OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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# RESEARCH BRIEF

Office of Research, Assessment, Data, Accountability, and Reporting

## Talented and Gifted Education: Identification and Representation

Talented and Gifted education, or TAG, serves to identify and support the needs of students with outstanding ability or potential in a range of areas. While intellectual and academic performance is the most commonly associated trait of this group, Oregon recognizes talent in a range of other areas, including creativity, leadership, and artistic ability [ORS 343.395(4)].

> "Talented and gifted children" means those children who require special educational programs or services, or both, beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society and who demonstrate outstanding ability or potential in one or more of the following areas:
> - General intellectual ability
> - Unusual academic ability
> - Creative ability in using original or nontraditional methods in thinking and producing.
> - Leadership ability
> - Ability in the visual or performing arts - ORS 343.395(4)

Oregon law and rule require all districts to create a plan to identify and support TAG students within their district. Districts offer support in a variety of ways, ranging from curricular extensions and supports embedded within the classroom, to dedicated programs or schools that serve primarily or exclusively students identified as TAG. Although Oregon's weighted state school funding formula provides funding for several other student groups that require additional supports, Oregon does not provide additional per-pupil funding for students identified as TAG.

TAG students have specific learning needs, and when not appropriately identified and adequately supported may experience frustration with school leading to disengagement; ultimately, they may not develop their full potential, as all students should. This first brief in a planned series focusing on the experiences of TAG students examines representation and identification challenges.

**Key Takeaways**

- Students from historically disadvantaged racial/ethnic groups and students who are emerging bilinguals are identified for TAG programs at much lower rates than expected given their representation in Oregon's student population. This under-identification has not changed over time, and may reflect underlying achievement and opportunity gaps in addition to potentially inequitable identification methods.
- Students are more commonly identified for TAG services in elementary school (3rd and 4th grade) and rarely move into or out of TAG after 5th grade. The exception is when TAG-identified students change districts, which commonly results in the loss of TAG identification. The lack of later identification may disproportionately impact emerging bilinguals.
- There is substantial variation in TAG identification rates between districts and between school types, with students in small, rural, and virtual settings much less likely to be identified.

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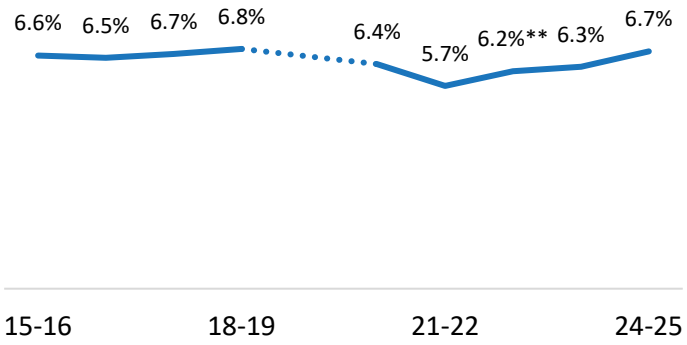
# TAG Identification Rates

Typically, around 6-7% of enrolled students are identified as TAG in a given school year, which is comparable to national rates.[1] While there were some fluctuations immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic,[2] rates have remained relatively stable over the last 10 years. Rates of identification do vary considerably by geography, demographics, and student characteristics. For example, about 1% more male students than female students are identified as TAG in most school years (7.2% of male students vs 6.2% of female students in 2024-25), but dramatically more students who identify as non-binary are identified as TAG (16% in 2024-25).

**Figure 1: TAG Identification Rates**

Percentage of Students Enrolled on the First School Day in May who were Identified as TAG




19-20 data are missing due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

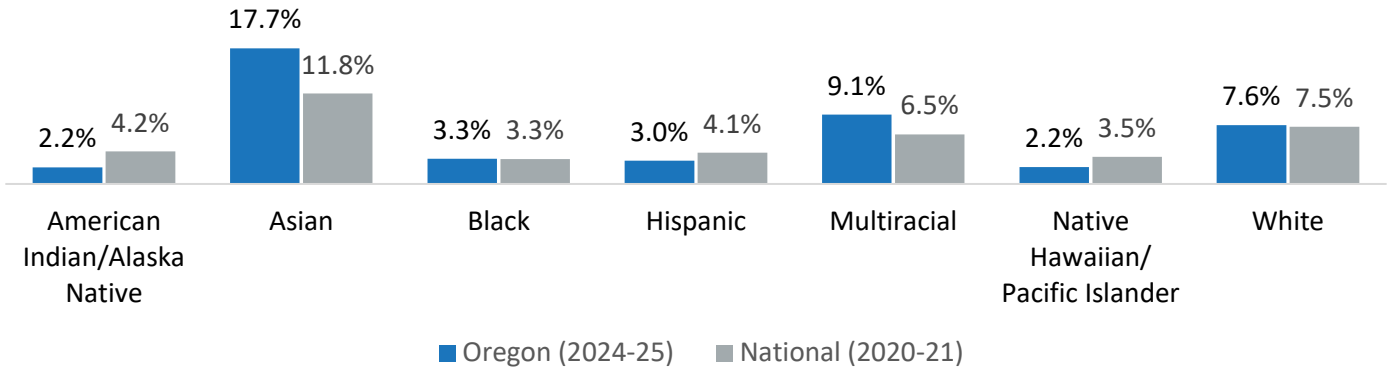
Students with disabilities (served through an Individualized Education Program, or IEP) are much less likely to be identified as TAG (2.3%), while students with disabilities (served through a Section 504 Plan) are slightly more likely (9.3%) to be identified, compared to the overall rate. Students experiencing poverty, emerging biliguals/English learners, migrant students, students navigating houselessness, students in foster care, recent arrivers/newcomer students, and student who are currently or were formerly incarcerated are all substantially less likely to be identified as TAG, with identification rates at or below 2.5% for all of those populations.

