirement for Talented and Gifted Education in Oregon.¹³

➤ *If gifted education is mandated, and gifted education identification is required, and services are required, is gifted education fully funded within the state?*

No. Talented and Gifted Education is not funded. The state of Oregon has not made a financial commitment to these learners in direct funding to school districts earmarked for the education of the population of Talented and Gifted learners.

➤ *Are there additional funding sources?*

Talented and Gifted Education is a state-defined initiative. There is no federal “flow through money” nationally to Oregon school districts because Talented and Gifted Education is state-defined. Additionally, Talented and Gifted Education is not funded by federal funding commonly known as “Title Programs.” Talented and Gifted Education is not funded as Special Education, English Language Learners, Homeless, Migrant Children, and other federal title program are funded.

In addition, historically the funding for Talented and Gifted Education has fallen under a qualifying clause cited in Oregon Statute 343.396, Nature of Programs:

“It is legislative policy that when talented and gifted programs are offered, the programs shall be provided by common and union high school districts, combinations of such districts or education service districts in accordance with ORS 334.175 and that the state will provide financial and technical support to the districts to implement the education programs within the limits of available funds.”¹⁴

How Does Oregon Compare to Other States?

Nationally, Oregon falls into a small population of states that mandate Talented and Gifted Education and require both identification and services. Five states fall within this category: Alabama, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. These states mandate gifted education, require identification and services, but do not fund Talented and Gifted education. Oregon is one of the five states in the United States that makes a large commitment in district responsibilities but does not follow through with funding to districts. This puts districts in the lowest 10% for all states in support of Talented and Gifted learners.

Table 1

Oregon's Mandate Comparison ¹⁵					
State	Funding Total 2010-2011	Student Enrollment	Total TAG Identified	Identification Required	Services Required
Alabama	0	741,043	49,536	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	0	1,383,705	No data	Yes	Yes
Oregon	0	552,883	42,065	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	0	1,830,684	71,830	Yes	Yes
Rhode Island	0	158,596	No data	Yes	Yes

Table 1. National Association for the Gifted: "Gifted by State."

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=37>

It is important to note that some states fund gifted education, but do not mandate it. Other states mandate gifted education and fully fund it. Although multiple permutations are employed nationally to describe how specific states do or do not provide identification and services, only the five states listed above categorically require identification and categorically require services while declining to provide districts with funding to support the state's own requirement for identification and services. Oregon falls within the lowest 10% of states in the lack of funding, yet maintains the highest requirements for implementation.

Why Is this Population of Learners Important?

Why is this population of learners so in need of identification, services, and funding?

Nationally, talented and gifted children exist in all socio-economic groups, all races, all ethnicities, and are in all classrooms in Oregon. These students include our future leaders, doctors, educators, attorneys and our future problem solvers, critical thinkers, and inventors. If they are not identified, they cannot be served, and the growth and intellectual capital of their potential as contributors to the Oregon society has been denied to all of us. Through this indifference, the purposeful identification and required services have been stymied and all but stalemated by the lack of attention, funding, and support for this population of Oregon students, our most able learners. This population includes students who have been identified and those

who are yet to be identified because of cultural bias and cultural perceptions. The Oregon education statutes address the needs of this population by defining the “special educational programs or services or both . . . in order to realize their contribution to self and society . . .” [Oregon Revised Statute, 343.395(4)]¹⁶. The current course is limitless for these learners. The chartered course, however, comes with the limitations of funding.

“Essentially, gifted children tend to view the world in nontraditional ways; they are divergent thinkers.”¹⁷ Because these students are quite often divergent thinkers with unique learning abilities and attributes, multiple myths have prevailed about how *easy* their lives must be. Instead of supporting the belief that gifted children also have the right to learn something new each day, the prevailing myths continue.

