

17 July 2021

Dear Ms Lisa Paul and members of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review,

I am writing to you as a parent and a teacher of gifted children and am very concerned with the lack of knowledge teachers have around teaching gifted children and also the lack of understanding teachers have for their unique learning styles.

This issue is of personal interest to me because I have seen this not just from a teaching perspective but also as a parent of an identified gifted child who we have had to home school for the past 3 years because of the inequity in schools with no resources and training. In five years we have tried four different schools, both state and Catholic, and interviewed countless others. Only to be told, "Sorry we can't help you, can you provide resources?". This is simply not good enough and not fair. Every child deserves an education, every child deserves to learn.

I have completed my own non-compulsory professional development, joined interstate gifted associations (as Queensland's gifted association have advised they can't offer help outside South East Queensland) and read many different articles and books. These all help me both personally and from a professional perspective but I am only one person.

Many different government enquiries have considered gifted education and reported on the need for initial teacher education to include a compulsory unit on gifted education. Some of these include:

Report by the Senate Select Committee on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children 1988,

Senate Inquiry into the Education of the Gifted and Talented 2001, amongst its hearings found:

"The main theme that emerged in the inquiry is the need for better teacher training (both preservice and inservice) so that teachers are better able to identify the gifted and make provision for their special needs. Better curriculum support is also essential so that teachers can differentiate the curriculum for the gifted."

Productivity Commission Research Report, Schools Workforce, April 2012, which reported:

... "it is also important to recognise the learning needs of gifted and talented students who have the potential to excel beyond the achievements of an average student) ".p268(

Despite all these inquiries, reports, and findings there is still no inclusion of a compulsory unit on gifted education included in initial teacher training. The AITSL teaching standards do not include gifted students anywhere. They are a missing piece of the classroom puzzle.

Quality teaching, and thus a quality education for gifted students is primarily met by teachers in mainstream classrooms. It is essential for teachers during initial teacher training to develop an

understanding in the needs of gifted students and the appropriate pedagogies and identification processes so that can provide a rigorous, engaging learning experience when they start classroom teaching. Queensland Education has an inclusive education policy but this is far from the help teachers need to be able to have the knowledge, resources and classroom help to be able to effectively teach a curriculum that can sometimes be two grade above the age level.

I urge you to make a unit of study in gifted education compulsory in all initial teaching programs across Australia. Only by doing this can we effectively embrace and excel the students who are our countries future innovators and truly say that we teach an inclusive education.

Yours faithfully,

Jessica Logan

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]