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Friends of PAGE -

I still remember my first PAGE conference several years ago. I remember being in a room where everyone held the same focus that I did. The collective energy and dedication were truly inspiring. It didn't matter whether they were parents, teachers, or administrators...we were all there with a common goal: how we, as an educational community can support gifted learners.

This month, as I begin my 2nd year as President of the PAGE Board, I am reminded of our mission statement: To empower educators and parents to meet the diverse needs of gifted learners through awareness, advocacy, and action. And I am reminded of just how important it is for ALL of us to work together to support this special group of learners.

Today, when I say "ALL", I am not just talking about parents and teachers.... Today, we need to include our leaders across the State of Pennsylvania. It is time for our School Board members and State Legislators to take action and support gifted learners across the State.

For the past year, I have been sharing the fact that Chapter 16, our legislation that supports and protects gifted learners, remains an UNFUNDED MANDATE in Pennsylvania. While this reality has not stopped progress, there is still much work to be done. Exciting developments are underway, including the State's receipt of a \$3.5 million Javits Grant to explore equity and best practices in gifted education. Additionally, our Conference attendance and membership continue to grow, and we are thrilled that the NAGC will be hosting its National Convention here in Pittsburgh in November 2025! Save the Date, November 13-16th, 2025.

But this is not ENOUGH! These are uncertain times for education across the country. Funding for research has been cut or frozen at the federal level and we are not sure if our partners at PDE will have the resources to implement the changes their early work has indicated we need. The momentum we've built must be supported with proper funding and action to ensure continued progress for gifted learners in Pennsylvania. The time for change is now.

Today, I am calling on every SCHOOL BOARD member and every LEGISLATOR across the State to ponder this one mathematical fact: In our neighboring state of Ohio, there are 1.7 million students enrolled in public schools and there are 265,000 students (15.5%) identified as gifted. Further, Ohio allocates well over \$76,000,000 for Gifted Education.

Here in PA, we have roughly the same number of students (1.6 million) but only 47,509 (3%) identified as gifted. How is this possible? Without the resources and funding, we are failing to teach and support over 12% of our student population.

This is not about politics. This is about every single elected official across the State of Pennsylvania doing what is right for our children. This is a call to action. I am calling on Gov. Shapiro and Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Dr. Carrie Rowe to add funding for gifted education as a line item to the State Education budget. I am calling on every School Board member and every parent to speak to your local representatives.

We are on the cusp of making great strides in support of gifted education here in Pennsylvania. Please join me in taking action to support, fund, and improve learning for thousands of students across the state.

Yours in partnership,



Dave Mendell
President, PAGE
Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education

*Ohio data: <https://education.ohio.gov/>

**Pennsylvania data: [PIMS](#)

[NAGC State of the States](#)