NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12

Gifted Education Programming Standards

A Guide to Planning and Implementing High-Quality Services

Edited by
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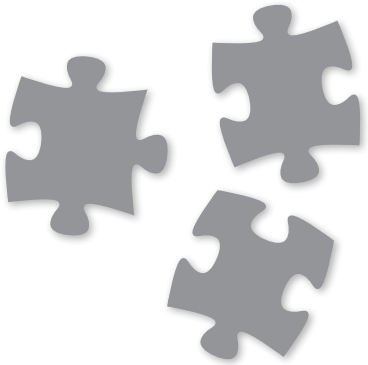

Chapter 1
Introduction to the NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards

by Susan K. Johnsen

The standards movement has grown exponentially since 1983, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk*. The Commission recommended that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards and set higher expectations for academic performance. Since that time, all states have adopted some form of a standards-based education system, professional associations have approved content standards in most subject areas, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has required that states report results on standards-related accountability measures (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). More recently, the U.S. Education Department's competitive grant program, Race to the Top, which has billions of dollars in federal monies, requires that states that are competing for these funds have standards in place to improve teaching and learning. Clearly, the standards movement is not going away. Because gifted and talented students deserve to be included, gifted educators must have standards to become actively involved in the national conversation.

Currently, gifted educators have two sets of standards—those that address teacher preparation and those that address pre-K–12 programs. This chapter will (a) examine where these gifted education standards fit within the national context, (b) recognize the need for gifted programming standards, (c) explain the process used for developing the 2010 Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards, (d) identify the general principles underlying the Gifted Programming Standards, (e) contrast the 1998 Gifted Program Standards with the 2010 Gifted Programming Standards, (f) describe each of the Gifted Programming Standards, and (g) make recommendations for their use.

Gifted Education Standards Within the National Context

The standards in gifted education are part of a wider network of professional preparation and programming standards that influence the education of all teachers and students (see Figure 1.1). At the top of Figure 1.1 are the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 1992, 2010, 2011). InTASC is a consortium of state education agencies and national educational organizations interested in the reform of the preparation, licensing, and ongoing professional development of teachers and is a part of the CCSSO (see http://www.ccsso.org). InTASC has developed common standards in the core subject areas of English-language arts and mathematics (e.g., CSSO, 2010) and in teacher preparation (CSSO, 1992, 2011). The influence of InTASC standards is noteworthy: 41 states have adopted the 2010 common core standards and 38 states have adopted the 1992 InTASC teacher preparation standards (see http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states).

The InTASC standards were used as guidelines for the development of the initial teacher preparation certificate in gifted education (National Association for Gifted Children [NAGC] & Council for Exceptional Children, The Association for the Gifted [CEC-TAG], 2006). Initial certificates may be offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and focus on educators who may have other certificates but are seeking their first one in gifted education. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) uses the NAGC/CEC-TAG initial standards to accredit teacher education programs (see http://www.ncate.org). Teacher preparation programs that meet these standards are nationally recognized by NCATE. Recently, the InTASC model core teaching standards and the NCATE recommendations for standards have been changed and will influence the next revision of the NAGC/CEC-TAG teacher preparation standards in 2013 (CCSSO, 2011; NCATE, 2009).

Gifted educators are also developing an advanced set of standards for teachers who already have an initial certificate, which should be available in 2012 (see http://www.cectag.org and http://www.nagc.org). These standards are based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 2011) and the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC, 2009) Advanced Common Core Standards. When approved, they will provide guidelines for teacher preparation programs and schools that are interested in developing teacher leaders in gifted education. Moreover, the NBPTS (2011) has a certificate for teachers in gifted education, which is a pathway within the Exceptional Needs Certificate.

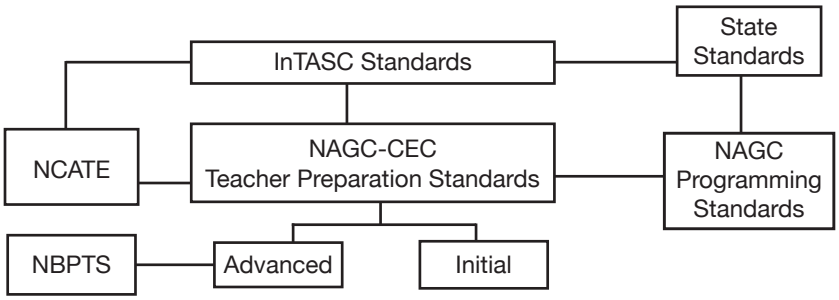

Figure 1.1. Context for state and national standards.