> "I sometimes do like soccer but stuff like tag I'm not [allowed] in bcuz I'm not 'talented or gifted'" – Oregon Student, 2024-25[3]

TAG identification varies substantially by race/ethnicity, with Asian students significantly more likely to be identified, and Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native students significantly less likely to be identified. Disproportionality in Asian identification is driven in part by very high identification rates among districts in the Portland metro area, a hub for tech centers.

**Figure 2: TAG Identification Rates by Race/Ethnicity**

Percentage of Students of each race/ethnicity who were Identified as TAG
2020-21 National Data is Latest Available




[1] https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov/profile/us?surveyYear=2020

[2] Identification of TAG student was waived for the 2020-21 school year, ORS 581-022-0104(3)(f).

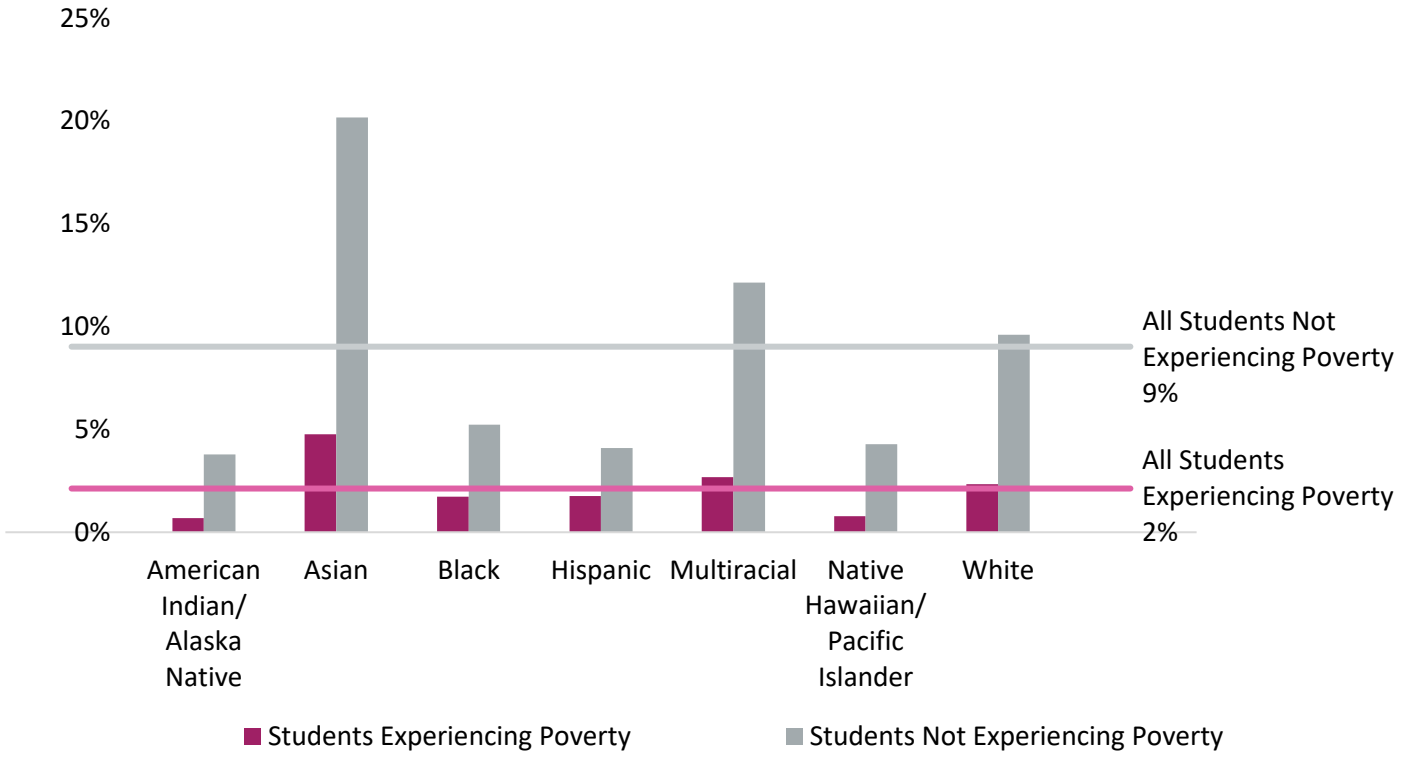
[3] Quotations drawn from the 2024-25 administration of the SEED Survey. Minor spelling and capitalization errors have been corrected for readability; more substantial changes are noted with square brackets or ellipses.

In 2020-21, the latest year for which national data is available, Oregon's racial/ethnic disparities were similar to national disparities. Oregon identified a higher proportion of Asian students than other states, and a lower proportion of American Indian/Alaska Native students – American Indian students in other states were more than twice as likely as American Indian students in Oregon to be identified as TAG.[4]

While identification rates varied substantially by poverty status, overall racial disparities persisted, a finding that is consistent with the literature.[5] For example, Asian students experiencing poverty were 2.3 times as likely to be identified as TAG compared to other students experiencing poverty, and Asian students not experiencing poverty were 2.4 times as likely to be identified as TAG compared to other students not experiencing poverty.

The biggest differences were observed for Black and Hispanic students, who were only slighly less likely to be identified as TAG when experiencing poverty, but much less likely to be identified as TAG when not experiencing poverty.

**Figure 3: TAG Identification Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Poverty, 2024-25**




These inequalities are common across the US, and may be driven by bias in identification processes, bias in how the education system defines and recognizes talent, and/or unequal access to early academic opportunities. Prior research has found that, statistically controlling for assessment results and district characteristics, disproportionalities were reduced significantly,[6] suggesting that while bias in identification continues to play a role, TAG disparities largely reflect underlying opportunity and achievement gaps.

