

Brenda Ray Scott

March 11, 2013

Sara Gelsler, Chair <rep.saragelsler@state.or.us>
Rep. Jeff Reardon, Vice-Chair <rep.jeffreardon@state.or.us>
Rep. Sherrie Sprenger, Vice-Chair <rep.sherriesprenger@state.or.us>
House Education Committee
Oregon House of Representatives
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Via Email (as noted)

Re: House Bill 2877

Dear Chair Gelsler, Vice-Chair Reardon, and Vice-Chair Springer,

I am writing to you as the parent of a TAG identified child, the chair of the Portland Public Schools TAG Advisory Council, and a committed TAG activist through OATAG because I am not able to be with you in Salem at today's hearing. The views expressed in this letter are my own. Your positive vote on House Bill 2877 sponsored by Representative Parrish is essential to providing funding and strengthening and sustaining the state of Oregon's commitment to helping TAG students receive the services they need to learn at their potential. As cited in "The Quiet Crisis in Talented and Gifted Education in the State of Oregon" published on October 1, 2012, current funding for TAG services provides for only one full-time employee and one-half FTE to provide support to 197 districts throughout the state including working directly with administrators, educators, and parents. Further, the funding does not flow through to individual districts leaving them to provide TAG services via 'unfunded mandate.' An increase in funding leads to increased capacity and eventually to increased services and opportunities for TAG students throughout the State of Oregon.

Dedicated funding is essential to providing more support and services for these underserved students. For my TAG student, most of her opportunities are limited to differentiation in the classroom instruction. At the best of times, that differentiation is limited and at the worst of times it is difficult to identify or non-existent. Other opportunities include experiences that are funded primarily through additional tuition or fee-for-service arrangements. More robust and stable funding is essential to providing TAG students with the service that they need and districts with the resources they need to provide these services.

TAG students need support and services in much the same way as other students with special needs. Without the funding for support and services, our gifted students might be left behind as low-achieving because they didn't get the opportunities or support needed to explore their gifts. Much like the athlete without a coach, TAG students lacking support and services are left on the sidelines without having the opportunity to give their best, championship winning best performance.

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Your support in moving the discussion on this very important bill is essential. With your help, we can take the a large step in the right direction to address Item “B” Funding, which the “The Quiet Crisis” report identifies as “The appropriate level of funding for instruction of talented and gifted children.”

Let’s move TAG funding to a level where all students and their families receive the support and services they need to be successful!

Sincerely,

Brenda Ray Scott

Brenda Ray Scott
Chair, Portland Public Schools – TAG Advisory Council
Liaison, Portland Public Schools - Llewellyn School TAG
Board member, Oregon Association of Talented and Gifted (OATAG)

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