



March 17, 2009

Senate Bill 3 Testimony

The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT) is a statewide non-profit educational association that represents nearly 3000 members, most of whom are educators and parents of high potential students identified as gifted and talented under Texas law. TAGT provides extensive continuing education opportunities about gifted education and gifted student development for educators as well as parents. Additionally, TAGT is committed to advocating for the unique educational needs of this population.

On behalf of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT), I thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill 3. While TAGT is neutral on this bill, on behalf of the association, we offer some suggestions that could greatly strengthen it.

TAGT has been requesting accountability and financial transparency for gifted education programs for many years. In return, TAGT has asked that the state uphold and support the laws and rules passed by previous legislatures that exist to protect the unique educational needs of gifted students.

To that end, TAGT requests that the following language be inserted into the Senate Bill 3:

Insert on page 2:

Section 1 (e)(3)(N): “gifted and talented programs under Subchapter D, Chapter 29”

Explanation: This section states that a school campus or district may not receive an exemption or waiver from providing certain services. Other populations such as bilingual, special education, pre-kindergarten, are protected, as well as extracurricular activities. Identification and services for gifted students are required under state law, and these students and their programs deserve the same protection as other special populations.

Insert on page 74:

Section 47 (c)(6): “gifted and talented programs”

Explanation: This citation would permit a campus to be awarded a distinction designation for particular programs or categories of performance. Gifted programs should be eligible for such an award. It is certainly a significant curricular area, and ties in well with the preceding paragraph on page 73 in section (b) that states “a campus does not...eliminate performance differentials through inhibiting of the highest achieving student subpopulation.”

Insert on page 77:

Section 50 (b)(3)(M): “gifted and talented programs under Subchapter D, Chapter 29”

Explanation: This citation would state that a school campus that holds a distinction designation is not exempt from providing certain services. Other populations such as bilingual, special education, pre-kindergarten, are protected, as well as extracurricular activities. Identification and services for gifted students are required under state law, and these students and their programs deserve the same protection as other special populations.

Insert on page 103:

Section 68 (1)(B): “gifted and talented course”

Explanation: When determining grade point average, specifically designated gifted and talented courses should be included, along with honors, AP, IB, and dual credit courses.

In closing, TAGT asks that gifted students and the programs that serve them receive the same considerations that other groups of specially identified students do. TAGT is committed to the proposition that every child should have the best possible education they can receive, regardless of their gifts, disabilities, or socioeconomic standing. The best means to achieve these goals is to have accountability for all students, including those identified as gifted and talented.

Respectfully submitted by
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