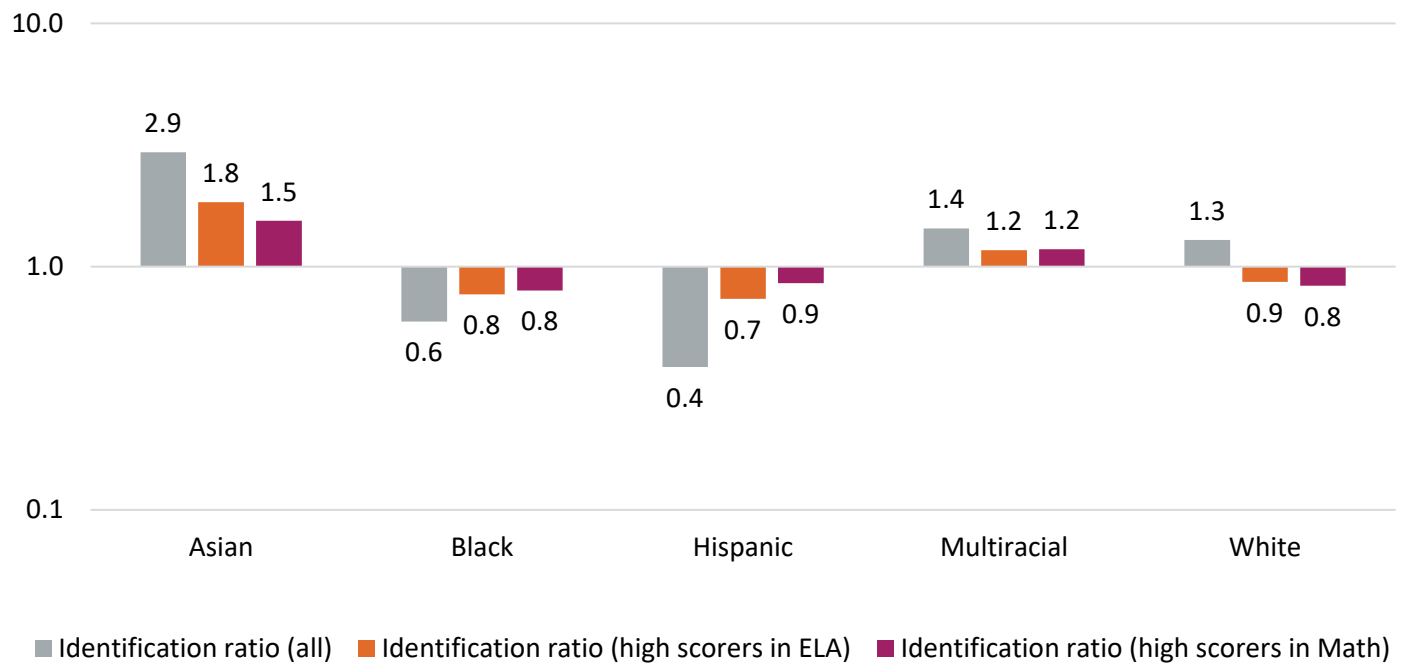
[4] National data courtesy of the Civil Rights Data Collection, https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov/profile/us?surveyYear=2020.
[5] McBee, M. (2010). Examining the Probability of Identification for Gifted Programs for Students in Georgia Elementary Schools: A Multilevel Path Analysis Study. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *54*(4), 283-297. https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986210377927 (Original work published 2010)
[6] Long, Daniel A., D. Betsy McCoach, Del Siegle, Carolyn M. Callahan, and E. Jean Gubbins. "Inequality at the starting line: Underrepresentation in gifted identification and disparities in early achievement." *AERA Open* 9 (2023): 23328584231171535.

"Activities wise like sports I do all the girl sports offered to me but there [aren't] any clubs offered to middle school students besides TAG (talented and gifted) which is for super super smart kids…I've tested for TAG twice and I didn't make it either time and there's only 3 kids in our whole school thats in it and ones for art so I'm in everything that is offered but there [are] no clubs." – Oregon Student, 2024-25

In Oregon, about one-fourth of students scoring at a Level 4 (the highest performance level) on the OSAS 4th grade English Language Arts assessment, and about one-third of students scoring at a Level 4 on the OSAS 4th grade Mathematics assessment, were identified as TAG.[7] However, even within this group, racial disparities persisted, though they are reduced substantially, and white students are slightly underrepresented, as shown below.

Figure 4 shows relative identification ratios – that is, the likelihood a student will be identified as TAG, relative to the likelihood for students not in that racial/ethnic group. For example, Asian students are about 190% as likely to be identified as TAG compared to other students,[8] but Asian students who scored at a Level 4 in English Language Arts are 80% more likely to be identified as TAG compared to other students scoring at a Level 4 – still disproportionate, but a much smaller discrepancy. Smaller bars (closer to 1.0) represent less disparity. Bars below 1.0 reflect underrepresentation (e.g. among students who scored at a level 4 in math, white students were about 20% less likely to be identified as TAG as other students were.

**Figure 4: TAG Relative Identification Ratios by Assessment Performance Level**
2024-25 Grade 4 OSAS; 1.0 is perfect proportionality. Some racial/ethnic groups not shown due to small n sizes




Controlling for high achievement on OSAS reduces disparities for each of the racial/ethnic groups shown, suggesting that, in Oregon, underlying academic disparities do contribute to overall TAG disproportionality. While disparities remain unacceptable regardless of their origin, addressing TAG identification practices alone is not likely to result in parity. This is aligned with other research that has found that nontraditional identification methods only somewhat narrow identification