Common Myths about TAG Learners

The following myths, although resoundingly untrue are pervasive beliefs among the general public, in classrooms and among teachers and administrators even today. The group of common misunderstandings about Talented and Gifted Learners is based on the following statements:

- Gifted kids do not require anything special. They will get it anyway.
- Gifted kids can teach themselves. If they are so smart, why can’t they figure it out?
- Gifted kids can read a book in the back of the room, while everyone else gets caught up on what they don’t know. He or she already knows this stuff.
- Gifted kids can help the overworked teacher by becoming the second teacher in the room.

UNDERLYING MYTHS ABOUT GIFTED CHILDREN¹⁸

Myths common in the public perception of gifted learners:

They have everything going their way.
 They can succeed without help.
 Their special abilities are always prized by their families.
 They should be valued primarily for their brain power.
 They are more stable and more mature emotionally.
 They have gotten “something for nothing.”
 They naturally want to be social isolates.

Myths common among parents and educators:

They are not aware of being different unless some tells them they are.
 They will reveal their giftedness.
 Their giftedness needs to be emphasized about all else.
 They need constant challenge by others if they are to achieve.
 They need to be disciplined more than other children.
 They should assume extra responsibility of others.
 They enjoy serving as “examples” for other children.

Current Status of Gifted Education in the State of Oregon

Gifted education in Oregon can easily be aligned to the three charges outlined in Senate Bill 330 with the language, “the task force shall determine:”¹⁹

- a) The resources that are needed to provide instruction to talented and gifted children
- b) The appropriate level of funding for instruction of talented and gifted children, including potential methods of funding; and
- c) The number of children who would benefit from instruction of talented and gifted children.

For the purposes of this report, “instruction” is also considered “services.”

In the year-long study embarked upon by the Talented and Gifted Education Task Force, multiple inter-related topics emerged. As a result, the initial study yielded the following results which are aligned to the initial charges of the TAG Task Force as outlined in Senate Bill 330:

CHARGE “A”: The resources that are needed to provide instruction to talented and gifted children:

INSTRUCTION AND SERVICES

- Instruction for TAG students is currently delivered through these modes: the differentiation of instruction, acceleration, or enrichment.
- There is no licensure (certification/endorsement) for teachers.
- Districts attempt to be compliant, despite the lack of state funding.
- The level of current funding supports compliance, not assistance

CHARGE “B”: The appropriate level of funding for instruction of talented and gifted children, including potential methods for providing funding;

FUNDING

- Districts receive no funding for mandated TAG services for the 40,375 students which is approximately 7.3% of Oregon’s total student population.
- Major inequities exist between districts in the amount of local funds.
- National Javits Grants have dried up.
- Funding for TAG services in Oregon has declined from \$1 million in 1978-1979 to the current \$350,000 per biennium funded at the Oregon Department of Education in support

of a TAG Specialist. The current funds provide for one Talented and Gifted Education Specialist at the Oregon Department of Education and 50% of an administrative support for the specialist. The designated funds assist in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the specialist including conference registration and attendance, travel in support of districts around the state, and TAG corrective action monitoring and support.

When asked if money should be carved out for TAG within the existing budget, one educator resoundingly stated an aversion to the “robbing Peter to pay Paul” method in the following:

“Although I do not agree that other budget reduction strategies should be employed to increase funding for TAG, I would be remiss if I did not state that continued decreased funding overall will result in more reductions across the district. Reduced resources will result in reduced TAG identification/ services across the board – regardless of what Oregon law states. There is only so much pressure the system can absorb.”²⁰

A second district educator comments:

“Funding for TAG needs to be sent to districts with the stipulation that it be used for TAG training, curriculum and instruction. Funds for this are important!”²¹

Charge “C”: The number of children who would benefit from instruction as talented and gifted children.

The number of children who would benefit from instruction as talented and gifted students is best addressed in the chart below, which outlines Oregon’s current student population by gender, race/ethnicity, and economic status. The data reveal that TAG identification is unevenly distributed among Oregon’s population of students. TAG identification is disproportionate to the state’s population in race and ethnicity.

