

Second Edition

# Using the National Gifted Education Standards for Pre-K–Grade 12 Professional Development

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b> National Standards for the Preparation of Teachers of Gifted Students in Pre-K–Grade 12 Schools and Their Relationship to Quality Programming .....	5 <i>Susan K. Johnsen, Joyce VanTassel-Baska, and Jane Clarenbach</i>
<b>Chapter 2</b> Developing Partnerships: Preparing Teachers to Serve Gifted Students in All Settings.....	37 <i>Alicia Cotabish, Debbie Dailey, and Nykela Jackson</i>
<b>Chapter 3</b> From Cacophony to Chorus: Collaborating in a Time of Multiple Standards.....	53 <i>Claire E. Hughes</i>
<b>Chapter 4</b> Identifying Outcomes for Professional Development.....	69 <i>Elizabeth Shaunessy-Dedrick, Chrystyna V. Mursky, and Alicia Cotabish</i>
<b>Chapter 5</b> Effective Models for Designing Professional Development in Gifted Education .....	89 <i>Kimberley L. Chandler</i>
<b>Chapter 6</b> Designing Professional Development Activities .....	109 <i>Debra A. Troxclair, Elizabeth Shaunessy-Dedrick, and Chrystyna V. Mursky</i>
<b>Chapter 7</b> Assessment of the Effectiveness of Professional Development Activities.....	127 <i>Debra A. Troxclair and Chin-Wen Lee</i>
<b>Chapter 8</b> Making Change Happen: Implementing the Teacher Education Standards in the Real World of Education.....	155 <i>Joyce VanTassel-Baska and Susan K. Johnsen</i>

**Chapter 9** Challenges and Prospects..... 171  
*Susan K. Johnsen and Joyce VanTassel-Baska*

**Appendix A** Research Support for the 2013 Teacher Preparation  
Standards in Gifted and Talented Education..... 179

**Appendix B** Classroom Observation Instruments ..... 231

**Appendix C** Needs Assessment..... 269

**Appendix D** Sample Professional Development Plan  
for Teachers of the Gifted and Talented ..... 275

**Appendix E** Sample Concept Maps..... 279

**About the Editors**..... 287

**About the Authors**..... 289

COUNCIL FOR  
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN  
SAMPLE

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# INTRODUCTION

**T**his guide is for Pre-K–grade 12 program leaders in gifted education and district personnel who are responsible for planning and implementing professional development activities for teachers at all levels of schooling. The purpose of the guide is to share the new professional standards for teachers of students with gifts and talents and how those standards might be used in determining professional development plans in gifted and general education.

In the first chapter, Johnsen, VanTassel-Baska, and Clarenbach provide an overview of teacher preparation and program standards in gifted education. Tracing the importance and history of the standards, they show the purposes and interrelationships among the initial and advanced gifted education teacher preparation standards, the knowledge and skills standards in gifted education for all teachers, the gifted education programming standards, and other

important standards in teacher preparation. They conclude with examples that incorporate research-based features of professional development.

In the second chapter, Cotabish, Dailey, and Jackson specify ways of developing partnerships among Pre-K–12 institutions, universities and other education preparation providers, and the larger community. They identify goals for these partnerships and related features that improve teacher quality. Using specific examples, they describe partnership activities that promote Pre-K–12 gifted students' learning.

Hughes suggests in the third chapter that teachers must often contend with as many as 10 different sets of standards in developing curriculum and instructional strategies for inclusive classrooms. She suggests that gifted education specialists can collaborate more effectively when they identify the needs of diverse learners, identify the needs of professionals, establish commonality of purposes, and create clear collaborative networks.

In Chapter 4, Shaunessy-Dedrick, Mursky, and Cotabish show how to address the teacher preparation standards through the lens of student outcomes. Providing practical examples, they describe how a variety of educators such as classroom teachers, gifted and special education specialists, psychologists and counselors, and administrators can contribute to the success of these outcomes. They also provide specific suggestions for professional learning experiences.

Using the Learning Forward standards for professional development in Chapter 5, Chandler shows how professional development in gifted education might be improved through five delivery models: individually guided professional development, observation and assessment, involvement in a development or improvement process, training, and inquiry. She concludes by identifying crucial steps for those individuals involved in planning professional learning in gifted education.

In Chapter 6, Troxclair, Shaunessy-Dedrick, and Mursky provide evidence for successful standards-based professional development approaches in gifted education related to the implementation of cluster grouping and instructional strategies in core content areas. Specific approaches include peer reflections, distance learning communities, lesson study, and communities of learning.

Troxclair and Lee describe ways to assess professional development activities in Chapter 7. They relate the teacher preparation standards to specific classroom observation instruments included in Appendix B and then provide examples showing how these assessments might be used in providing evidence for desired teacher and student outcomes.