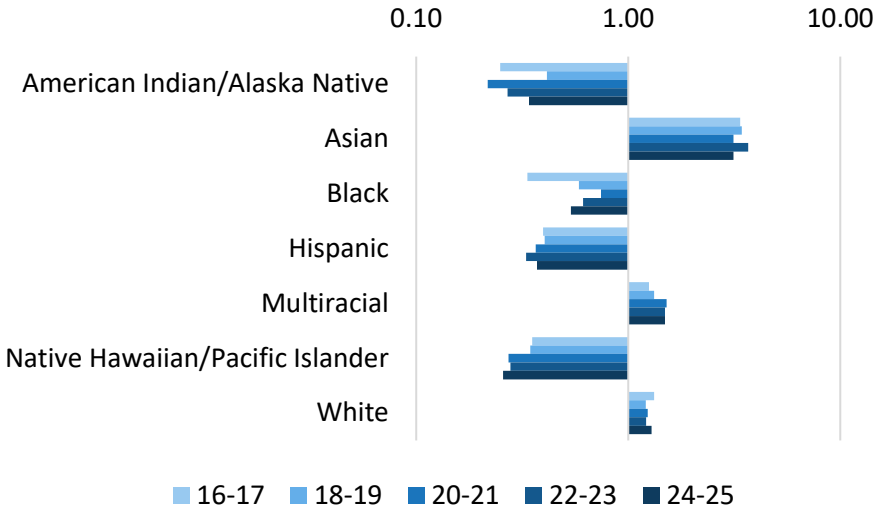
[7] Not all students identified as TAG scored at a Level 4 on these assessments; not all students who scored at a Level 4 are expected to meet criteria to be identified as TAG. Grade 4 was selected for analysis since the preponderance of students who will ever be identified as TAG are identified by this grade.
[8] Limiting the sample to students who took the grade 4 assessment and met performance inclusion criteria.

gaps, and the use of them did not result in rates approaching parity.[9] In fact, ODE has been emphasizing holistic TAG identification methods for some time,[10] and overall TAG identification rates in 2024-25, by race/ethnicity, have not changed substantially from 2015-16.

In Figure 5, examining identification rates for 3rd and 4th graders (the grades in which students are most likely to be first identified) in order to focus on the impact of changes to identification processes reveals a similar lack of impact over time. Disproportionalities (the rate at which students in a racial/ethnic group are identified, relative to the rate at which students not in that group are identified) have remained constant or even grown over time.

**Figure 5: 3rd and 4th Grade Relative TAG Identification Ratios**

1.0 is perfect proportionality; alternate years shown




By gender, disparities between male and female students[11] increased slightly after adjusting for high ELA performance but virtually disappeared (relative identification 1.0) when adjusting for high math performance. This suggests that male students' ELA performance may be given extra weight in TAG identification, and that high Math performance may be a significant factor in TAG identification for both genders.

There is a growing body of literature supporting the premise that intelligence is malleable, with interventions including nutrition, early education, training on memory or problem-solving, and interactive reading all showing promise.[12,13,14] Research on prenatal interventions and supports is more mixed, but parental access to adequate nutrition and healthcare may also play a role in cognitive development,[15,16] as can prenatal and early childhood exposure to pollution.[17,18] Unequal access

[9] Hodges, Jaret, Juliana Tay, Yukiko Maeda, and Marcia Gentry. "A meta-analysis of gifted and talented identification practices." *Gifted child quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2018): 147-174.

[10] The administrative rule was formally changed in the 2021-22 school year to emphasize inclusive practices, though inclusive practices were recommended prior to this formal adoption by TAG specialists at ODE.

[11] Non-binary students excluded due to small n size.

[12] Buschkuehl, Martin, and Susanne M. Jaeggi. "Improving intelligence: A literature review." *Swiss medical weekly* 140, no. 1920 (2010): 266-272.

[13] Protzko, John, Joshua Aronson, and Clancy Blair. "How to make a young child smarter: Evidence from the database of raising intelligence." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 8, no. 1 (2013): 25-40.

[14] Roberts, Marina, Terezie Tolar-Peterson, Abby Reynolds, Caitlin Wall, Nicole Reeder, and Gina Rico Mendez. "The effects of nutritional interventions on the cognitive development of preschool-age children: a systematic review." *Nutrients* 14, no. 3 (2022): 532.

[15] Taylor, Rachael M., Shanna M. Fealy, Alessandra Bisquera, Roger Smith, Clare E. Collins, Tiffany-Jane Evans, and Alexis J. Hure. "Effects of nutritional interventions during pregnancy on infant and child cognitive outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis." *Nutrients* 9, no. 11 (2017): 1265.

[16] Field, Tiffany. "Prenatal depression risk factors, developmental effects and interventions: a review." *Journal of pregnancy and child health* 4, no. 1 (2017): 301.

[17] Persico, Claudia L., and Joanna Venator. "The effects of local industrial pollution on students and schools." *Journal of Human Resources* 56, no. 2 (2021): 406-445.

[18] Persico, Claudia. *Can pollution cause poverty? The effects of pollution on educational, health and economic outcomes*. No. w30559. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2022.

to these and similar opportunities to learn and grow, and unequal exposure to external risk factors, may explain some of the TAG identification disparities.

Prior research on the relationship between family income and TAG identification has similarly found that, after adjusting for assessment performance, the likelihood of TAG identification is consistent for students with income in the bottom 80 percent, and only very high incomes are still associated with increased TAG identification.[19]

Prior research in other states[20] has found that students who are taught by teachers who share their race/ethnicity are more likely to be identified as TAG, but Oregon data did not show a similar pattern.[21]

## Opportunities and Resources

TAG-identified students in grades 3, 6, and 9, the only grade levels where this question is asked on Oregon's Student Educational Equity Development Survey (SEED Survey), were much more likely than non-TAG students to report high levels of reading outside of school – 42% reported at least an hour of reading each day, compared to only 26% of students who were not TAG-identified.[22] TAG students in grades 3-11 were somewhat more likely to report that books and magazines to read for fun were always available to them (63% vs 54%). The difference narrowed but did not disappear among students experiencing poverty (57% of TAG students vs 51% of students not identified as TAG).