Although only 20 states require credentialing or licensure for professionals working in gifted education programs, the majority of states have requirements for programs and services in gifted education (NAGC, 2008–2009). State rules, regulations, and/or guidelines include characteristics of definitions, procedures for identification, programs and services, personnel preparation, and other practices such as acceleration, early entrance, dual enrollment, and high school graduation alternative.

All of these teacher preparation and state standards have influenced the development of the 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards. The national Gifted Programming Standards provide the next layer of support to schools so that they are aware of not only quality teachers in gifted education, but also the characteristics of quality programs. The remainder of this chapter will describe these new standards and their value to the field of gifted education.

Need for Gifted Programming Standards

The 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards are important to professional fields and provide benefits to all educators. They provide coherence, structures, guidelines for professional development, attention to underserved populations, ways to improve programming, and a foundation for advocacy.

Given the lack of a federal mandate and variations in services across states, the Gifted Programming Standards can identify the characteristics of effective programming in gifted education and ensure a degree of consistency across schools and school districts so that all students receive a quality education (Johnsen, VanTassel-Baska, & Robinson, 2008). Educators in gifted education can point to evidence-based practices that are important to implement. With-

out standards, services to gifted and talented students are left to the discretion of decision makers who may or may not have a background or even an interest in gifted education.

The Gifted Programming Standards can also provide a structure for defining critical benchmarks; developing policies, rules, and procedures; and identifying practices that are the most effective for students with gifts and talents (Johnsen, 2011a). In this way, policymakers can focus on what is important in gifted education, and schools are able to evaluate all aspects of their programs and set benchmarks for improvement.

With the Gifted Programming Standards, professionals in gifted education are more aware of evidence-based classroom practices essential to improving outcomes for gifted and talented students. They can be used as a guide for professional development of individual teachers and for entire school districts. Educator preparation institutions and agencies can also use the standards for identifying relevant theory, research, and pedagogy for designing courses and coherent programs.

The Gifted Programming Standards also reveal the importance that the field of gifted education places on serving underrepresented populations in the areas of assessment, curriculum planning, establishing learning environments, and programming. They reinforce the idea that diversity exists in our society and in each individual's expression of gifts and talents (Johnsen, 2006).

Finally, Gifted Programming Standards can be used for advocacy and effect new initiatives at the local, state, and national levels. They may then direct educators' efforts toward adequately recognizing students with gifts and talents, developing and implementing programming, and ultimately raising the quality of services provided to gifted students and their families.

Process Used to Develop the Gifted Programming Standards

The 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards are the result of many years' effort on the part of NAGC members in collaboration with CEC-TAG members and others who have sought to improve the education of gifted and talented students. The effort began more than 10 years ago with the development of the 1998 Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards (Landrum, Callahan, & Shaklee, 2001; NAGC, 2000).

When the NAGC/CEC-TAG (2006) teacher preparation standards were developed, the NAGC Board wanted to revise the 1998 Gifted Program Standards so that they were aligned with the new teacher preparation standards and recent research. The NAGC Board created the Professional Standards Com-

mittee in 2007 to provide leadership in not only creating awareness of the new teacher preparation standards but also in developing an appropriate alignment of the NAGC/CEC-TAG teacher preparation standards to other standards within and outside of the gifted education field, including the 1998 Pre-K–12 Gifted Program Standards (NAGC, 2007).

On September 15, 2007, NAGC approved a Governance Policy that created the NAGC Professional Standards Committee (PSC) and charged this new committee with "develop[ing] appropriate alignment of the NCATE standards to other standards in and out of the gifted education field, including the *NAGC Pre-K–12 Gifted Program Standards*." The PSC met for the first time at the 2007 NAGC annual convention in Minneapolis, MN. Susan Johnsen and Claire Hughes assumed the leadership roles for aligning the teacher preparation standards with the 1998 NAGC Pre–K–Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards and identifying its research base. The alignment and research support for each of the 1998 program standards was completed by August 2008. The research support included theory/literature-based, research-based, and practice-based research (CEC, 2010, pp. 9–10):

- *Theory/literature-based*. Knowledge or skills are based on theories or philosophical reasoning. They include knowledge and skills derived from sources such as position papers, policy analyses, and descriptive reviews of the literature.
- *Research-based*. Knowledge or skills are based on peer-reviewed studies that use appropriate research methodologies to address questions of cause and effect, and that researchers have independently replicated and found to be effective.
- *Practice-based*. Knowledge and skills are derived from a number of sources. Practices based on a small number of studies or nomination procedures, such as promising practices, are usually practice-based. Practice-based knowledge or skills also include those derived primarily from model and lighthouse programs. Practice-based knowledge and skills include professional wisdom. These practices have been used so widely with practical evidence of effectiveness that there is an implicit professional assumption that the practice is effective. Practice-based knowledge and skills also include "emerging practice," practices that arise from teachers' classroom experiences and are validated through some degree of action research.