In Chapter 8, VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen provide research-based principles to effect change in the real world of education. They suggest strong leadership and dynamic views of professional development must be operative and

# NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OF GIFTED STUDENTS IN PRE-K- GRADE 12 SCHOOLS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO QUALITY PROGRAMMING

SUSAN K. JOHNSEN, JOYCE VAN TASSEL-BASKA,  
AND JANE CLARENBACH

**T**his chapter shares the new professional standards for teachers of students with gifts and talents and how those standards might be used in determining professional development plans in gifted education. The chapter includes the importance of teacher preparation standards, the history of their development, their alignment with other standards, and implications for Pre-K–12 educators.

## Importance of Standards

According to the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC; 2013), standards serve three major functions: They provide a com-

mon vision, set a level of performance, and provide a way of assessing performance. The 2013 NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education address these functions by identifying the essential knowledge and skills that gifted education teachers need to acquire to be effective in teaching gifted and talented students (National Association for Gifted Children [NAGC] & Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2013a). The standards have been systematically developed using theory, disciplined inquiry, empirical research, and practical evidence of effectiveness (CEC, 2010). Educator preparation institutions and school districts can use these standards in designing courses and coherent teacher preparation programs, establishing benchmarks to measure candidate progress. Pre-K–12 schools can use the standards as an assessment tool for identifying important characteristics of gifted educators, establishing meaningful outcomes, guiding professional development activities, and providing the necessary supports and opportunities for meeting the standards.

Because the standards are built on a sound base of research literature, they define the distinct knowledge and skills needed by teachers in gifted education, which are different from those in other fields. In this way, they build the legitimacy of gifted education and the importance that the field places on serving all students with gifts and talents, particularly those from underserved populations (see Appendix A).

The standards can also provide consistency across states, universities, and schools involved in teacher preparation, development, and licensure because gifted education is not federally mandated. They provide a structure for developing policies, rules, and procedures. In this way, policymakers can focus attention on the key components of gifted education programs and services, and schools are able to evaluate their programs and set benchmarks for improvement. This consistency helps in placing qualified teachers in gifted education classrooms and increases the probability that gifted learners will receive a challenging curriculum.

Moreover, using the standards can enhance advocacy efforts at the local program level and even new legislation at the state and national levels. Educators, families, and other stakeholders can point to the knowledge and skills necessary for preparing teachers who will ultimately raise the quality of services to gifted students and their families.

# DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS: PREPARING TEACHERS TO SERVE GIFTED STUDENTS IN ALL SETTINGS

ALICIA COTABISH, DEBBIE DAILEY,  
AND NYKELA JACKSON

## National Standards and Their Relationship to Developing Partnerships

**T**he practitioner nature of education creates opportunities to nurture, develop, practice, and demonstrate the content and pedagogical knowledge and skills that promote student learning (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2013). The field of gifted education is no different. It is an evolving and changing discipline that requires certain responsibilities, actions, and instructional practices that benefit high-achieving and promising learners. Teacher education begins with preservice teacher preparation and continues through induction, mentoring, professional development, and life-long learning. Along this trajectory, candidates typically participate in school-



based practica experiences. However, the partnership between university teacher preparation programs (Education Preparation Providers [EPPs]) and schools are often limited to these experiences. To facilitate ongoing teacher learning (with the intent of making an impact on candidates' knowledge and skills), efforts should be made to build and maintain partnerships with general education, academic departments, content specialists, other school district personnel, higher education, and the community at large.

The responsibility for teacher education typically has been divided between EPPs and school districts, rather than shared between these systems, creating a missed opportunity (Cotabish & Dailey, 2016). As a fluid system in teacher preparation, partnership reform efforts begin at the EPP level, extend across Pre-K–12 education and the community at large, and reflect organizational accountability and expansion of leadership roles among all partners involved in teacher preparation. Figure 2.1 highlights the symbiotic relationship between EPPs and school-based agencies.

Although Figure 2.1 highlights the teacher preparation role of EPPs regarding their responsibility in creating partnerships, it's important to note (and encourage) that partnership relationships might also be initiated by Pre-K–12 schools and other school-based agencies (e.g., school districts, educational co-ops, etc.). Goals for Pre-K–12 partnerships, regardless of agency initiation, should be developed and include key features of teacher preparation quality (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2006). At the EPP level, these features include strong content preparation and extensive clinical experiences involving the integration of technology for teacher candidates. Key features found in both EPP and the school-based agency level include evolving, continuous improvement through the quantity and quality of courses; pre- and inservice teacher professional development using best practices in teaching, instructional materials, and technology; embedded teacher learning experiences that encompass quality clinical and field experiences and peer-coaching opportunities; and assessments that ensure teacher and teacher candidates' performance. Recognition of these key features makes it easier to facilitate a shared mission.

Figure 2.2 provides a framework for establishing partnership goals for educational professionals. The figure centers around three goals: (a) increased support for the partnership between universities and schools/districts/agencies, and their roles in teacher preparation; (b) organizational changes and relationships among partners; and (c) efforts to institutionalize partnerships.