While the difference in resource access may contribute somewhat to TAG identification, even among students who reported that reading materials were always available to them, TAG students were more likely to report high amounts of reading, and the differences (shown in figure 7) were much larger at early grades (when most identification occurs, as outlined later in this brief). A very similar pattern of reading time was observed among students who reported that public or school library books were always available to them. Only about 1 in 3 students with books always available to them were reading an hour or more per day among non-TAG students, compared to half of TAG students. It may be the case that TAG students are stronger readers at this age, or that TAG students had the benefit of

**Figure 6: Daily Time Spent Reading (outside of school)**

2024-25 SEED Survey; Grades 3, 6, and 9

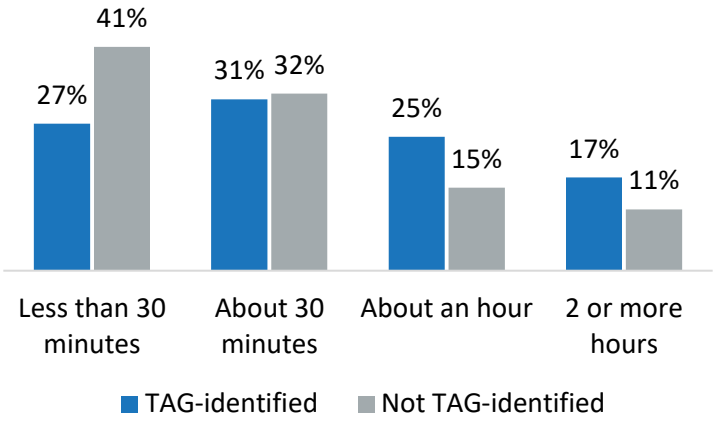
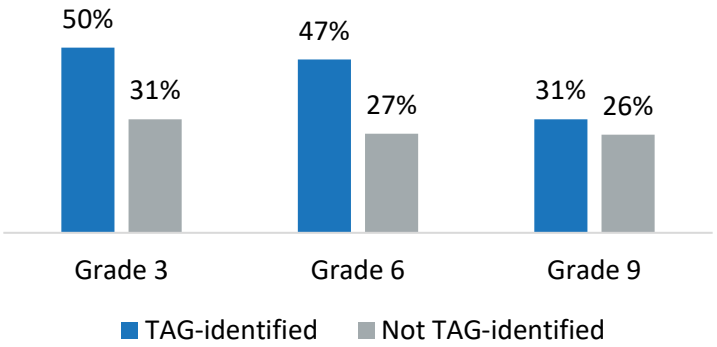



**Figure 7: Percent Reading at least One Hour per Day Outside of School**

Among Students who Reported that Materials to Read for Fun are Always Available

2024-25 SEED Survey




[19] Ainsworth, Nicholas J., Aaron J. Ainsworth, Christopher Cleveland, Leah R. Clark, Quentin Brummet, Emily K. Penner, Jacob Hibel et al. *Gifted Identification Across the Distribution of Family Income*. No. 25-73. 2025.

[20] Grissom, Jason A., and Christopher Redding. "Discretion and disproportionality: Explaining the underrepresentation of high-achieving students of color in gifted programs." *Aera Open* 2, no. 1 (2015): 2332858415622175.

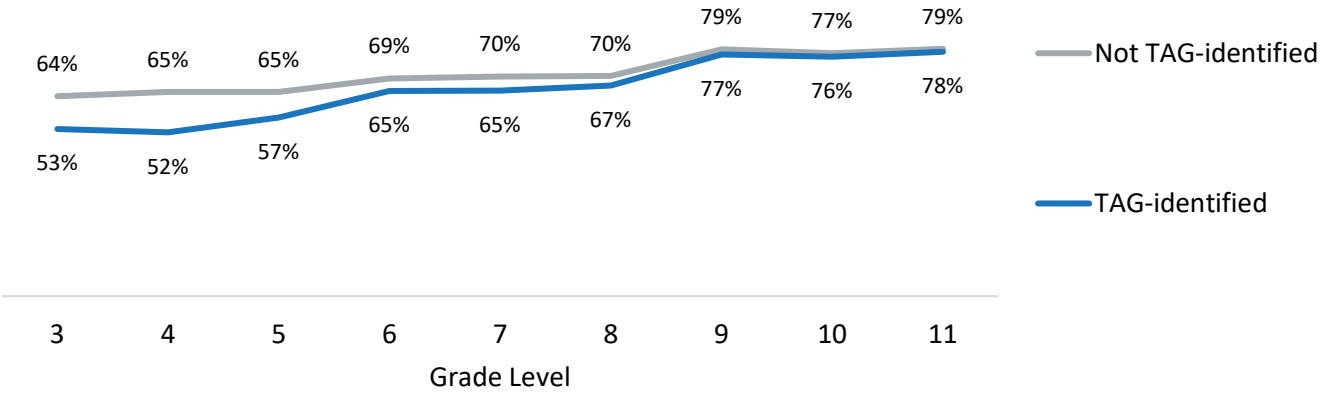
[21] 4th grade students were no more likely to be identified as TAG (p = 0.62) if they had a teacher who shared their race/ethnicity in grades K-4, among students identifying as Black/African American, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

[22] Data from the 2024-25 administration of the SEED survey. This item was only administered to students in grades 3, 6, and 9.

teachers and instruction that instilled a love of reading. TAG students may also be predisposed to traits such as curiosity and liking cognition that result in greater enjoyment of reading.

TAG students were also less likely to report receiving tutoring outside of school, with the largest differences in early grades (as shown in Figure 8). This suggests that access to extra supports outside of school (provided by parents or community organizations) is not responsible for TAG students' acceleration or identification. ODE does not have data on students' access to supports embedded within the school day or in after school programs, but this would be an interesting area of future study.

**Figure 8: Percent Reporting Tutoring Sometimes or Always Available**
By Grade Level, 2024-25 SEED Survey
Includes only tutoring or extra help *not* provided by the school




"We shouldn't hold kids back, we should be able to meet everyone where they are. Whether they're ahead or behind, every student deserves to be taught at their level. We have extra help classes for those who are behind and we used to have advanced classes for students needing a challenge but we scrapped those because we want everyone to be 'equal'…We are giving everyone the same box [metaphor for equity] when in reality everyone needs a slightly different sized box and some don't need a box at all. Why are we holding our children back? We need to figure equity out and start helping students rather than hurting them." – Oregon TAG Student, 2024-25

