

Standards for the Preparation of Gifted Education Professionals

Initial Preparation Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences	
1.0	Beginning gifted education professionals understand the variations in learning and development in cognitive and affective areas between and among individuals with gifts and talents and apply this understanding to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.
<i>Key Elements</i>	
1.1	Beginning gifted education professionals understand how language, culture, economic status, family background, and area of disability can influence the learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
1.2	Beginning gifted education professionals use understanding of development and individual differences to respond to the needs of individuals with gifts and talents.

Supporting Explanation

Historically, gifted educators have placed the learning needs of the individual at the center of gifted education instruction. Gifted educators alter instructional practices to optimize learning for individuals with gifts and talents. Development of expertise begins with a thorough understanding of and respect for similarities and differences in all areas of human growth and development. Like all educators, beginning gifted educators first respect individuals with gifts and talents within the context of human development and individual learning differences. Not only do beginning gifted educators understand advanced developmental milestones of individuals with gifts and talents from early childhood through adolescence, but they also understand how exceptionalities can interact with development and learning and create developmentally appropriate learning environments to provide relevant, meaningful, and challenging learning experiences for individuals with gifts and talents.

Beginning gifted educators understand the variation in characteristics between and among individuals with and without gifts and talents. They know exceptionalities can interact with multiple

domains of human development to influence an individual's learning in school, community, and throughout life. Moreover, they understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can influence relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Further, experiences of individuals with exceptionalities can influence their ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community. Educators of the gifted understand the phenomenon of underachievement and how it manifests itself in males and females—and they understand techniques for reversing underachievement.

Beginning gifted educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how the primary language, culture, family, and areas of disability interact with the gifts and talents to influence the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career and postsecondary options. These learning differences and their interactions provide the foundation upon which beginning gifted educators differentiate instruction to provide developmentally meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with exceptionalities.

Initial Preparation Standard 2: Learning Environments	
2.0	Beginning gifted education professionals create safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with gifts and talents become effective learners and develop social and emotional well being.
<i>Key Elements</i>	
2.1	Beginning gifted education professionals create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments that engage individuals with gifts and talents in meaningful and rigorous learning activities and social interactions.
2.2	Beginning gifted education professionals use communication and motivational and instructional interventions to facilitate understanding of subject matter and to teach individuals with gifts and talents how to adapt to different environments and develop ethical leadership skills.
2.3	Beginning gifted education professionals adjust their communication to an individual's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences.
2.4	Beginning gifted education professionals demonstrate understanding of the multiple environments that are part of a continuum of services for individuals with gifts and talents, including the advantages and disadvantages of various settings.

Supporting Explanation

Like all educators, beginning gifted educators develop safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments for all students. They also collaborate with colleagues in general education and other specialized environments that develop students' gifts and talents, engaging gifted students in meaningful learning activities that enhance independence, interdependence, and positive peer-relationships.

Beginning gifted educators modify learning environments for individual needs. Knowledge regarding the interaction of an individual's language, family, culture, areas of disability, and other significant contextual factors with an individual's

gifts and talents guides the beginning gifted educator in modifying learning environments, and provides for the maintenance and generalization of acquired skills across environments and subjects. They adjust their communication methods to an individual's language proficiency. They value and are responsive to cultural and linguistic differences, avoiding discrimination, stereotyping, and deficit views of differences.

Beginning gifted educators structure environments to encourage self-awareness, self-regulation, self-efficacy, self-direction, personal empowerment, leadership, and self-advocacy of individuals with gifts and talents, and directly teach them how to adapt to the expectations and demands of differing environments.

Initial Preparation Standard 3: Curricular Content Knowledge	
3.0	Beginning gifted education professionals use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to advance learning for individuals with gifts and talents.
<i>Key Elements</i>	
3.1	Beginning gifted education professionals understand the role of central concepts, structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry of the content areas they teach, and use their understanding to organize knowledge, integrate cross-disciplinary skills, and develop meaningful learning progressions within and across grade levels.
3.2	Beginning gifted education professionals design appropriate learning and performance modifications for individuals with gifts and talents that enhance creativity, acceleration, depth and complexity in academic subject matter and specialized domains.
3.3	Beginning gifted education professionals use assessments to select, adapt, and create materials to differentiate instructional strategies and general and specialized curricula to challenge individuals with gifts and talents.
3.4	Beginning gifted education professionals understand that individuals with gifts and talents demonstrate a wide range of advanced knowledge and performance levels and modify the general or specialized curriculum appropriately.

Supporting Explanation

The professional knowledge base in general education clearly indicates that educators' understanding of the central concepts and structure of the discipline and tools of inquiry related to the academic subject-matter content areas they teach makes a significant difference in student learning.

Within the general education curricula, beginning gifted educators demonstrate in their planning and teaching a solid foundation of understanding of the theories, central concepts and principles, structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry of the academic subject-matter content areas they teach so they are able to organize knowledge, integrate cross-disciplinary skills, develop meaningful learning progressions, and collaborate with educators in:

- Using and interpreting assessments to select, adapt, and create materials to differentiate instructional strategies and general and specialized curricula to challenge individuals with gifts and talents.
- Teaching the content of the general or specialized curriculum to individuals with gifts and talents across advanced performance levels.
- Designing appropriate learning and performance modifications for individuals with gifts and talents in academic subject matter and specialized content domains that incorporate advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, distinctive, and/or complex content.