Areas that were not aligned between the two sets of standards (e.g., teacher preparation and the 1998 Gifted Program Standards) included differences in themes (e.g., diversity, special education, technology, differentiation), in lack

of specificity, and in the tone of the program guidelines (e.g., more advocacy than standards). The PSC made recommendations for aligning the two sets of standards and for updating the program standards to the NAGC Board. The NAGC Board accepted the PSC's recommendations and approved a Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards Revision Workgroup (Workgroup).

At the annual NAGC meeting in Tampa, FL, on October 31, 2008, the Workgroup, which was chaired by Susan Johnsen, met for the first time. Its charge was to (a) revise and update the 1998 Gifted Program Standards to reflect the current research in the field; (b) align the program standards with the teacher preparation standards so that they shared common themes (diversity, twice-exceptional learners, technology, differentiation); (c) integrate special education and recent special education regulations into the standards; (d) provide more specificity within all of the program standards; (e) consider the variations among state policy, rules, and regulations that influences the standards' language; and (f) establish criteria for the categories of "minimal" and "exemplary" standards. The PSC developed a set of questions to identify the current use of the program standards and future areas for improvement. Margie Kitano and Wayne Lord field tested these survey questions with gifted education coordinators and directors.

In February 2009, NAGC sent the piloted survey to its members and had 32 states respond, which included 68 administrators, district coordinators, full-time gifted teachers, school-level gifted coordinators, state directors, and university faculty. These results were reported: only 15 (22%) of the respondents mentioned a strong alignment between state standards and the NAGC program standards, 39 (57%) said the standards didn't interface with their states' accountability systems, 68 (100%) thought that curriculum and instruction and student identification were essential standards, 49 (72%) didn't differentiate their standards (e.g., acceptable to exemplary), and the majority felt it was important to include diversity (n = 52, 76%) and collaboration (n = 44, 65%).

During five subsequent conference calls in 2009, the Workgroup agreed to organize the revised standards around student outcomes so that schools might be more accountable in showing evidence that their programs were effective for students with gifts and talents. Because of NCATE's recommendations to reduce the number of standards and indicators for reviewing teacher preparation programs, the Gifted Programming Standards were collapsed into six areas and assigned to different Workgroup members for development. Using the 1998 Gifted Program Standards, state program standards, and the NAGC/CEC-TAG teacher preparation standards, the Workgroup developed a draft set of student outcomes and evidence-based practices. They then identified the research base for each of the evidence-based practices.

At the 2009 NAGC annual convention in St. Louis, MO, a draft of the revised Gifted Programming Standards was presented to the University Network and at a special session. Again, a wide variety of stakeholders were present, including university faculty, administrators, teachers, and parents. Comments regarding the standards were collected and summarized and shared at the Workgroup's meeting. The participants (a) liked the change to student outcomes; (b) felt that a minimum of three studies from a variety of sources and disciplines should be used for retaining an evidence-based practice; (c) suggested that empirical, literature-based, and practice-based research could be used; (d) identified areas that might be missing and areas of overlap; and (f) recommended the development of specific resources for student assessments and implementing specific strategies. Feedback was mixed on having "developing, acceptable, exemplary" ratings. Some wanted these ratings, others suggested that an overall rating might be provided, and still others thought that the focus should be on student outcomes, not on the completion of a certain number of standards.

The Workgroup members met in San Diego in January 2010 to examine all of the programming standards as a whole, modify the standards based on the feedback from the NAGC annual meeting in St. Louis, and create a final draft copy for the NAGC Board to review at its next meeting. The NAGC Board unanimously approved the new Gifted Programming Standards at its March 2010 meeting. Subsequently, the CEC-TAG Board unanimously approved the new standards at its April 2010 meeting. The programming standards were then disseminated at the 2010 NAGC annual meeting in Atlanta, GA.