Table 2

Identification of Talented and Gifted Learners in Oregon				
	Students in Subgroup	Students identified as TAG	Percent of TAG students belonging to this subgroup	Percent of All Students belonging to this subgroup
Total	553,279	40,375	100.00%	100.00%
Gender				
Female	269,149	18,921	46.86%	48.65%
Male	284,130	21,454	53.14%	51.35%
Race/Ethnicity				
White (non-Hispanic)	361,083	30,113	74.58%	65.26%
Multiracial (non-Hispanic)	26,416	2,341	5.80%	4.77%
Black/African American (non-Hispanic)	13,900	518	1.28%	2.51%
Hispanic	116,391	3,406	8.44%	21.04%
American Indian/Alaskan Native (non-Hispanic)	9,774	291	0.72%	1.77%
Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)	3,662	123	0.30%	0.66%
Asian (non-Hispanic)	22,053	3,583	8.87%	3.99%
Economically Disadvantaged				
Economically Disadvantaged	291,905	9,736	24.11%	52.76%
Not Economically Disadvantaged	261,374	30,639	75.89%	47.24%

Table 2: Oregon State Report Card, 2011-2012 School Year, Oregon Department of Education²²

The Oregon identification of Talented and Gifted learners includes two categories that encompass very forward thinking about the extensive population of students who could or should be identified as TAG students. Oregon Administrative Rules 581-022-1310 paragraphs (2)(a) and (e) address a more expansive group as outlined in the following:

“Districts shall make efforts to identify students from ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, and students who are culturally different or economically disadvantaged.”²³

“Despite a student’s failure to qualify under paragraphs (d) (A) and (B) of this subsection, district, by local policies and procedures, shall identify students who demonstrate the potential to perform at the 97th percentile.”²⁴

The statements to serve all students demonstrates the intent of the lawmakers to match the state’s diverse population of learners through language to provide encouragement by recognizing special populations of learners and by recognizing students who almost hit the 97th percentile benchmark with the language “potential to perform.” This language adjusts for diverse needs while couching the terms in an encouraging format. However, within the state, there is a diversity lag in Talented and Gifted Education.

**The First Troubling Trend in Talented and Gifted Education:
Under Identification**

Four troubling trends emerged in the Task Force study. The trends dovetail into the Governor Kitzhaber’s current statewide educational initiatives outlined by the Oregon Education Investment Board, OEIB, in a December 2011 publication.²⁵

The current status of Talented and Gifted Education in Oregon as indicated in the following chart outlines the state TAG identification data for the last six years. The chart includes total state student enrollment numbers and the total number of identified TAG students, and the percent of identified gifted students is derived from the Statewide Spring Membership Count. The number of students identified as TAG is an unduplicated count, meaning the students who are counted are only counted in one category, even if they qualified in both mathematics and reading, for example.

Table 3

Trend Data in Oregon Talented and Gifted Education - Student Identification²⁶			
School Year	State Enrollment	Total Number Identified TAG (unduplicated count)	Percent Total Population Identified as TAG
2011-2012	553,279	40,375	7.30%
2010-2011	561,328	41,698	7.54%
2009-2010	561,696	42,065	7.6%
2008-2009	564,044	41,374	7.5%
2007-2008	564,757	42,463	7.5%
2006-2007	561,681	42,517	7.6%

Table 3: Oregon Statewide Annual Report Cards, data derived from 2006 through 2012

<http://www.ode.stateor.us/search/page/?id=1821>

“Districts can no longer absorb the lack of funding for gifted education.”

The trend shows that TAG students are declining at a rate faster than overall enrollment. For example, overall student enrollment decreased by 0.07% from 2009-10 to 2010-11. However, TAG students decreased .87% during the same period. Similarly overall student enrollment decreased by 1.43% from 2010-11 to 2011-12. However, TAG students decreased by 3.17% during the same period. This means that TAG students are leaving the districts at a faster rate than the overall student population. It also means that districts are not continuing to adequately identify TAG students.

“Oregon has thousands of talented and gifted children. They come from all sub-groups such as ELL and Sp Ed, making their educational needs even more complicated. Students who come from poverty are the most likely to fail to achieve their full potential.

