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On Behalf Of:  
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Measure: SB595

Equity includes meeting ALL students' educational needs. As a PPS parent of two TAG kids, and a classroom volunteer, I have seen what happens to gifted kids as they move through school. Unfortunately for my now 8th grade son, I was too pro-public school. I tried finding focus option schools that were supposed to be more geared toward student-driven projects or STEM, but these still left him reading books in a corner because he was bored or already worked through the materials provided. I saw this with my own eyes and even had his 3rd grade teacher (who was the TAG coordinator for the school!) tell me she just didn't have any curriculum that could meet his rate and level. We have been denied single subject acceleration multiple times because the "schedule doesn't align." I hired after school tutors at my son's request so he could "do math with someone" instead of worksheets alone or no math at all during classroom instructional time. I sent him to weekend and summer math and science camps, and numerous other activities and groups to try to keep him engaged. It was not enough to counter the years of day in, day out lack of learning in each traditional classroom. By keeping him in PPS, he has lost all confidence in his intelligence and lost the desire to explore the things that interest him. I now see how devastating it was keeping him in classrooms that lack TAG supports, TAG-trained teachers and TAG funding. That perspective is both depressing and affirming. Affirming because since then, I pulled my now second grader out of PPS and put her in a gifted private school. I can see how in just a few months, this has totally changed her trajectory. She is with similar peers, supported by teachers who are trained in guiding gifted students and fostering deeper learning. Unlike her brother's experience, she spends her school hours learning! He spent many of his school hours sitting, waiting. It makes me cringe to think of the hours every week where he did nothing but read books that he brought just so he would have something to do during "instructional time." TAG kids deserve the same number of learning hours as any other student. Please support the bills that support TAG students. They matter. Their minds matter. Thank you.