General Principles Underlying the Gifted Programming Standards

During the process of developing the Gifted Programming Standards, the Workgroup reviewed the research base and developed the following principles to guide the revision of the 1998 Gifted Program Standards (NAGC, 2010, p. 4):

1. *Giftedness is dynamic and is constantly developing; therefore, students are defined as those having gifts and talents rather than those with stable traits*. Instead of endorsing a static definition of giftedness (e.g., a student is either gifted or not), more researchers have acknowledged the developmental nature of giftedness, which includes a set of interacting components such as general intelligence, domain-related skills, creativity, and nonintellective factors (Cattell, 1971; Gagné, 1999; Renzulli, 1978; Tannenbaum, 1991). A developmental perspective strongly influences identification and programming practices.

2. *Giftedness is found among students from a variety of backgrounds; therefore, a deliberate effort was made to ensure that diversity was included across all standards*. Diversity was defined as differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area. Because the underrepresentation of diverse students in gifted education programs is well documented (Daniels, 1998; Ford & Harris, 1999; Morris, 2002), specific evidence-based practices needed to be incorporated to ensure that identification procedures were equitable (Ford & Harmon, 2001; Frasier, Garcia, & Passow, 1995; Harris, Plucker, Rapp, & Martinez, 2009), curriculum was culturally responsive (Ford, Tyson, Howard, & Harris, 2000; Kitano & Pedersen, 2002a, 2002b), and learning environments fostered cultural understanding for success in a diverse society (Harper & Antonio, 2008; Zirkel, 2008).
3. *Standards should focus on student outcomes rather than practices.* The number of practices used or how the schools used the practices were not as important as whether or not the practice was effective with students. Consequently, the Workgroup decided not to identify acceptable versus exemplary standards because the distinction would be difficult to support with research.
4. *All educators are responsible for the education of students with gifts and talents.* Educators were defined as administrators, teachers, counselors, and other instructional support staff from a variety of professional backgrounds (i.e., general education, special education, gifted education). Research suggests that collaboration enhances talent development (Gentry & Ferriss, 1999; Landrum, 2002; Purcell & Leppien, 1998) and improves the likelihood that gifted students with disabilities receive services in gifted education programs (Coleman & Johnsen, 2011).
5. *Students with gifts and talents should receive services throughout the day and in all environments that are based on their abilities, needs, and interests*. Therefore, the Workgroup decided to use the word "programming" rather than the word "program," which might connote a unidimensional approach (e.g., a once-a-week type of program option). This emphasis is critical given the patchwork of programs and services that are currently provided to gifted and talented students, which vary from state to state and from school to school (NAGC, 2008–2009).

Along with the stakeholders' input, these principles informed the Workgroup's revisions of the 1998 Gifted Program Standards and assisted in maintaining consistency throughout the revision process.

Differences Between the 1998 Gifted Program Standards and the 2010 Gifted Programming Standards

NAGC released the first set of pre-K–grade 12 standards to the field in 1998. These standards were organized within seven areas (i.e., program design, program administration and management, socio-emotional guidance and counseling, student identification, curriculum and instruction, professional development, program evaluation) and included minimum and exemplary performance levels. The major differences between the 1998 Gifted Program Standards and the 2010 Gifted Programming Standards center on the following areas (Johnsen, 2011a; NAGC, 2010):

1. *The 2010 Gifted Programming Standards are aligned to the 1998 Gifted Program Standards and the NAGC/CEC-TAG teacher preparation standards*. The 2010 Gifted Programming Standards adhere very closely to the language in the NAGC/CEC-TAG teacher preparation standards and the 1998 Gifted Program Standards and integrate the two sets of standards within evidence-based practices. This alignment is helpful to schools that want to build on previously implemented standards and that want to ensure that gifted educators are using best practices. On the other hand, the 2010 Gifted Programming Standards include teacher preparation standards that were not addressed in the 1998 Gifted Program Standards such as language and communication, learning environments, social interaction, diversity, collaboration between gifted education and special education, and ongoing assessment (see Table 1.1). Moreover, the number of standards were reduced and combined into cohesive categories that reflect the research literature and other sets of professional standards (e.g., NCATE, InTASC; see Table 1.2).
2. *The 2010 Gifted Programming Standards' focus is on student outcomes*. The revised standards reflect the national landscape and movement toward accountability based on student performance. Student outcomes require schools to examine the effectiveness of their practices and the value of gifted education programming. When educators are able to show programming's effects on gifted and talented students'

Table 1.1

2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Student Outcome Alignments With NAGC/CEC-TAG Teacher Preparation Standards and the 1998 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards

