

I'm writing to support passage of this bill.

I have two boys who were both TAG identified in first and second grade. Schools pay lip service to TAG, and they identify kids, and they write up school plans full of things that don't actually happen at the school, and that is all. There has been no difference in my boys' education before and after TAG identification. A couple of teachers have wanted to give them more homework rather than more appropriate homework, wanting them to do the regular homework as well as something more challenging. My kids have asked me in the past "when does TAG start?" and "why am I being punished for being in TAG with more homework?"

Money is not available for TAG at a level that makes any difference. School administration falls back on "differentiation" any time you talk with them about TAG services. Well, the reality is that something that is not funded is not important, and a teacher cannot effectively differentiate in a classroom of 28 kids at a variety of levels. The kids who are not performing are given the extra time, attention, pulled out for individual or small group work with a teacher, etc. Kids who are at the top of their class are ignored, asked to help a struggling student with their work, or told to wait while others catch up. It is heartbreaking as a parent to see your children's gifts not being nurtured, and to have a child who spent most of grade school hating it because it was boring.

My younger son started this year in math by scoring 96 on a pretest. How engaged/challenged do you think he is sitting in a class where he already knows the material? And the school does nothing with this information.

I could provide many more examples, but the point is that TAG is currently a useless, pointless endeavor by schools that have to jump through enough hoops to act like they are complying. PPS for the first time has admitted that they are not in compliance. They have never been in compliance. And this bill provides some funding for TAG, which schools can use to actually do something helpful for TAG students instead of continuing to ignore their needs. Funding is prioritizing TAG, empowering TAG, and sending a message to the schools that this is important and needs to happen. Children should not have to wait until college to be challenged and engaged. We are wasting generation after generation of the brightest kids waiting for a fix.

Please support this bill. It's so important to the kids who are getting left behind, the brightest minds in the schools who are slowly burning out on education because it is so inappropriate to their abilities.

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