TAG Services in the State of Oregon reflect the lack of funding and the lack of will to identify and serve our gifted students. Larger school districts can support this population in a more systematic way than the smaller districts, but when the funding for this sub-group of students is compared to the funding of other sub-groups, it is found to be much less. The expectation that these students will do well without advanced, explicit instruction, with a focus on their ability to learn quickly and comprehend at greater depth and complexity, is misinformed.

Acknowledgement and support for these students at the State level and by the Legislature would shine a light on the special needs of this group of children. The strength and growth of Oregon depends on the appropriate education of all our children.”²⁷

Although these gifted children exist in our statewide student population, if no identification is employed, it follows that there are no appropriate services. The lack of meaningful and appropriate services includes the most urgent unmet need, the requirement for appropriate instruction. Specific TAG instruction is defined in the following Oregon Administrative Rule 581-022-1330 (4), “The instruction provided to identified students shall be designed to accommodate their assessed levels of learning and accelerated rates of learning.” When districts are not incentivized to identify these students, they are clearly failing to serve them.

The Second Troubling Trend in Talented and Gifted Education: Equity and Access Across Oregon Districts

The 197 districts in Oregon include the 18 Single School District Charter Schools all of which have designed their district charter agreements with the Oregon Department of Education to exclude providing Talented and Gifted Education. This is permitted by Oregon Charter School Law. The absence of Talented and Gifted Education in the single district charter schools is based on “not declaring” in the single school total district’s charter. The district must declare that it will provide services; the 18 single district charters have not declared, so they are not accountable to provide TAG identification and services.

Of the 197 school districts, there are currently 18 single district charter schools, thus leaving 179 districts that are required to provide TAG programs and services as directed by Oregon education Statutes and Rules. Within the most recent data review, the following information supports the decline in gifted identification statewide:

In an Oregon Department of Education study of the fidelity to the requirement to identify and serve TAG students, the following information about the 197 school districts came to light:

Of the districts in Oregon that are not single school charter districts, 67 districts or 37.4% of the total districts in Oregon are identifying zero students or are under-identifying at less than 2% of the total district population.

- Thirty-one (31) school districts not designated single district charters have identified zero (0) students as Talented and Gifted as of the Spring Membership Count, 2012.
- An additional 36 school districts have identified less than 2% of their total student population as of the Spring Membership Count, 2012.
- This creates a total of 67 districts or 37.4% of the remaining districts that are significantly under-identifying TAG students.
- The remaining 112 districts that *are identifying* TAG students comprise only 62.56% of the total Oregon school districts.

As a result, the non-identified and under-identified students are being denied an equal opportunity for an education that could be more appropriate for them as possible TAG students. Again, this population is under-identified and therefore is under-served, even though these students are potentially our future engineers, doctors, civic leaders, innovators and creators across all of Oregon. The causes for this suppressed identification may be multiple, but a large reason could be when there is no money attached to the students' needs, there is no guarantee that students will have an opportunity to reach their full potential.

**The Third Troubling Trend in Talented and Gifted Education:
Oregon as a State Falls Behind**

In the December 2011, Oregon Education Investment Board Report (OEIB) to the Legislature, the current deficit situation of Oregon Education and Oregon society was clearly outlined, in the following statements which cited “troubling trends.”

Troubling Trends

“Never has education been more important in the lives and fortunes of Oregonians and our communities. Yet, Oregon is falling behind. Our current generation of young adults – ages 25-34 – is less educated than their parents’ generation, with fewer earning a certificate or degree beyond high school.”

Societal Context

The social context of the troubling trends is. . . “made all the more challenging by increasing rates of poverty among households with children and persistent gaps for children of color.”²⁸

**The Fourth Troubling Trend:
The Oregon Talented and Gifted Achievement Gap**

While the OEIB addresses the achievement gap for specific populations of learners in poverty and in racial and ethnic groups, it should be clearly noted that among those children, there are also high ability learners. The challenge of providing minimal support to overcome the achievement gap based on poverty, race, and ethnicity is found equally in children who start out behind and may never catch up who also show great potential to be identified as gifted.