2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Outcomes	NAGC/CEC-TAG Teacher Preparation Standards										1998 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.1		*	*														
1.2		*	*														
1.3			*		*												
1.4		*															
1.5		*	*														
1.6	*	*	*										*				
1.7			*														
1.8													*				
2.1								*			*						
2.2	*							*		*	*	*		*	*		
2.3								*				*			*		
2.4				*				*		*			*				
2.5											*	*	*	*			
2.6											*	*	*	*			
3.1	*			*			*				*	*	*	*	*		*
3.2				*			*					*					
3.3				*			*					*	*		*		
3.4				*			*										
3.5				*			*										
3.6				*			*										
4.1	*				*	*											
4.2					*												
4.3					*												
4.4	*				*												
4.5						*											
5.1				*		*	*								*	*	*
5.2										*					*	*	
5.3										*						*	
5.4															*	*	

Table 1.1, continued

5.5							*							*		
5.6	*								*					*		
5.7							*						*		*	
6.1	*			*					*	*	*	*	*	*		
6.2									*		*	*	*	*		
6.3									*							
6.4	*								*		*					

Table 1.2

Relationships Among the NAGC/CEC-TAG Teacher Preparation Standards, the 1998 NAGC Pre-K–Grade12 Gifted Program Standards, and the 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Programming Standards

NAGC/CEC-TAG Teacher Preparation Standards	1998 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards	2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Programming Standards (Relationships to Standards)
1. Foundations 2. Development and Characteristics of Learners 3. Individual Learning Differences 4. Instructional Strategies 5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions 6. Language and Communication 7. Instructional Planning 8. Assessment 9. Professional and Ethical Practice 10. Collaboration	1. Student Identification 2. Professional Development 3. Socio-Emotional Guidance and Counseling 4. Program Evaluation 5. Program Design 6. Program Administration and Management 7. Curriculum and Instruction	1. Learning and Development (combined NAGC/CEC-TAG #2, #3; 1998 Gifted Program Standards #3) 2. Assessment (combined NAGC/CEC-TAG #8, 1998 Gifted Program Standards #1, #4) 3. Curriculum Planning and Instruction (combined NAGC/CEC-TAG #4, #7; 1998 Gifted Program Standards #7) 4. Learning Environments (combined NAGC/CEC-TAG #5, #6) 5. Programming (combined NAGC/CEC-TAG #10; 1998 Gifted Program Standards #5, #6) 6. Professional Development (combined NAGC/CEC-TAG #9, #10; 1998 Gifted Program Standards #2)

Note. The Foundations Standard from the NAGC-CEC/TAG Teacher Preparation Standards was integrated throughout all of the Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards.

performance, they are more likely to have data that provide the basis for improving laws and policies related to gifted education and to access greater resources.

3. *The 2010 Gifted Programming Standards emphasize evidence-based practices that are based on research*. Although the 1998 Gifted Program Standards were developed to reflect the best practices at the time, the field has evolved since their creation more than 10 years ago. The revised standards have support from research, literature, and practice-based studies for each of the evidence-based practices. Only evidence-based practices that had research support from at least three studies were included. The research base also provides gifted educators with the necessary evidence needed for advocacy.
4. *The 2010 Gifted Programming Standards reflect a much stronger emphasis on diversity*. The new standards use a broader definition of diversity that includes cultural, linguistic, intellectual, sexual orientation, and disabilities, and overtly stress the importance of student outcomes and evidence-based practices in this area. For example, within the Learning and Development standard, students "recognize the influences of their beliefs, traditions, and values on their learning and behavior" (see 1.2); within the Learning Environments standard, students "possess skills in communicating, teaming, and collaborating with diverse individuals and across diverse groups" (see 4.4); and within the Curriculum Planning and Development criterion, teachers use "challenging, culturally responsive curriculum" (see 3.5.1). Because students from diverse backgrounds continue to be underrepresented in gifted education programs, this emphasis is critical for their inclusion and their ability to access quality programming.
5. *The 2010 Gifted Programming Standards emphasize stronger relationships between gifted education, general education, and special education*. The revised standards stress the importance of partnerships among all educators in addressing the needs of all students. With the inclusion of twice-exceptional students within a Response-to-Intervention model (Coleman & Johnsen, 2011), gifted educators have opportunities to collaborate with special and general educators in implementing rigorous differentiated curriculum, recognizing strengths early, scaffolding learning, and using data to make decisions about more intensive services (see 5.2). The Gifted Programming Standards stress the importance of partnerships among all educators (administrators, teachers, counselors, and other instructional support staff) in addressing the needs of all students (see Standard 6: Professional Development).