In addition, beginning gifted educators use a variety of specialized curricula to individualize meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with exceptionalities.

Initial Preparation Standard 4: Assessment	
4.0	Beginning gifted education professionals use multiple methods of assessment and data sources in making educational decisions about identification and learning.
<i>Key Elements</i>	
4.1	Beginning gifted education professionals understand that some groups of individuals with gifts and talents have been underrepresented in gifted education programs and select and use technically sound formal and informal assessments that minimize bias.
4.2	Beginning gifted education professionals use knowledge of measurement principles and practices to differentiate assessments and interpret results to guide educational decisions for individuals with gifts and talents.
4.3	Beginning gifted education professionals collaborate with colleagues and families in using multiple types of assessment information to make identification and learning progress decisions and to minimize bias in assessment and decision-making.
4.4	Beginning gifted education professionals use assessment results to develop long- and short-range goals and objectives that take into consideration an individual's abilities and needs, the learning environment, and other factors related to diversity.
4.5	Beginning gifted education professionals engage individuals with gifts and talents in assessing the quality of their own learning and performance and in setting future goals and objectives.

Supporting Explanation

Beginning gifted educators understand measurement theory and practice for addressing issues of validity, reliability, norms, bias, and interpretation of assessment results. Bias may occur not only within quantitative assessments that do not have technical adequacy but also from barriers within identification procedures such as low teacher expectations, exclusive definitions, and a focus on deficits rather than strengths (Ford, 1998; Ryser, 2011). Beginning gifted educators understand the appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments and collaborate with families and other colleagues to ensure nonbiased, meaningful assessments and decision making.

Beginning gifted educators understand the policies and ethical principles of measurement and assessment related to gifted education referral

or nomination, identification, program planning, differentiated instruction, learning progress, and services for individuals with gifts and talents, including individuals with culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse backgrounds. Beginning gifted educators select and use quantitative and qualitative assessment information to support a wide variety of decisions within gifted education. They conduct formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to differentiate the learning experiences and document the growth of individuals with gifts and talents. Moreover, they differentiate assessments to identify above level performances and to accelerate and enrich the general education curriculum.

Beginning gifted educators use available technologies routinely to support their assessments and employ a variety of assessments such as performance-based assessment, portfolios, and



computer simulations. Using these data, beginning gifted educators make multiple types of assessment decisions including strategic adaptations and modifications in response to an individual's constellation of social, linguistic, and learning factors in ways to minimize bias. They also use the results of assessments to identify above-level performance, develop long-range instructional plans anchored in both general and specialized curricula, and translate these plans into carefully selected shorter-range goals and objectives to differentiate and accelerate

instruction. Moreover, beginning gifted educators engage individuals with gifts and talents in assessing the quality of their own learning and performance and in providing feedback to guide them in setting future goals.

Like their general education colleagues, beginning gifted educators regularly monitor the learning progress of individuals with gifts and talents in both general and specialized content and make instructional adjustments based on these data.

Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies	
5.0	Beginning gifted education professionals select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance the learning of individuals with gifts and talents.
<i>Key Elements</i>	
5.1	Beginning gifted education professionals know principles of evidence-based, differentiated, and accelerated practices and possess a repertoire of instructional strategies to enhance the critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and performance skills of individuals with gifts and talents.
5.2	Beginning gifted education professionals apply appropriate technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for individuals with gifts and talents.
5.3	Beginning gifted education professionals collaborate with families, professional colleagues, and other educators to select, adapt, and use evidence-based strategies that promote challenging learning opportunities in general and specialized curricula.
5.4	Beginning gifted education professionals emphasize the development, practice, and transfer of advanced knowledge and skills across environments throughout the lifespan leading to creative, productive careers in a multicultural society for individuals with gifts and talents.
5.5	Beginning gifted education professionals use instructional strategies that enhance the affective development of individuals with gifts and talents.

Supporting Explanation

In the selection, development, and adaptation of learning experiences for individuals with gifts and talents, beginning gifted educators consider an individual’s abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors to achieve positive learning results in general and special curricula. Understanding these factors, curriculum models, and the implications of being recognized as gifted and talented guides the educator’s development of scope and sequence plans; selection, adaptation, and creation of learning activities; pace of instruction; and use of differentiated evidence-based instructional strategies.

Beginning gifted educators possess a repertoire of evidence-based strategies to differentiate and accelerate the curriculum for individuals with gifts and talents. They select, adapt, and use these strategies to promote challenging learning opportunities in general and special curricula and to modify learning environments to enhance self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-efficacy for individuals with gifts and talents. They enhance 21st-century student outcomes such as critical and creative thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and performance skills in specific domains and allow individuals with gifts and talents opportunities to explore, develop or research their areas of interest or talent.