The OEIB aspirations for Oregon’s culture are designed to perpetuate a new focus on engaging students to achieve their potential as lifelong learners and contributors to our economic and civic life. However, these aspirations negate one population. That population is our Talented and Gifted Learners. In the great desire to create a much needed culture of excellence, the efforts and abilities of our most able learners, the Talented and Gifted Learners, have yet to be singled out as a second population of students who are equally in need of reaching their full potential. In a review of our gifted and talented students, there is equally a Talented and Gifted Achievement Gap.

Globally, talented and gifted children exist in all socio-economic groups, all races, all ethnicities, and are in all classrooms in Oregon. However, the purposeful identification and required services have been stymied and all but stalemated by the lack of attention, funding, and support for this population of Oregon students. This population includes students who have been identified and

yet, have been woefully underserved and those who are yet to be identified because of cultural bias and cultural perceptions, a general malaise in priorities about this population.

In a corollary approach, Senate Bill 253 which established the most aggressive high school and college completion goals of any state in the country did not address our talented and gifted population. Equally, Senate bill 909 which called for the creation of a unified, student centered system of public education from preschool through graduation school (P-20) to achieve the state's educational outcomes, did not address our talented and gifted population.

Neither Senate Bill 253 nor Senate Bill 909 specifically addressed the needs, abilities, and lifelong aspirations of those students who are identified as Talented and Gifted.^{29/30} The broad implication that this group of learners will be “all right” sends a strong message supporting the “Quiet Crisis” in gifted education in the State of Oregon.

FINDINGS

The findings outlined below are aligned to the topics outlined in Senate Bill 330. The Task Force on the Education of Talented and Gifted Children unanimously voted to approve the following findings.

“The resources that are required to provide instruction to talented and gifted children.”

Charge in Item “A” Instruction and Services

- Districts are struggling to comply with the state Talented and Gifted Education Mandate.
- Services do not adequately reflect the goals envisioned by the TAG Mandate of 1987.
- There is no Talented and Gifted Education licensure for teachers or administrators through the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC).
- Services are inconsistently delivered across the state.
- The services provided do not necessarily reflect the best practice programming (instruction and services) for TAG students.
- Instruction for TAG students is currently delivered through the differentiation of instruction, acceleration, and enrichment.
- Teachers who are tasked with delivering TAG instruction lack access to professional development to improve their craft in appropriate instruction for TAG students in their classrooms.
- The TAG Task Force survey suggests that districts lack the staff and funding to provide adequate services to identified TAG learners.
- The lack of statewide infrastructure about TAG does not support district to implement appropriate TAG services.
- Districts attempt to maintain a commitment to these learners despite the lack of state funding.
- Federal legislation contained in the No Child Left Behind Act, skewed priorities for districts with an emphasis on lower performing learners requiring a “benchmark” level for all students, rather than emphasizing optimal growth for all which would have included an appropriate emphasis for students above benchmark.

“The appropriate level of funding for instruction of talented and gifted children”

Charge in Item “B” Funding

- Districts receive no direct funding for the “Mandated” TAG services to the 40,375 identified TAG students who represent 7.3% of the current state enrollment.
- Major inequities exist between districts in the amount of local funds used for TAG services.
- Funding of TAG services dropped from a high level of \$1 million in 1978-1979 to \$350,000 per biennium. The current amount is to support a TAG Specialist at the Oregon Department of Education. There is no flow-through funding to Oregon school districts.
- The current state appropriation of \$350,000 per biennium funds the ODE TAG Specialist as a full-time employee and pays for one-half FTE administrative support. Additional funds cover travel around the state, conference attendance, and visits for corrective action monitoring. For a statewide program serving 40,375 students, this provides only one person at ODE with oversight of a statewide population of learners. This position requires support to Oregon’s 197 districts, including individual school personnel, teachers, school administrators and parents of gifted students.
- Funding is inadequate to support implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and oversight of a large population of learners with diverse needs.
- The current funding structure reinforces and perpetuates the prevailing myths about Talented and Gifted learners, creating inadequate and inequitable services.