With this in mind, Partnership Goal 1 focuses on increasing support for partnerships. Developing partnerships between EPPs and Pre-K–12 schools and other community-based organizations encourages, supports, and informs teacher preparation (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

# FROM CACOPHONY TO CHORUS: COLLABORATING IN A TIME OF MULTIPLE STANDARDS

CLAIRE E. HUGHES

It is 11 a.m. on an October morning, and Mrs. Mabry is teaching her first graders when to capitalize letters. She is using small-group instruction with rotations. One of the stations involves a computer game that matches the game to the child's skill, one engages students in a real-world letter-writing activity to their pen pals in Japan using word processing, and the third is direct instruction where she teaches the specific skill of capitalization. She has a core lesson, a foundational lesson for students who are struggling, and an enrichment activity, which she developed in her graduate program, for students who already understand. She uses highly visual instructional materials because two of her children are from Guatemala and speak limited English. She is careful not to be too loud because two of her students have autism and are responsive to loud noises, while another comes from an abusive home and gets aggressive when there is too much vol-

ume in the room. She is careful to ask higher order questions involving analysis and evaluation for her two gifted learners, one of whom is from Mexico and often acts as an interpreter for the students from Guatemala. The door opens, and an administrator enters, checking to see that Mrs. Mabry is indeed, teaching to the “standards.”

On any given day in a large school district, a typical first-grade classroom could conceivably have more than 10 different administrators—including the building principal; the district coordinator of special education, gifted education, or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); content specialists; counselors; or behavior specialists—come in to evaluate the curriculum, the environment, the instruction, the teacher, or the children—all using a different set of standards. In this classroom might be gifted children, children with special needs, children from non-English-speaking backgrounds, children from poverty, and children being assessed for a wide variety of behavior and learning needs.

Gifted education is but a small voice among a large number of other voices specifying how different types of children are to be taught and what teachers should know and be able to do. Not only are there many, many sets of standards, practitioners also have limited knowledge of them. For example, in a study of special education teachers, most had “minimal to no knowledge” of the CEC ethics and standards (Fiedler & Van Haren, 2009), while other studies have found that teachers use standards to “map” onto existing lessons and curriculum, without understanding the implications for improvement of professional practice (Chung & Kim, 2010).

How then, in this cacophony of standards, can a gifted education specialist, armed with the program and teacher preparation standards, be heard and be relevant? There is a phrase, “If you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu.” Because gifted education has a history of being cut in budget crunches, it is vital for gifted educators to demonstrate a willingness to collaborate so that they will not be swallowed up in the larger collective. Just as members of a chorus do not sing all the same note, but sing different notes and different pitches in harmony, gifted education and other education professionals must work together to find areas of common interest.



# IDENTIFYING OUTCOMES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ELIZABETH SHAUNESSY-DEDRICK,  
CHRYSTYNA V. MURSKY, AND ALICIA COTABISH

**G**ifted education's practitioner nature presents opportunities to nurture aspiring candidates to develop, practice, and demonstrate the content and pedagogical knowledge and skills that promote student learning (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2013, para. 1). The newly revised national teacher preparation standards in gifted education are grounded in research and support this purpose. However, school personnel who teach students who are gifted and talented often integrate multiple standards into instruction due to the multifaceted nature of their position, which often includes teaching a variety of subject matter across grade levels. To navigate this complex landscape requires educators to align multiple sets of standards (see Chapter 1). Some of these standards include (a) the InTASC Standards (2013); (b) the NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted Education (NAGC-CEC, 2013a); (c) the NAGC-CEC Advanced Standards in Gifted Education

Teacher Preparation (NAGC-CEC, 2013b); (d) NAGC Knowledge and Skill Standards in Gifted Education for All Teachers (NAGC, 2014); and (e) the 2010 Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards (NAGC, 2010). It is important to note that the first three are preparation standards that describe the teacher’s knowledge and skills. Although the 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards “use student outcomes for goals” (para. 2), the Knowledge and Skills Standards in Gifted Education for All Teachers were created to guide the preparation of general educators in preservice settings as well as those already in classrooms who do not have formal training in gifted and talented education.

The goal of this chapter is to provide a professional development approach to address the teacher preparation standards through the lens of student outcomes. All educators—including those new to gifted education as well as those refreshing their expertise in educating gifted learners—are the audience for this chapter. The first section includes sample student outcomes that may be achieved when educators have the knowledge and skills to implement the professional standards for gifted education. We also offer examples of how a variety of educators can contribute to achieving these outcomes. The second section of this chapter provides suggestions for professional learning experiences that can lead to the sample student outcomes.

## Alignment of Standards with Student Outcomes

How do professional standards contribute to improved student outcomes? Learning Forward (2011) explained the connection among professional standards, effective educators, and positive student outcomes as follows:

1. When professional learning is standards-based, it has greater potential to change what educators know, are able to do, and believe.
2. When educators’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions change, they have a broader repertoire of effective strategies to use to adapt their practices to meet performance expectations and student learning needs.
3. When educator practice improves, students have a greater likelihood of achieving results. (Learning Forward, 2011, p 16)

Furthermore, Learning Forward noted when professional learning focuses on student outcomes, there is a positive effect on changing educator practice and increasing student achievement.