

TALENT Act (S.363 / H.R. 2960)

To Aid Gifted and High-Ability Learners by Empowering the Nation's Teachers Act

Success in the 21st century requires a commitment to developing the high levels of talent needed in every field. However, on international comparisons, the performance of top students in the U.S. lags behind other nations.¹ Additionally, few students of color or from poverty in the U.S. are reaching advanced achievement levels.² The failure to support our best students, including those who have the ability to become high achievers, has serious implications for the nation's future and occurs as the federal focus on remediating low achievement has discouraged schools from meeting these students' needs. To address this urgent problem, legislation has been introduced to meet the needs of gifted students and those with the potential to achieve at high levels. *To Aid Gifted and High-Ability Learners by Empowering the Nation's Teachers* (TALENT; S.363/H.R. 2960) Act has four key emphases:

Confront and Address National "Excellence Gaps"

- ⊕ School districts describe in Title I plans how they will identify and serve gifted students, including high-ability children with disabilities and English language learners and other high-ability students who have not been formally identified for gifted programs
- ⊕ States describe in Title I plans how they will support districts in these efforts
- ⊕ Districts use excellence gap analysis for instructional improvements
- ⊕ Include professional development and services that support gifted and high-ability students in the Rural Education Achievement Program

Support Educator Development to Ensure Academic Growth for High-Ability Students

- ⊕ States describe how Title II funds will be used to improve teachers' ability to identify gifted and high-ability students' specific learning needs and tailor instruction appropriately
- ⊕ School districts describe how they will use Title II professional development funds based on an analysis of excellence gap data to support gifted students through instructional strategies such as early entrance to kindergarten, enrichment, acceleration, curriculum compacting, and dual enrollment

Provide Public Transparency of Student Achievement Data

- ⊕ Ensure state assessments measure above-grade level performance
- ⊕ Public disclosure of student performance at each achievement level (not just proficient), broken out by subgroup so the public can hold schools accountable for excellence gaps

Continue Research and Dissemination of Best Practices in Gifted Education

- ⊕ Continue research and development activities exploring how to identify and serve gifted and high-ability students through demonstration grants and the National Center for Research on Gifted Education.
- ⊕ Direct the Secretary of Education to report on how states and districts are analyzing excellence gaps and the steps taken to close such gaps

The TALENT Act provides common sense, no-cost strategies to change America's talent trajectory. We cannot succeed as a nation if only a fraction of the talent pool is excelling. The TALENT Act addresses the persistent challenges that impede school districts from providing appropriate services to all their high-ability students.

¹ Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2012). Approximately 510,000 15-year-olds took the exams in 62 countries. In math, the average percentage of students receiving top scores was 13%; the U.S. had 9% of its students scoring at the top. Compare to Shanghai (55%), Singapore (40%), Korea (31%) and Switzerland (21%).

² For example, in 2013 while 12% of White 8th grade students scored at the advanced level on the NAEP math exam, only 2% of Black and 3% of Hispanic students did so. For low-income students, 2% of 4th graders eligible for free/reduced lunch scored at the advanced level on the NAEP math exam compared to 13% of non-eligible students. Every state reports similar excellence gap data on state assessments.