6. *The 2010 Gifted Programming Standards are more specific and integrate cognitive science research*. Based on recent research on learning, the Gifted Programming Standards emphasize metacognition, higher level thinking, and problem solving within the evidence-based practices. The evidence-based practices are also more specific and provide guidance to educators on the types of practices to implement. For example, educators are encouraged to use critical and creative thinking strategies and problem-solving and inquiry models (see 3.4.1–3.4.4).

An Overview of the 2010 Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards

The 36 student outcomes are organized within six programming standards: learning and development, assessment, curriculum planning and instruction, learning environments, programming, and professional development (see Appendix A). Each of the six standards represents an important emphasis in developing and implementing effective programming for students with gifts and talents. Practices that are based on research evidence are also included and aligned with each student outcome. These evidence-based practices provide guidance to educators in specific strategies that might be implemented to achieve the student outcomes. Following is a brief overview of each standard and its related student outcomes and evidence-based practices.

Standard 1: Learning and Development

The first standard is foundational to the remaining standards because educators must understand the population's characteristics and needs before they plan and implement assessments, curriculum, instructional strategies, learning environments, programming, and professional development. The student outcomes within this standard recognize the learning and developmental differences of students with gifts and talents, and encourage the students' ongoing self-understanding, awareness of their needs, and cognitive and affective growth in the school, home, and community. To achieve these outcomes, educators (a) help students identify their interests, strengths, and gifts (Lee & Olszewski-Kubilius, 2006; Simonton, 2000; VanTassel-Baska, 2009); (b) develop activities, culturally responsive classrooms, and special interventions that match each student's characteristics (Ford, 2006; Hébert, 1991; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997); (c) use research-based grouping practices (Gentry & Owen, 1999; Kulik & Kulik, 1992; Rogers, 1991); (d) provide role models and mentors within and outside the school (Bloom & Sosniak, 1981; VanTassel-Baska, 2006); (e) col-

laborate with families (Moon, Jurich, & Feldhusen, 1998; Williams & Baber, 2007); and (f) provide students with college and career guidance (Greene, 2003; Maxwell, 2007).

Standard 2: Assessment

This standard incorporates knowledge of all forms of assessments including identification, the assessment of learning progress and outcomes, and evaluation of programming because they are inextricably linked to one another. The student outcomes within this standard relate to equal access, representation of students from diverse backgrounds, and the expression of individual differences in gifts and talents during the identification process. Students with gifts and talents also demonstrate advanced and complex learning and progress as a result of ongoing assessments and evaluation. To achieve these outcomes, evidence-based practices include (a) developing environments where students can show diverse gifts and talents (Borland & Wright, 1994; Grantham, 2003; Hertzog, 2005); (b) using comprehensive, cohesive, ongoing, and technically adequate procedures during the identification process that do not discriminate against any student with potential (Ford & Trotman, 2000; Johnsen, 2011b; Ryser, 2011); (c) using various types of assessments such as performances, products, off-level tests, and other types of pre/post measures (Baker & Schacter, 1996; Baum, Owen, & Oreck, 1996; Reis, Burns, & Renzulli, 1992; VanTassel-Baska, 2007); and (d) implementing an evaluation that is purposeful, reliable, and valid for examining the effectiveness of practices on student outcomes (Avery, VanTassel-Baska, & O'Neill, 1997; Callahan & Reis, 2004; Moon, 1996).

Standard 3: Curriculum Planning and Instruction

The third standard not only addresses curricular planning but also talent development, instructional strategies, culturally relevant curriculum, and accessing appropriate resources to engage a variety of learners. Desired outcomes include students demonstrating growth commensurate with their aptitude, becoming competent in talent areas and as independent investigators, and developing knowledge and skills for being productive in a multicultural, diverse, and global society. To achieve these outcomes, educators (a) develop comprehensive, cohesive programming for students with a variety of gifts and talents that is based on standards, incorporate differentiated curricula in all domains, and use a balanced assessment system (Kitano, Montgomery, VanTassel-Baska, & Johnsen, 2008; Tomlinson, 2004; Stiggins, 2008; VanTassel-Baska, 2004); (b) use specific strategies such as critical and creative thinking, metacognitive, problem-solving, and inquiry models (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001;

Elder & Paul, 2004; Hartman, 2001); (c) develop and use culturally responsive curriculum (Ford, 2006; Ford et al., 2000); and (d) use high-quality resources that integrate technology (Pyryt, 2003; Siegle, 2004).