## Emerging Bilinguals/English Learners

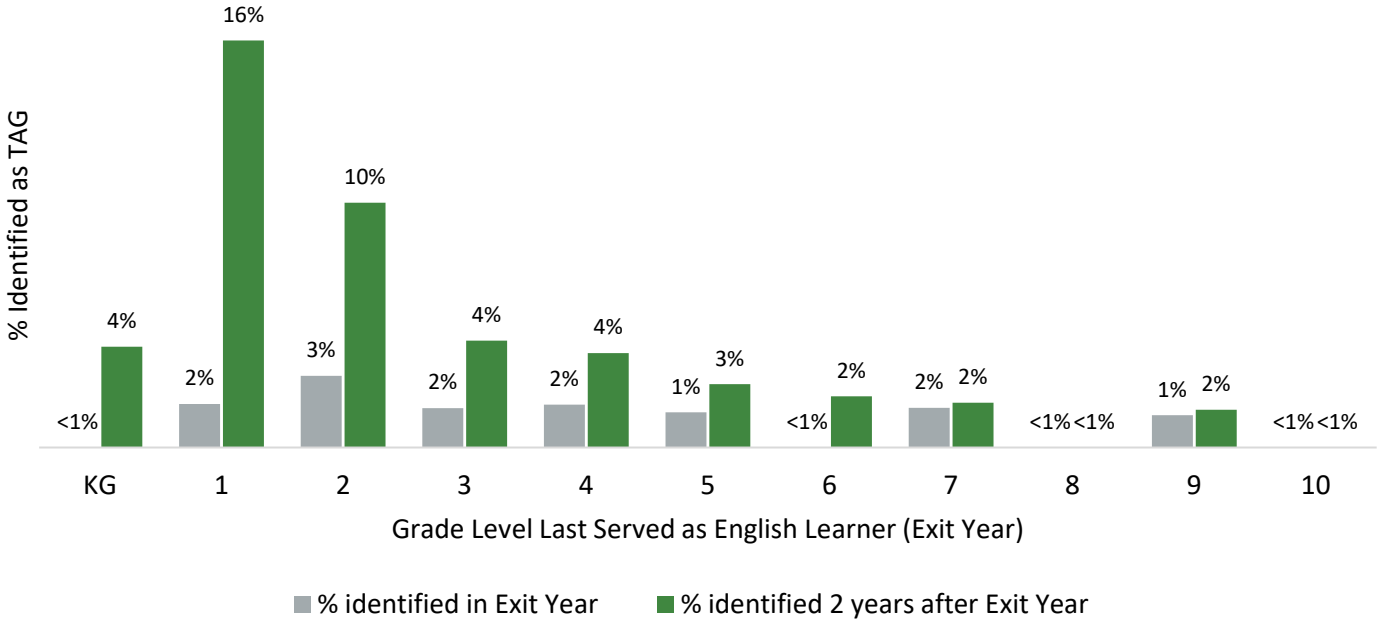
Former English learners (students who have attained English language proficiency) are slighly more likely to be identified as TAG than the overall population (7.1%), potentially reflecting the skill needed to master a second language, or the way language acquisition can enhance academic achievement across subjects.[23] The sizeable difference in TAG rates between current (<1%) and former English learners may also reflect increased challenges in identifying giftedness among students who are not yet proficient in English. The disparity in identification rates for English learners in Oregon is consistent with national findings, but schools in some states have achieved more parity by adopting research-based best practices.[24] However, despite increased focus on multilingual education in Oregon, the rate at which current English learners were identified as TAG has not changed between 2017-18 and 2024-25.

[23] Taylor, Carolyn, and John Marsden. "Foreign Language Learning and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Educational Research* 112, no. 3 (2019): 345–362.
[24] Gubbins, E. Jean, Del Siegle, Rashea Hamilton, Pamela Peters, Ashley Y. Carpenter, Patricia O'Rourke, Jeb Puryear et al. "Exploratory Study on the Identification of English Learners for Gifted and Talented Programs." (2018).

Figure 9, below, shows the likelihood of former English learners being identified by the year they exited EL services (grey bars), compared to the likelihood of the same students being identified within 2 years after exiting EL services (green bars). In general, but particularly in elementary grades, the same students were more likely to be identified as TAG after exiting EL services than before exiting.

**Figure 9: TAG Identification Rates for Students Exiting English Learner Status**

Rates reflect identification for the same students before and after exiting English Learner status
Students exiting in 2021-22 or 2022-23




Students who exited English Learner status in early grades were very likely to subsequently be identified as TAG. Among students who were last identified as English Learners in Kindergarten, 1st, or 2nd grade, very few were identified as TAG prior to exiting but 10% were identified as TAG within three years following their exit year. This aligns with student enrollment in 3rd grade, the first grade in which Oregon Statewide Assessments (OSAS) are administered.[25] Students who exited English Learner status in 3rd-6th grade were only slighly more likely to be identified as TAG after exiting, and there was no difference for students who exited in 7th grade or later.[26]

Grade-level identification patterns for English Learners mirror grade-level identification patterns overall, as outlined in the following section. Very few students (in either group) are first identified for TAG after 5th grade – English Learners exiting services are roughly equally likely to be identified following their exit than non-English learners at the same grade level are to be identified as TAG for the first time, which is to say very unlikely if they have not already been identified as TAG in an early grade.

Earlier-exiting students may also be more likely to be identified as gifted based on their ability to develop bilingual proficiency at a young age. Future study in this area may be able to further unravel these factors.

Students who exit English Learner status are not likely to become more gifted in the years after their exit than the same students were when they exited, but they may become more visible to teachers and others responsible for identifying

[25] ODE does not recommend use of OSAS alone as a method for TAG identification; in alignment with OAR, districts should use multiple modes and methods of both qualitative and quantitative evidence for identification. For more information about TAG identification, see Unpacking OAR 581-022-2325.

[26] Based on a cohort of students with consistent enrollment in the 2021-22 through 2024-25 school years, who exited English Learner status at some point during that timeframe.

