Supporting Gifted and Talented Students in Federal Initiatives

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March 22, 2015

Scanning the Environment

• New Congress, 71 new Members (+2 3 vacancies)
• Same party leads both House & Senate; new Committee leadership
• Deeply divided House makes compromise with Senate difficult
• Javits Act funding increased in FY2015; state grant competition for first time since 2005
• Educ cmttees have bills to reauthorize Elem & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (aka NCLB)
2 Areas on Which to Focus

• Fund only federal program that focuses on advanced students from underserved populations (Javits Gifted & Talented Students Education Act (“Javits”)), originally created back in 1988
• Strengthen federal K-12 education law (ESEA) to include gifted students

Javits Gifted & Talented Students Education Act

• Sole federal program specifically targeted at GT students.
• Focus on underrepresented students (low-income, minority, ELL, and disabled)
• Demonstration grants to research best ID and service practices (10 awarded in FY14)
• National Center for Research on Gifted Education (grant in FY14)
• Will be competitive state grants in FY 2015
Work GT Students into ESEA

- Confront & address national “excellence gaps”
- Support use of federal professional develop $$ to ensure high-ability students are appropriately challenged so they will have learning growth
- Provide public transparency of achievement data, disaggregating student data at each achievement level
- Continue research & dissemination of best practices with high-ability students

TALENT Act – Senate

- S.363 embodies 4 key areas of focus
- 4 original cosponsors + Senator Grassley
- Supported by 4 national organizations
- Written to be an amendment to ESEA
- HELP cmttee
  - Negotiating among staff to craft a bill that is bipartisan; Mikulski staff making the case to incorporate GT language
  - markup week of 4/13
ESEA / TALENT Act – House

• No TALENT Act introduced (yet)
• Will still focus our messages on amending ESEA to increase federal support for GT students in 4 crucial areas
• HR 5:
  – Local districts may use Title II funds to increase teachers’ ability to meet GT student needs.
  – States may reserve a % of Title II funds for PD on a range of skills, including meeting needs of GT students in new teacher induction and mentoring programs.
• H.R. 5 passed Ed & Workforce Cmte on 2/20 but pulled from House floor because of division among republicans.

Framing the Messages: National & State Perspectives
Big Picture

1. The U.S. is failing to develop high levels of talent compared to the world.

- PISA data (2012)
  - 9% of U.S. students scored at the advanced level in mathematics literacy, compared to an average of 13% across participating countries and 55% in Shanghai.
  - In reading, 8% of U.S. students scored at the advanced level, equal to the average for participating countries.

2. We’re failing to develop advanced talent in all our student populations – especially among poor and minority students.

- NAEP assessment data – excellence gaps @ 4th grade
  - While 10% of white students scored at the advanced level on the math exam in 2013, only 3% of Hispanic students and 1% of black students did likewise. Only 2% of students eligible for free/reduced lunch reached the advanced level in math compared to 13% of non-eligible students.
- State assessment data
- OCR data
  - 29% of high schools with highest enrollment of black and Hispanic students offer calculus (compared to 55% of all)
3. The education needs of GT students are not addressed in federal education policy, which also means students not a priority in local schools.

- No federal accountability for student growth
  - 9 states report on learning gains/growth of GT students as a separate group
- No federal data collection
  - 16 states do not monitor or audit GT programs.
- 77% of teachers say that focus on struggling learners means the needs of advanced students “take a back seat”

4. Teachers are not trained to support these students.

- 65% of teachers have had little to no preparation in addressing the needs of GT students
- Only 3 states require all general education teachers to have some type of training
- Regular classroom is leading GT service model
- GT students not a priority in schools
- Need research into the development of best practices for identifying and serving high achieving and high-potential students
Applying State Details to the “Big Picture”

The Iowa Cheer Team for Gifted
Team characteristics

- Geographical representation: 3 of Iowa's 4 legislative districts. Constituency matters!
- Professional roles: teacher, AEA staff member, higher education, ITAG board members, parent
- Personal characteristics: We LOVE doing this! We LOVE forming the relationships! Relationships matter!