Standard 4: Learning Environments

The fourth standard focuses on the creation of safe learning environments where students are able to develop personal, social, cultural, communication, and leadership competencies. Specific student outcomes include the development of self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, resilience, independence, and curiosity. Students also learn how to develop positive peer relationships, social interactions, and interpersonal and technical communication skills with diverse individuals and across diverse groups. In their development of leadership skills, they also demonstrate personal and social responsibility. To achieve these outcomes, educators create environments that (a) not only have high expectations, but also honor effort (Cross, Stewart, & Coleman, 2003; Dweck & Kamins, 1999; McKown & Weinstein, 2008); (b) are safe and welcoming for exploring issues and for risk taking (Brody, 1999; Neihart, 2002); (c) provide opportunities for self-exploration and leadership (Frey, 1998; Hensel, 1991; Ross & Smyth, 1995); (d) promote positive interactions with artistic/creative and chronological-age peers (Enersen, 1993; Olszewski-Kubilius, Grant, & Seibert, 1994); (e) support diverse learners (Cline & Schwartz, 2000; den Brok, Levy, Rodriguez, & Wubbels, 2002); and (f) teach positive coping, social, and communication skills (Berger, 2003; Kitano & Lewis, 2005; Kolesinski & Leroux, 1992).

Standard 5: Programming

The fifth standard includes a variety of programming options that are coordinated and implemented by teams of educators who have adequate resources and policies and procedures to implement comprehensive services, which include talent development and career planning. Outcomes include students demonstrating growth and enhanced performance in cognitive and affective areas and identifying future career pathways and talent development pathways to reach their goals. To achieve these outcomes, educators (a) create policies and procedures (Ford & Trotman, 2000; Zeidner & Schleyer, 1999); (b) provide sufficient funding (Baker & Friedman-Nimz, 2003; NAGC, 2008–2009); (c) coordinate services and collaborate with families and other professionals (Campbell & Verna, 2007; Coleman & Johnsen, 2011); and (d) develop and implement a comprehensive set of services such as acceleration, enrichment, grouping, individualized learning, mentorships, internships, and technology

that develop relevant student talent areas (Berger, 2003; Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004; Johnsen & Johnson, 2007; Kulik & Kulik, 1992; Renzulli & Reis, 2003; Siegle & McCoach, 2005).

Standard 6: Professional Development

This standard examines the preparation of educators and the knowledge and skills needed to develop their students' talent and socioemotional development. It also emphasizes high-quality educator development that creates lifelong learners who are ethical in their practices. Student outcomes include the development of their talents and focus on the social and emotional areas. To achieve these outcomes, educators (a) participate in ongoing, research-supported, and multiple forms of professional development that model how to develop environments and instructional activities for students with gifts and talents (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Kitano et al., 2008); (b) provide sufficient human and material resources for professional development (Guskey, 2000; Johnsen, Haensly, Ryser, & Ford, 2002); (c) become involved in professional organizations (Callahan, Cooper, & Glascock, 2003; Landrum et al., 2001); (d) assess their practices and identify areas for personal growth (Bain, Bourgeois, & Pappas, 2003; Gubbins et al., 2002); (e) respond to cultural and personal frames of reference (Ford & Trotman, 2001; Frasier et al., 1995); and (f) comply with rules, policies, and standards of ethical practice (Copenhaver, 2002; Klein & Lugg, 2002).

Use of the Gifted Programming Standards

How might educators use the 2010 Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards? The Gifted Programming Standards may be used for self-assessment, professional development, selecting teachers, program evaluation, and advocacy.

» *Self-assessment*. First, they can be used for self-assessment at the classroom, school, school district, and/or state levels. At the classroom and school levels, teachers might consider which evidence-based practices are being implemented, how these are affecting student progress, and other practices they might want to implement (see Table 1.3). In Table 1.3, the educators have identified a practice (i.e., use of inquiry models within interdisciplinary units) that is being implemented but not assessed. The next step might be for them to identify some possible assessments, review these, and identify which ones might be used across grade levels to determine students' progress in becoming independent investigators.

Table 1.3
Gap Analysis Chart

Standard	Evidence-Based Practices	What We Do to Support This Practice	Desired Student Outcomes	What Evidence Do We Have That Current Practices Are Leading to Desired Student Outcomes?	What Additional Evidence Do We Need? (Gaps)
3. Curriculum Planning and Instruction	3.4.3 Use inquiry models	Interdisciplinary units of study are built around inquiry model.	3.4 Students with gifts and talents become independent investigators.	No formal assessments are used to determine if students are becoming more competent as independent investigators.	Need to develop a way of assessing increasing competence in this area (e.g., product and performance rubrics).