Beginning gifted educators also emphasize the development, practice, and transfer of advanced knowledge and skills across environments throughout the lifespan leading to creative, productive careers in society for individuals with gifts and talents. Moreover, beginning gifted educators facilitate these actions in a collaborative context that includes individuals with

gifts and talents, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate. They are familiar with alternative and augmentative communication systems and are comfortable using technologies to support language and communication, instructional planning and differentiated instruction for individuals with exceptionalities.

Initial Preparation Standard 6: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	
6.0	Beginning gifted education professionals use foundational knowledge of the field and professional ethical principles and program standards (NAGC, 2010) to inform gifted education practice, to engage in life-long learning, and to advance the profession.
<i>Key Elements</i>	
6.1	Beginning gifted education professionals use professional ethical principles and specialized program standards to guide their practice.
6.2	Beginning gifted education professionals understand how foundational knowledge, perspectives, and historical and current issues influence professional practice and the education and treatment of individuals with gifts and talents both in school and society.
6.3	Beginning gifted education professionals model respect for diversity, understanding that it is an integral part of society's institutions and impacts learning of individuals with gifts and talents in the delivery of gifted education services.
6.4	Beginning gifted education professionals are aware of their own professional learning needs, understand the significance of lifelong learning, and participate in professional activities and learning communities.
6.5	Beginning gifted education professionals advance the profession by engaging in activities such as advocacy and mentoring.

Supporting Explanation

Beginning gifted educators practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges, which requires ongoing attention to legal matters and serious consideration of professional and ethical issues. Ethical principles and program standards guide beginning gifted educators. These principles and standards provide benchmarks by which gifted educators practice and professionally evaluate each other.

Beginning gifted educators understand gifted education as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, policies, historical points of view that continue to influence the field of gifted education and the education of and services for individuals with gifts and talents and their families in both school and

society. Beginning gifted educators understand how these factors influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, services, and program evaluation.

Beginning gifted educators understand the aspects of human diversity and equity as related to academic diversity. They understand aspects of human diversity and equity regarding individuals identified as gifted and talented as well as those who have potential of being identified gifted and talented.

Beginning gifted educators are sensitive to the aspects of diversity of individuals with gifts and talents and their families, how human diversity can influence families, cultures, and schools, and how these complex issues can each interact with the delivery of gifted education services. Of special significance is the growth in the number and prevalence of ELLs and economically disadvantaged students, and the



provision of effective gifted education services for these students with exceptionalities and their families. Beginning gifted educators also understand historical relationships of gifted education services related to diversity and equity and the organization of schools, school systems, and education-related agencies within the culture in which they practice.

Beginning gifted educators understand the relationships of the organization of gifted education services to the organization of schools, school systems, and education-related agencies within cultures in which they practice. They are aware of how their own and others' attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice, and use this knowledge as a foundation to inform their own personal understandings and philosophies of special education.

Beginning gifted educators engage in professional activities and participate actively in professional

learning communities that benefit individuals with gifts and talents, their families, colleagues, and their own professional growth. They view themselves as life-long learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice, and develop and use personalized professional development plans. They plan and engage in activities that foster their professional growth and keep them current with evidence-based practices and know how to recognize their own skill limits and practice within them. They place particular emphasis on professional activities that focus on human diversity and academic diversity in all of its manifestations. Moreover, educators of the gifted embrace their special role as advocates for individuals with gifts and talents. They promote and advocate for the learning and well being of individuals with gifts and talents across multiple and varied settings through diverse learning experiences.

Initial Preparation Standard 7: Collaboration	
7.0	Beginning gifted education professionals collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with gifts and talents, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with gifts and talents across a range of learning experiences.
<i>Key Elements</i>	
7.1	Beginning gifted education professionals apply elements of effective collaboration.
7.2	Beginning gifted education professionals serve as a collaborative resource with colleagues.
7.3	Beginning gifted education professionals use collaboration to promote the well being of individuals with gifts and talents across a wide range of settings and collaborators.

Supporting Explanation

One of the significant changes in education over the past several decades is the rapid growth of collaborative educational teams to address the educational needs of students. The diversity of the students, complexity of curricular demands, growing influence of technology, and the rising targets for learner outcomes in the 21st century has created the demand for teams of educators collaborating together to ensure all students are effectively learning challenging curricula.

Beginning gifted educators embrace their role as a resource to colleagues and use the theory and elements of collaboration across a wide range of contexts and collaborators. They use culturally responsive behaviors that promote effective communication and collaboration with individuals with gifts and talents, their families, school personnel, and community members. They collaborate with their general education and other special education

colleagues to create learning environments that meaningfully include individuals with gifts and talents, and that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement. In addition, beginning gifted educators use collaboration to facilitate differentiated assessment and instructional planning to advance learning of individuals with gifts and talents across a wide range of settings and different learning experiences. They routinely collaborate with other educators in developing mentorships, internships, and vocational programming experiences to address the needs of individuals with gifts and talents.

Gifted educators have long recognized the positive significance of the active involvement of individuals with gifts and talents and their families in the education process, and gifted educators involve individuals with gifts and talents and their families collaboratively in all aspects of the education of individuals with gifts and talents.