

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

I am writing to you as a parent of gifted children, a teacher, and someone passionate about offering suitable opportunities to those who will create a better Australia for all.

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:

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

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.

This issue is of personal interest to me because classrooms are complex environments and those in charge need to be prepared to cater for individuals and their needs. Special options, inclusive education, special education etc have left gifted and talented students and their teachers to struggle for too long, and students sadly miss opportunities to flourish and reach their potential. Australia is the loser.

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.

I urge you to make a unit of study in gifted education compulsory in all initial teaching programs across Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Nicola Smith MEd (Gifted Education)

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AAEGT Member