Your Members of Congress

- Know the background of your member of Congress.
- Let previous interactions guide your conversation.
- Find biographical information on website.
- Find committee memberships on website.
- What did we learn, and how did we work that information in our conversation?
Iowa’s Senators

Senator Chuck Grassley

Senator Joni Ernst

Iowa’s Representatives

Rep. Dave Loebsack

Rep. Steve King

Rep. Rod Blum

Rep. David Young
Congressman Dave Loebsack, who grew up in poverty and was raised by a single parent, is living proof of how community support can make a difference in people’s lives. He faced many challenges but with hard work and help from teachers, friends and mentors he was able to overcome his many hardships.

Congressman Rob Blum: For more information concerning work and views related to Education and Opportunity, please contact our office.

Senator Joni Ernst: In November 2014, Joni was elected as the first woman to serve in federal elected office from the State of Iowa and also became the first female combat veteran elected to serve in the United States Senate. In Washington, Joni serves on four Senate committees of major importance to Iowans: Armed Services; Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; and Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Joni is focused on growing a vibrant economy and ensuring the government runs effectively and efficiently which means cutting out-of-control spending, reducing taxes, eliminating harmful regulations and balancing the budget.

Congressman David Young was a Congressional aide for Sen. Grassley. Note to self: Let’s talk to James.

Information We Share

- Number of identified gifted students
- Number of identified gifted students in subcategories (DE has these data)
  - Rural poverty
  - Increasing minority populations in cities
  - Gifted and disabled
  - Gifted and ELL
- Other relevant details
  - Iowa has mandate and funding
  - Endorsement for gifted education teachers
The Javits Message

- Grants to the University of Iowa (Loebsack)
  - Past support
  - Current support: Project TEAMS (Twice Exceptional students Achieving and Matriculating in STEM), received a five-year $2.4M Javits grant
- Research being conducted in school districts through Javits funding (all, but focus on examples from Congressional district)
- Curriculum being used in schools (all, but focus on examples from Congressional district)

The TALENT Act Message

We’re failing to develop high levels of talent, especially with low-income and minority students

- Low-income students in Iowa: 41% of the K-12 population (and increasing every year)
- Low-income students: 20% of the identified gifted population.
- Excellence gap in Iowa (refer to data in packet); we mirror what is happening nationally
- Tailor conversation to demographics and opportunities in Representative’s district (rural, white poor vs. urban)
- Personal experience (Gail vs. Cathy vs. me)
Teacher Preparation

Teachers are not prepared to identify and serve TAG students

- Teacher preparation programs: 1 class session (= 1-3 hours) of instruction on gifted learners.
- Professional development: isn’t offered as often as it should be. (The Iowa DE and ITAG collaborated June 2014 to offer workshops on CCSS and gifted learners in ELA.)
- Instructional strategies developed through GT can benefit other students. Teachers can use these strategies in their non-GT classes.

Federal Leadership Matters

If federal education policy does not address the needs of GT students, state policy may not either.

- A federal voice sends the message that the development and success of gifted students matters.
- Iowa’s GT students will benefit from ESEA revisions.
  - ESEA revisions can help with state-level advocacy (equity for rural schools, more PD, etc.).
  - Iowa Core/Common Core
  - MTSS/RtI
Daily Affirmation

1. You matter.
2. Gifted education matters.
3. Your organization and its members matter.
4. If you don’t tell legislators about gifted education, who will?
5. If you don’t share your message year after year, how will legislators and their staff members remember?

“Old cheerleaders never die. They just find other cheers to perform.”
So What do We Say?

The “Ask”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the House</th>
<th>In the Senate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• We need to increase support for GT students in federal education law.</td>
<td>• Please co-sign the Grassley-Casey dear colleague letter that urges continued funding for the Javits Act in FY 2016. ++</td>
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<tr>
<td>We will contact you to cosponsor the TALENT Act when it is introduced.</td>
<td>• Please cosponsor the TALENT Act, S.363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Please let the Appropriations Cmttee know you support continued funding of</td>
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<td>the Javits Act in FY 2016 ++</td>
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Questions?

Hill Visits

• Packet pick up with Adriane
  – 1 packet per office (add your state factsheet plus whatever you may have brought)
• Senate Dear Colleague letter on Javits
• Copy of S.363 for Senate offices
• Maps / Congressional directories
• State of the Nation
• Hill visit sheets for each visit OR
  http://www.nagc.org/affiliateresourcecenter.aspx
• Meet in lobby BY 7:30 am Tuesday to walk to the Capitol for 8:00.