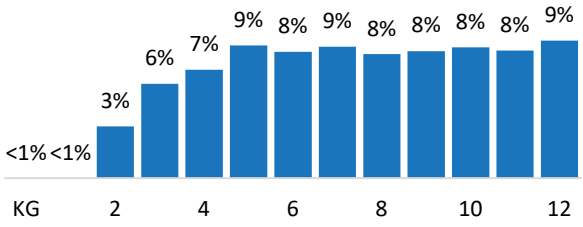
students for TAG services. Other research in this area has found equity improvements from professional development to help teachers accurately identify giftedness in English Learners, outreach to parents (who may not be aware of how TAG services in the US differ from those in their country of origin), using universal screening tools, and taking a broad view of giftedness.[27] This research also found that parents and school staff were concerned that English Learners who were identified as TAG would only be able to receive TAG services in English, or might require students to travel to magnet locations. Districts may be able to alleviate these concerns by building TAG services as differentiated instruction within the student's current classroom.

## Enrolled Grades and Grade Progression

TAG identification by enrolled grade follows a similar pattern, with students very unlikely to be identified prior to 3rd grade, rates rising rapidly through 3rd and 4th grade, and then remaining steady for subsequent grades, as shown in figure 10. Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR 581-022-2325) require districts to use a varitety of tools, procedures, and evidence to identify students as TAG, rather than relying on OSAS, but identification rates suggest that OSAS may still be driving a large portion of TAG identification statewide. Prior research has found that districts most commonly identify for TAG in 3rd grade, with 2nd grade as the next most common, and very few districts identifying in kindergarten or 1st grade.[28] Other research has found that early signs of giftedness, for example precocious reading,[29] are only moderately correlated with later achievement, which may drive local decisions to delay identification for a few years.[30] Some sources feel that intelligence and brain development is too malleable for accurate identification in early grades, but others[31] argue that early identification and intervention is beneficial to gifted children.

**Figure 10: TAG Identification by Grade Level**

2024-25 Enrollment




> "I would create more opportunities for TAG students. I have been TAG since kindergarten and I think the only time a teacher did something extra for the TAG students to challenge them was in 3rd grade. I am often stuck in classes where I am not challenged enough and I don't have the option to do harder work or take harder classes. There are many students who feel they are not challenged enough in some of their classes and that they want harder work so they aren't bored or unmotivated to complete assignments because they are too easy. It might make some students more excited about their classes, and less likely to complain about things being too easy." – Oregon TAG Student, 2024-25

Students who had not been identified as TAG by 5th grade were very unlikely to be identified as TAG in future years. Middle and high schools generally have more opportunities for acceleration, such as taking high school classes while in middle school, or taking classes through a local college or online, which may make TAG identification in those grades less of a priority. It is also the case that students previously identified as TAG have greater access to accelerated coursework in high school, however[32] - an absence of later TAG identification practices may bar students who would have benefitted from these opportunities.

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[27] Gubbins et al., *ibid*.
[28] Long et al., *ibid.*
[29] Mills, Joseph R., and Nancy E. Jackson. "Predictive significance of early giftedness: The case of precocious reading." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 82, no. 3 (1990): 410.
[30] Neisworth, John T., and Stephen J. Bagnato. "The case against intelligence testing in early intervention." *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* (1992): 1-20.
[31] https://rossier.usc.edu/news-insights/news/identifying-and-serving-gifted-and-talented-students-younger-age
[32] SB 736 Legislative Report, https://www.oatag.org/uploads/9/6/7/6/96763140/sb736_legislativereport.pdf.

**Grade Progression and Early Completion**

Students identified as TAG were slightly more likely to have skipped a grade and much less likely to have been retained in a grade than students who were not, but both outcomes are vanishingly rare in Oregon schools, where over 99% of students, both TAG and not, had a standard grade progression over the years studied. [33] TAG students were also not likely to graduate early – in the 2023-24 four-year cohort, TAG and non-TAG students had virtually identical average ages at each outcome (typically a few months over 18 years old for graduates, 17.5 years old for GED recipients and a few months over 17 years old for non-completers).

> "Have more opportunities for the TAG program and let us go farther. As it is, I got one email at the start of the year and then have been left to participate in the regular school activities. I would like to be able to take more classes above my grade level so that school is interesting."– Oregon TAG Student, 2024-25

**Stability of TAG Identification**

Once identified as TAG, students were very unlikely to lose the identification in later years. Among the small number of kindergarteners identified as TAG in 2021-22 through 2023-24, 93% of them remained identified in their first grade year as well; for students identified in higher grades, an average of 98% of students retained their TAG identification from one year to the next. The exception was when TAG students changed school districts – in the first year of attending a new district, only 74% of students who had been identified as TAG in their former district were identified as TAG in their new district. The same effect was not seen for non-TAG students changing districts, suggesting that the change is not the result of a re-evaluation of incoming students' abilities, or for students who changed schools but remained within the same district. A similar impact was seen in prior research looking at eligibility for Section 504 plans after district changes – in general, district transfers are commonly associated with interruptions in or changes to services. These disruptions may also be associated with varied district TAG policies.

> "I am often inspired to go to school and learn new things or socialize with friends. The only problem is that students in the same grade are at vastly different levels of learning. Some people may not be able to finish work while others are often bored. A solution could be to split assignments into different groups of difficulty and work load so that every student has a chance for them to learn the subject at their pace, and get the most out of their school." ."– Oregon TAG Student, 2024-25

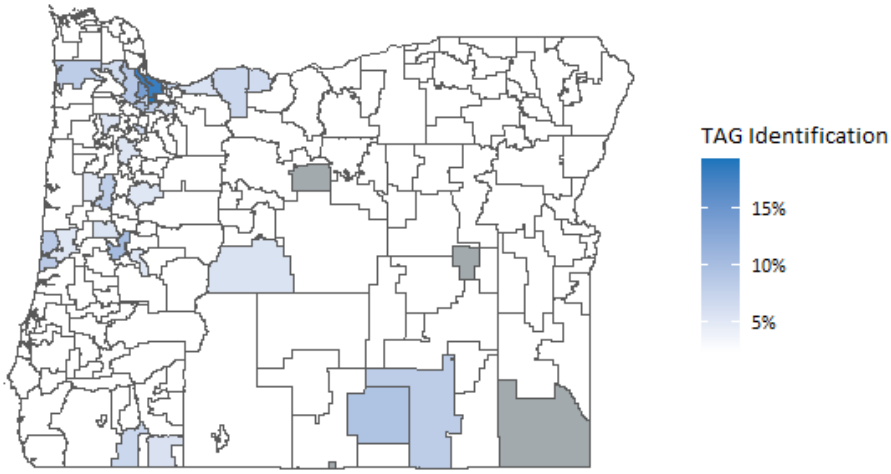
[33] Students who were in grade 8 or below in 2021-22, looking at enrollment patterns in 2021-22 through 2024-25.

