
PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) periodically issues policy statements that deal with issues, policies, and practices that have an impact on the education of gifted and talented students. Policy statements represent the official conviction of the organization.

All policy statements approved by the NAGC Board of Directors are consistent with the organization's belief that education in a democracy must respect the uniqueness of all individuals, the broad range of cultural diversity present in our society, and the similarities and differences in learning characteristics that can be found within any group of students. NAGC is fully committed to national goals that advocate both excellence and equity for all students, and we believe that the best way to achieve these goals is through *differentiated* educational opportunities, resources, and encouragement for all students.

In many classrooms, one-size-fits-all instruction is pervasive. At the same time, these classrooms are becoming more academically diverse and classroom teachers are being asked to be primary service providers for the full range of academic diversity—including students who are advanced well beyond their age peers. The role of preservice education programs in preparing educators to work effectively in academically diverse classrooms is critical to the success of public education, and to its capacity to maximize the potential of all learners.

NAGC supports the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards for preservice teachers that include: knowledge of subject matter and how to make it accessible to students; understanding how to foster learning and development; ability to create learning experiences adapted to the needs of diverse learners; use of teaching strategies that foster critical thinking, problem solving, and high levels of performance; ability to create a positive and purposeful learning environment; knowledge of how to promote effective communication and collaboration in the classroom; ability to plan instruction based on subject matter and student needs; curriculum goals and community context; understanding of and skill in using a wide variety of assessment strategies; ability to reflect on, evaluate and improve teaching and learning; and ability to collaborate with colleagues and parents to support student learning. Preservice education programs that adhere to these standards will model them in teacher education classes and employ them as benchmarks for novice teacher preparedness in preservice teaching practica.

Implicit in appropriate application of these standards to gifted learners are preservice programs that explicitly and continually address:

- 1. characteristics of high-ability learners, including those from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds and those who underachieve;**
- 2. recognition of needs of high-ability learners in classroom settings;**

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- 3. understanding the interrelationship between appropriate instructional challenge, student motivation, and student achievement in high-ability students;**
- 4. proactive development of meaningful learning experiences well beyond grade-level expectations;**
- 5. continual assessment of student progress and adaptation of instructional options based on assessment data;**
- 6. appropriate use of a variety of instructional strategies to provide advanced and extended learning opportunities;**
- 7. management of multitask classrooms, and**
- 8. approaches to reporting student progress that stress individual student growth rather than only comparison to a grade-level norm.**

NAGC believes that all aspects of effective teacher preparation programs should stress the responsibility of teachers to address the varying cognitive and affective needs of academically diverse student populations and relentlessly promote the skills necessary to succeed in addressing that pivotal responsibility.

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