Note. Adapted from *NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards: A Blueprint for Quality Gifted Education Programs* (p. 5), by National Association for Gifted Children, 2010, Washington, DC: Author. Copyright 2010 by National Association for Gifted Children. Adapted with permission.

At the school, school district, and state levels, educators may self-assess by aligning the standards with local and state programming standards, similar to Table 1.1, and examine these questions: What standards are addressed? Which ones may need to be addressed? What assessments are being used to examine the student outcomes and the effectiveness of practices? Assessments that might be considered include off-level standardized achievement measures; end-of-course or Advanced Placement (AP) exams; rubrics for assessing complex products and performance; critical or creative thinking measures to assess process skills; pre/post assessments, portfolio assessments, or student self-assessments such as journals, written products, or surveys to examine students' performances over time (see Appendix B for a listing of assessments). It's important that educators remember to match "the desired outcome to the student's knowledge and skills and level of interest" (NAGC, 2010, p. 7).

» *Professional development*. Following self-assessment, educators can target specific evidence-based practices for professional development. For example, using the information in Table 1.3, educators across grade levels might select and/or design comprehensive and cohesive assessment

tools that might be used to examine how well students are progressing in becoming independent investigators in a variety of domains. These assessments then might be used to drive more professional development in specific practices related to research such as formulating questions, gathering information, analyzing data and summarizing information, developing products, and so on.

» *Selection of gifted educators*. Along with the NAGC/CEC-TAG teacher preparation standards, these standards might also be used for selecting teachers and other educators who would be effective in planning programming and serving students with gifts and talents. For example: Do educators engage students in identifying their interests, strengths, and gifts (see 1.1.1)? Do they use differentiated pre- and post-performance-based assessments that measure the progress of students (see 2.4.1)? Do they use critical thinking strategies (see 3.4.1)? Do they establish a safe and welcoming climate for addressing social issues (see 4.3.1)? Do they collaborate with other educators in planning programs for students with gifts and talents (see 5.2.1)? Are they aware of the foundations of gifted education and research-supported practices (6.1.1)?

» *Program evaluation*. The standards can help educators establish school- or district-wide benchmarks to monitor the progress of implementing specific evidence-based practices over time. Because the Gifted Programming Standards are also written in terms of student outcomes, educators involved in evaluation can assess the effect of implemented practices on students with gifts and talents. For example, to what degree are students demonstrating self-knowledge (Standard 1); accessing resources to support their needs (Standards 1 and 2); demonstrating competence in talent areas (Standards 3 and 6); demonstrating skills in communicating, teaming, and collaborating across diverse groups (Standard 4); and demonstrating learning progress commensurate with their abilities (Standards 3 and 5)? Collecting these assessment data will not only improve programming, but also will show the value added by having specialized programming for students with gifts and talents, which can be used for requesting adequate human and material resources.

» *Advocacy*. The standards can be used to inform educators, policymakers, and the community about the characteristics of effective programming for students with gifts and talents. Presentations can be made to teachers, instructional support staff, administrators, school boards, parent groups, and other community organizations in describing the important practices and related outcomes for gifted education programming.

Building both grass-roots and administrative-level supports can assist in policy development at the district and state levels, which ultimately builds a foundation for gifted education programming that will not disappear during lean economic times.

Summary

Since the 1980s, education has been influenced by the standards movement and the need for accountability. The field of gifted education needs standards, not only to be a part of national conversations, but also to provide leadership to educators who are wanting to develop programming that is effective for gifted and talented students. The 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards provide a foundation for developing consistency across schools and school districts, a structure for defining critical benchmarks, guidelines for professional development, and a basis for advocacy efforts. Moreover, the standards' attention to underserved populations demonstrates the field's commitment to each individual's expression of gifts and talents.

Informed by national standards, research, and more than 2 years of collaborative work among associations, administrators, district coordinators, full-time gifted teachers, school-level gifted coordinators, state directors, and university faculty, the Gifted Programming Standards focus on student outcomes that are organized within six areas: learning and development, assessment, curriculum planning and instruction, learning environments, programming, and professional development. Their use in self-assessment, professional development, selection of gifted educators, program evaluation, and advocacy will help in the development and implementation of quality programming so that all students with gifts and talents have opportunities for enhancing their performance.

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