# District and School Variation

Rates of TAG identification are highly uneven across the state, with rates above 10% in Beaverton SD, Portland SD, Eugene SD, and Lake Oswego SD, and 58 districts reporting no TAG students at all over the past three years. At the school level, the majority of schools identified TAG students at very low rates, but a small number, including some schools and programs that are specifically designed to serve TAG students, identified at much higher rates.

**Figure 11: Rates of TAG Identification by District**

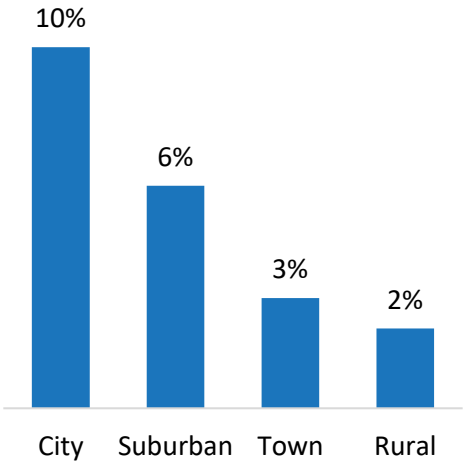
Average of 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 Identification as of the First School Day in May




Note: 161 districts identified less than 5% of their students as TAG.
Rates for all of these districts are shown as 2.5% to protect student confidentiality.
Districts shown in grey had fewer than 10 students total in the past three years.

**Figure 12: Rates of TAG Identification by Locale**

Average of 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 Identification as of the First School Day in May




By locale,[34] as shown in Figure 12, students were far more likely to be identified as TAG when they attended urban and suburban districts than when they attended more rural districts. District size was moderately correlated with TAG identification rates as well, with larger districts likely to identify at higher rates. This may reflect the ability of districts with larger staff and student populations to support dedicated TAG classrooms and identification specialists, as well as the ability of smaller districts to differentiate within the classroom without needing formal identification – for example, in settings where all students are taught by a single teacher, differentiation can occur by default for all students. This may also reflect persistent belief gaps in the abilities of, and potential future pathways open to, rural students.

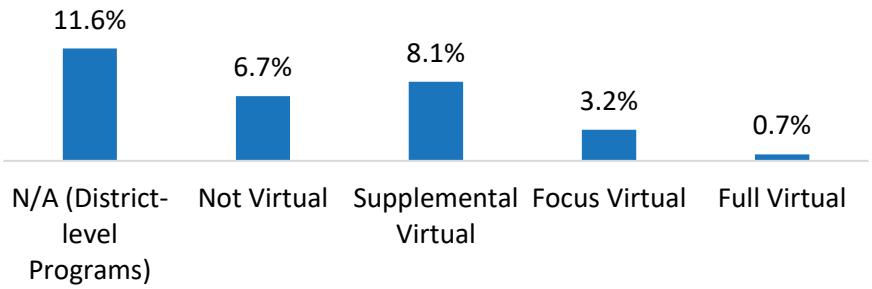
Virtual schools, charter schools, and alternative schools were comparatively unlikely to identify students as TAG overall, though some interesting patterns emerged by grade level. In all grades, students attending charter schools were much less likely to be identified as TAG – only 1.9% of charter school students were identified. However, charter schools are excepted from compliance with TAG OARs, which likely explains the lower identification rate.[35]

> "Fundamentally the way schools handle gifted and TAG students is underperforming. I understand that things like teachers and class sizes can sometimes be complex, but gifted students deserve proper attention and care. Moving TAG and gifted students up a grade isn't always enough. We need to be intellectually stimulated and surrounded by like-minded individuals." – Oregon TAG Student, 2024-25

[34] Locale classifications courtesy of the National Center for Education Statistics.
[35] Excluding charter schools from the local data presented in Figure 12 did not substantially change the trend presented.

In grades K-8, schools that were not virtual[36] (the most common school type for this grade band) identified the highest proportion of their students as TAG, while in high school grades, schools that were supplemental virtual (the most common school type for high schools) identified the highest proportion of their students as TAG. In all grade levels, full and focus virtual schools identified relatively few students as TAG.[37]

**Figure 13: Rates of TAG Identification by Virtual School Status (excluding charter schools)**
2024-25, by School Attended on the First School Day in May




Overall, alternative schools enrolled fewer TAG students than non-alternative schools (3.7% of alternative school students were identified as TAG). However, K-8 students, while representing a minority of all students in alternative schools, were more likely to be identified as TAG (9% of K-8 students attending alternative schools were identified as TAG) than students in other settings (6% of K-8 students in other settings were identified as TAG).

**Discussion**

TAG identification rates vary substantially between racial/ethnic groups, as well as between focal populations. While identification practices likely contribute to these disparities, underlying opportunity gaps are also an important part of the picture. Changing TAG identification practices alone will not compensate for the underlying differences in opportunities to experience high expectations and necessary supports. TAG identification that predominantly occurs in upper elementary grades also disadvantages students who exit English Learner services later in school, when they may have more ability to participate in TAG programming if they were to be identified.

[36] Virtual school status descriptions available here. District-level programs are instructional settings designed to serve the needs of a specialized population of students. Virtual status is not tracked for these programs.
[37] District-level programs serve a variety of student needs, including some that are specialized to serve TAG students, such as Portland's ACCESS Academy. ODE does not gather program-specific data on students served through district-level programs.