“The number of children who would benefit from instruction as talented and gifted children”

Charge in Item “C” Identification

- The number of Identified students currently identified is 40,375 or 7.3% of the total student population in the 2011-2012 school year.
- Racial and ethnic data on page 16 reveals that the districts are not identifying TAG students in proportion to the racial and ethnic data.
- School districts have many ways to identify students through the multiple instruments that are approved for TAG identification. However, the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) is the single most commonly used instrument for TAG identification. The lack of cost to districts is a large factor.

- Schools need guidance and technical support on the identification of under-represented populations, as demonstrated by the under identification of racial and ethnic populations.
- Identification is inconsistently applied across the state with 31 districts identifying -0- students and 36 districts identifying less than 2% of their total student population. The result is a total of 37% of the districts that could be identifying and serving TAG students are not doing so, either by total lack of identification or under-identification.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Current provision of services to meet the needs of Talented and Gifted students is not uniform across the state. The lack of any uniformity, high standards, and necessary state-wide infrastructure has led to a patchwork of services across the state.

As a result of the in-depth study of Talented and Gifted Education in the State of Oregon, the Talented and Gifted Education Task Force on the Education of Talented and Gifted Children recommends the following systemic, comprehensive, and infrastructure changes in Talented and Gifted Education:

Create a uniform plan for Talented and Gifted Education, commonly titled the “OREGON STATE PLAN FOR TALENTED AND GIFTED EDUCATION”

Elements of the Oregon State Plan for Talented and Gifted would include the following five elements:

1. Student Assessment, Identification of TAG Students
2. Service Design, Delivery of Services to TAG Students
3. Curriculum and Instruction for teachers and administrators
4. Professional Development on these aligned topics
 - Student Identification
 - Service Design
 - Curriculum
 - Instruction
 - Adaptations for Special Population of Gifted Learners, including Twice-Exceptional
 - Professional Development on the National Association for the Gifted Standards for Teacher Proficiencies in Talented and Gifted
 - Focused and On-going Meetings with the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission with the goal to establish a Teacher Certification/Endorsement in Talented and Gifted Education
 - Investigation and coordination of teacher licensure with the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practice Commission
5. Family and Community Involvement

Creating the Oregon State Plan for Talented and Gifted Education would:

- Align resources to support the needs of Talented and Gifted learners in the state.
- Provide direction to the state to create uniform standards for the provision of TAG services.
- Provide a consistent and easy to understand framework for parents, educators and state stakeholders that would identify the population to be served and the services to be provided.
- Provide a rubric that would enable districts and their stakeholders to assess and evaluate districts on their provision of talented and gifted services.
- Provide a means to disseminate evidence based best practices that can be used by each district to meet the needs of its talented and gifted population.
- Allow for Talented and Gifted Education alignment to the Common Core State Standards with an specific application for TAG students.

Oregon's State Plan for Talented and Gifted Education Funding Request in Implementation Years

In order to fully support the TAG State Plan, statewide infrastructure must also be developed. Infrastructure includes:

- Creating professional development to provide the teachers in the classrooms with the skills they need to reach this diverse student population.
- Creating a robust data system to longitudinally track this student population to measure success.
- Establishment of staff in order to continually monitor and improve the TAG State Plan, professional development tools, and data system.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND COSTS

Oregon statewide TAG plan implementation

The most effective and efficient means of implementing the TAG State Plan requires a four-year roll out period.

First Year

The first year would create the TAG State Plan and also develop necessary infrastructure to implement and monitor the TAG State Plans' success. Resources would be provided to the Oregon Department of Education to fund staff for

- Create the Oregon State TAG Plan. This includes input for TAG stakeholders and users of the TAG State Plan.
- Develop a statewide data collection system for longitudinal data. This could be modifying existing data systems.
- Create profession development tools for educators of Talented and Gifted students.

