

Submission

Literacy Advisory Panel

Policy & Intergovernmental Relations Division
Department of Premier and Cabinet

Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc.

General information about TAG

Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc. (TAG) is a state-wide association whose primary objective is to provide support to parents and teachers of gifted children. TAG receives no funding from the Tasmanian Government or any other organisation, nor is it formally associated with any education sector. TAG makes no recommendations to members regarding individual school choices. TAG has members who are employed by or have children enrolled at Government, independent and Catholic schools as well as children who are home-schooled. TAG is affiliated with the Australian Association for the Education of Gifted and Talented (AAEGT) and a TAG member holds the position of Tasmanian Representative on the AAEGT board.

Functions and objectives of TAG

TAG provides support to children, parents and teachers from diverse backgrounds. The children range in age from pre-schoolers to secondary students. TAG supports teachers and schools by providing information, resources and professional development opportunities by way of conferences and information sessions. TAG also provides children's activities to meet needs that are not met in schools. Members share information and resources and are supportive of fellow parents of gifted children. Membership of the association is open to all interested groups and individuals. Counselling and the provision of resources to parents who are experiencing difficulties with the various educational sectors in Tasmania forms a large part of TAG's work.

Specific goals of TAG include:

- Support and conduct of activities that provide maximum opportunity for the development of students with gifts and talents

- Use web presence, social media, meetings and conferences to promote:

Parent, teacher and community awareness of the needs and potential of gifted children

Strategies for parents, teachers and others to identify gifted children, including those that may be underachieving and other disadvantaged gifted children

- Promotion of appropriate training of all teachers in the education of gifted children by lobbying Government agencies and Universities
- Collation and distribution of relevant information, advice and research work through direct communication with members, website and social media
- Promotion of flexibility in school programs at all levels to ensure gifted children are provided with appropriate schooling opportunities to allow for their asynchronous development at the level and pace appropriate to their capabilities and developmental stages
- Advocacy and lobbying for improved legislation for the education of gifted children

- Maintenance of a pro-active and effective working relationship with other associations and organisations nationally and internationally that support the needs of gifted and talented children

Gifted children in the population

Professor Francois Gagné, Professor of Psychology, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada, identifies that around 10-15% of the population is gifted. Professor Gagné's work underpins the identification estimates adopted within the Australian Curriculum.

While a majority of these children are mildly gifted, having an IQ score between 115-130, these mildly gifted children, by year 5, are capable of functioning at least one grade level above the majority of their classroom peers.

For those with an IQ score above 130 who are moderately gifted, above 145 (highly gifted), above 160 (exceptionally gifted) and above 180 (profoundly gifted) the gap between the majority of the class and the level at which these gifted children are capable of functioning increases rapidly.

TAG's touchpoint with the Literacy Advisory Panel

TAG supports the implementation of the Government's Literacy Advisory Panel which aims to improve literacy outcomes for all individuals in Tasmania. We consider literacy as a cornerstone to an individual's education. TAG supports all individuals having access to literacy opportunities regardless of where they live or their social, financial and economic circumstances.

TAG would like to see speech screening implemented early in an individual's education – in kindergarten. Speech screening should occur annually throughout early years education throughout all education providers. We also believe that children should undergo comprehensive literacy screening at the start of *every* school year from kindergarten through to year ten (minimum). This will set up and support our children through to young adulthood and enable them with the skills they need to navigate everyday adult tasks such as applying for employment.

In addition, we strongly support a literacy *re-assessment* in Term 3 of schooling from kindergarten through to year ten (minimum). TAG believes individuals should be supported in achieving at least one year of literacy growth, every year, throughout their schooling and regular, standardised literacy screening that occurs more than once a year will set children up for success. Frequent screening will identify and track progress in at risk students; both those children behind developmentally in basic literacy skills despite initial intervention and those students who demonstrate a higher ability in literacy skills than their classroom peers i.e. literacy gifted individuals.

Disappointingly, there was no mention of gifted learners in 'Paper One: Setting the Scene'. Gifted learners have needs as far from the average learner as are the needs of students with a disability. Gifted students are diverse and have a range of abilities and learning styles including individuals that may have asynchronous development. Gifted learners often

require acceleration at various stages in their education by means of grade skipping, use of mentors, multi-age groupings and curriculum compacting (pre-testing for existing knowledge and skipping the 're-learning'). Students that are identified as gifted in literacy must be appropriately accelerated in order to achieve their full potential.

While there has been no referencing for the statements made within this document, scholarly articles support the assertions made and could be sourced if required.

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17th March 2022