



**THE WASHINGTON COALITION  
FOR GIFTED EDUCATION**

18149 147 Avenue SE  
Renton WA 98058

425-271-1357

wagifted@earthlink.net

**WHAT IS THE WASHINGTON COALITION FOR GIFTED EDUCATION  
AND WHAT DOES IT ADVOCATE FOR?**

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The Washington Coalition For Gifted Education is a non profit organization representing gifted students in Washington, their parents, teachers and advocates. In Washington law, these students are referred to as "highly capable." In research based literature, highly capable or gifted students are also referred to as advanced or accelerated learners. Approximately 100,000 students in Washington's public schools fall within the definition of highly capable.

Our goal, "Learning Without Limits," means no child should be held back by grade level expectations which he or she already exceeds. Nor should learning be limited by state standards, a text book, or age cohort. To reach this goal, highly capable students, especially those in mixed ability classes, must be taught by teachers knowledgeable in identification of and instructional methods for gifted students. We want to ensure that these "gifted and talented" students, are "gifted and thriving."

The inclusion of highly capable in the definition of basic education for the state of Washington will ensure an equitable educational opportunity for these students. With the inclusion of highly capable programs within ESHB 2261

- \*students will be identified and serviced according to their academic and cognitive needs
- \*students will be provided appropriate curricular and instructional services
- \*staff will be provided the training and resources needed to serve these students

Coalition membership is recommending the inclusion of highly capable programs as defined by ESHB 2261 among the first provisions of the law phased in beginning September 2011.

The reason for this is that programs for highly capable students already exist in 222 of the 296 districts in the state, and districts provide \$35,208,235 of local funds to supplement the \$7,026,729 provided by the state (figures from the *OSPI Annual Report of the Highly Capable Learners Program, School Year 2006-2007*, the most recent data available from OSPI).

Both basic and enhanced funding is set at 2.314% of FTE. Under the new provisions a funding level of 2.314% means less money for these programs than is currently spent (\$42,234,964). We strongly recommend that both the basic and enhanced funding be at the full 3% provided for in Section 708(2).

We also advocate that the provisions in Section 403(1) be amended to provide training in gifted identification and methods in the professional development programs known as learning improvement days. The training provided should be aligned with the provisions of the Specialty Endorsement - Gifted recently approved by the Professional Educators Standards Board.

Section 203(3)(a) calls for the K-12 data governance group to "Identify the critical research and policy questions that need to be addressed by the K-12 education data improvement system." We will request that the Education Data Improvement System in Part II of ESHB 2261 include information on students participating in highly capable programs in the various data gathered to monitor and analyze the costs and results of programs as specified in Sections 202(3)(d), (g) and (j).

The membership of the Coalition and member organizations seek active participation in any discussions to further explain or elaborate on these recommendations and requests.



The Coalition was incorporated as a non-profit advocacy organization under Washington law in 1985 and will celebrate 25 years of advocating on behalf of highly capable/gifted and talented students in Washington during Gifted Education Day in Washington, February 5, 2010.

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