Total costs for the first year are estimated at \$500,000 for necessary state resources.

Second Year

The second year, ODE staff will work with districts to create their own TAG plans that align with the TAG State Plan. This will require outreach and education on the part of ODE staff. The second year will:

- Ensure districts write TAG plans aligned to the Oregon State TAG Plan.
- Ensure that the state provides maximum flexibility to districts to create TAG Plans that maximize the districts' ability to provide services within the individual parameters of the districts.
- Ensure continued development of data systems, with district input, to track TAG students across all districts.
- Refine and adapt professional development tools for educators of TAG students.

Total costs for the second year are estimated at \$500,000 for necessary state resources.

Third Year

The third year provides resources to a limited number of districts to aid in implementing district TAG plans that align with the TAG State Plan. Districts will be chosen based on the alignment of their district plan, identified needs and identified methods to continue providing of TAG

resources once start-up costs are provided. The third year will provide the state with the following outcomes:

- Data on how districts of different sizes and locations implement the TAG State Plan to fit their needs.
- Data tracking the outcomes of TAG students in various districts which have implemented district plans aligned with TAG State Plan.
- Data collection systems that maximize usable data and minimize impact on district data collection efforts.
- Evidenced-based best practices that can be implemented across districts of the same characteristics.
- Professional development systems and infrastructure, including pre-licensure development, to assist districts in meeting TAG State Plan requirements.

The total costs for the second year are \$1,000,000. This includes \$500,000 to continue ODE staffing for TAG State Plan implementation, provision of professional development tools, data systems maintenance and data analysis. The other \$500,000 will go to districts as competitive grants to implement the TAG State Plan. Priority will be given to districts that have demonstrated success, or demonstrate an ability to dramatically improve the success of talented and gifted students. Further, the grants will go to fund TAG State Plan implementation at districts of varying sizes and locations.

Fourth Year

The fourth year implements the plan state-wide. Statewide implementation includes:

- Dissemination of best practices.
- Provision of professional development for educators.
- Provision range of services and evidence-based recommendations for districts to improve success.
- Informing parents of talented and gifted services available for students at their district.
- Provision of quality measurable data on the successful outcomes to districts.

The total costs for the fourth year are \$5,500,000. This includes \$500,000 to continue ODE staffing for TAG State Plan implementation, provision of professional development tools, data systems maintenance and data analysis. The other \$5,000,000 will go to districts as grants to help implement the TAG State Plan as best fits their district. This \$5,000,000 will be an ongoing funding to maintain the quality infrastructure created and ensure success of the TAG State Plan.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes required of the Oregon State Plan for Talented and Gifted Education are simple. The outcomes ensure that all talented and gifted students reach their full potential and the state will meet its 40-40-20 goal. Measuring student outcomes, showing individual improvement and providing teachers with the necessary skills to assist this population will ensure that all Talented and Gifts students contribute to the statewide success of the 40-40-20 goal.

Successful implementation of the Oregon State Plan for Talented and Gifted Education goes beyond the 40-40-20 goal. Talented and gifted students have the opportunities to create, innovate and lead Oregon into the next generation. They have the opportunity to create new businesses of which Oregon has not yet dreamed. They have the ability to create jobs for Oregon where none existed. They also have the ability to provide the highly skilled workforce that employers need to continue to invest in Oregon.

Simply put, a successful Oregon State Plan for Talented and Gifted Education ensures continued and future success for all of Oregon by providing the next generation of creators, thinkers and leaders with the tools they need to succeed.

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APPENDIX 1

Senate Bill 330 - TAG Education Task Force Membership

Professional Educators in Gifted Education

Kathi Robinson, Ed. D., Executive Director, School Improvement, Hillsboro School District

Ricki Schuberg-Myers, TAG Services Coordinator, Salem-Keizer School District

District Administrators with Oversight of TAG Programs

Kevin Bogatin, Assistant Superintendent, Corvallis School District

Paul Weill, Curriculum Director, Springfield School District

Brian Wolf, Superintendent, Harrisburg School District

Higher Education/University Liaison

Marjorie DeBuse, Ph.D., Director – Youth Enrichment/Talented and Gifted, College of Education, University of Oregon

Parent of Gifted Children

Mark Ritter, Lake Oswego School District

Affiliated Education Associations

Margaret DeLacy, Ph.D., Oregon Association for the Talented and Gifted (OATAG)

Kris Howatt, President, Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA)

Oregon Department of Education Representatives (Non-voting members)

Rebecca Blocher, Talented and Gifted Education Specialist, Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation, Oregon Department of Education

Michael S. Elliott, Fiscal Analyst, School Finance, Office of Finance & Administration, Oregon Department of Education

Cindy Hunt, Government and Legal Affairs Manager, Office of the Superintendent, Oregon Department of Education

Theresa Richards, Ed.D., Director, Teaching and Learning Team, Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation, Oregon Department of Education

Stephanie Parks, Administrative Support, Teaching and Learning Team, Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation, Oregon Department of Education

Debbie Shannon, Administrative Support, Teaching and Learning Team, Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation, Oregon Department of Education

APPENDIX 2

TAG Task Force Meeting Topics of Study and Research

The members of the TAG Task Force were very invested in becoming knowledgeable about the context in which talented and gifted education occurs in Oregon. This included looking at the currently established programming and instructional practices and enrichment opportunities. Community members with expertise in specific domains were invited to present to the Task Force. Data was gathered on current district practices by creating and surveying districts through a statewide survey, sent out in May 2012 to all 197 districts.

Other initiatives included forecasting the on-going need of the “fit” for gifted learners in the context of the changing atmosphere of education in Oregon, including the impact of the current realignment all education PK– 20, but especially through the Oregon Education Investment Board. The TAG Task Force sought to determine, the fit for talented and gifted education with new initiatives in the educational realignment PK–20 through the OEIB.

TAG Task Force initiated the following meeting topics and purposes as outlined below:

October 2011

Introductory Meeting: Procedures and Purpose

December 2011

Review of Senate Bill 330: How is our work defined in the questions presented in the bill? What are the definitions within the questions? What are the implications of each question?

January 2012

Guest Speaker: Brian Reeder, ODE Assistant Superintendent

Topic: Overview of Oregon Education & Investment Board (OEIB)

TAG Funding at district levels without legislated funding

February 2012

Task Force Sub-Committees established:

- Survey Committee
- Achievement Data, Request to report achievement data
- Oregon Business Council and/or OEIB
- Status: Current Teacher Certification/ TSPC TAG Endorsement

March 2012

All Committees Reported: Survey Subcommittee, and Oregon Business Council and OEIB, and TAG Student Data

Presentations:

- Dr. Marji DeBuse, University of Oregon - Current Pre-Service TAG Coursework at all Oregon Institutions of Higher Education
- Andrea Morgan, ODE Specialist in Social Studies: Current Instructional Practices; Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs

April 2012

Presentation: Keith Menk, Deputy Director, Oregon Teacher Practice Standards Commission (TSPC)

Topic question: What would be required for teachers to have available a certificate or endorsement in gifted education?

May 2012

Presentation: Margie Lowe, Governor's Office, Oregon Education Investment Board (in place of Mark Nesbitt)

Work Product: TAG Survey sent to all Oregon School Districts; Early Data Review and Confidentiality Agreement

June 2012

Michael Elliott, Fiscal Analyst, State School Fund and TAG: Weights and Grants, Funding discussion within task force

July 2012

Presentations:

- Common Core State Standards & TAG: Cheryl Kleckner, ODE
- Proficiency Based Instruction: Diane Smith, BEC
- Colorado Growth Model: Jon Wiens, ODE

August 2012

Work Session, Review of Information with vote on temporary findings and recommendations to date.

September 2012

Final Work Session with final vote on findings, recommendations, and reporting format.