



2012 – 2013

State of the Nation in Gifted Education

Work Yet to Be Done

An NAGC Look at the 2012-2013 State of the States in Gifted Education Report





Business and government leaders continue to raise concerns about the future supply of highly skilled employees that can meet the nation's economic and national security needs. Although there are pockets of leadership across the nation in policies and practices that support our high ability and high-achieving students, the **2012-2013 State of the States in Gifted Education** survey shows that the United States as a whole has not yet committed attention and resources to ensure that high-ability students will receive an education that maximizes their talent and supports them in attaining advanced levels of achievement in school and beyond. The survey, conducted in conjunction with the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted, examines policy and practice affecting the education of gifted and talented students. The report is the only national compilation of data about gifted and talented education. Forty-two states, the District of Columbia, and Guam responded to the survey.

The federal government does not require identification and services for gifted students, nor does it provide resources to states or school districts to support identification of these learners. As a result, decisions about

whether high-ability students receive specialized curriculum and services, in which courses, and in which grades, are left to states and school districts.

As the survey results show, state and district-level advanced learner policies are uneven across the country and even within states. While the majority of states have laws and policies that require districts to identify and/or serve their high-ability students, most of the policies are partially or totally unfunded, with only four states fully funding their gifted education obligations in 2012-13. Similarly, most states leave key decisions about identification, curriculum and instruction, teacher training, and supportive policies affecting gifted students to local school districts. State oversight of local district activities is also uneven with approximately half of the states monitoring or auditing the local gifted programs and fewer requiring districts to submit their gifted education plans to the state education agency. Taken together, the evidence shows that few states are employing strategic plans regarding the education of their advanced learners. Following are key findings from the report:



WHAT THE DATA TELL US

Teacher Training & Funding

The ability of professionals to identify and properly serve high achieving and high-potential students is essential to meeting student needs. Thus, teacher preparation remains a concern as gifted students frequently receive their education in the general education classroom and many school leaders have not received training in the nature and needs of gifted students.

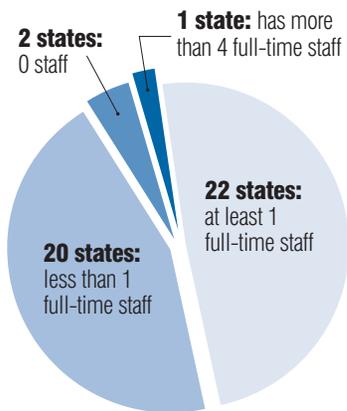
- 3 states require general education teachers to have some type of training in gifted education
- 8 states estimate that 5% or fewer of general education teachers in the state receive annual professional development in gifted education
- Only 17 states require teachers in gifted and talented programs to have a gifted education credential

- 3 states require administrators and/or counselors to receive training in the needs of gifted students as part of their endorsement or certification

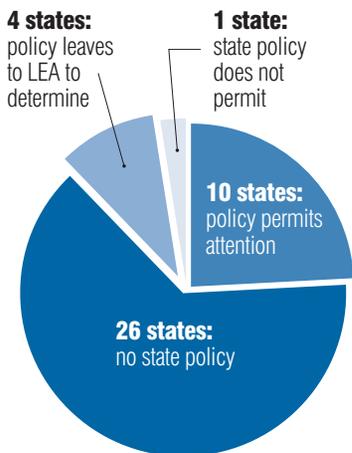
In nearly half of the states, a district's ability to provide effective gifted education services is dependent wholly or largely on local resources. During the 2012-2013 school year:

- 14 states provided no funding to local districts for gifted education
- Of the 25 states that provided funds to districts:
 - 9 states provided between \$1 million and \$10 million to school districts; 8 provided \$40 million or more
 - 12 states increased their funding compared to 2010, most with slight increases
 - 6 states made cuts in state funding since 2010

SEA Staffing for Gifted Education n=44



Response to Intervention Includes Attention to GT Students n=41



Barriers to Access & Increased Accountability

While appropriately trained educators and adequate funding is necessary to deliver high quality services to meet the needs of all gifted and high-potential students, states can make progress toward this goal by removing barriers that obstruct access to services or prevent high-achieving students from moving through school at a pace faster than the typical learner and commensurate with their abilities. Barriers include:

- Only 9 states have policies permitting acceleration of students; 22 states leave the decision to school districts
- 16 states prohibit students from starting Kindergarten early
- 3 states prohibit dual enrollment in which middle school students are also enrolled in high school

There is little public accountability for the delivery of gifted education services or for gifted student achievement nationally. Data is needed to develop quality programs that result in increased student growth. In addition, improved information about the students being served in gifted education programs is necessary for appropriate curriculum and instruction planning that supports student needs.

- 17 states do not collect demographic data about the gifted student population
- 9 states report on the academic performance and/or learning growth of gifted students as a separate group on state report cards or other accountability measures
- 15 states include the number of identified gifted students on district report cards

A CALL TO ACTION

Meaningful national progress on how we identify and serve our high achieving and high-potential students requires meaningful action. The Common Core State Standards movement has provided a foundation on which participating states are building, with 11 states making changes in teacher training and/or curriculum planning specifically for gifted students in alignment with the CCSS; 14 other states indicated such changes are coming at the district level.

At the federal level, NAGC strongly supports initiatives to add high achieving and high-ability students to federal education policy. For example, education reform bills pending in the Congress would enhance state and district accountability for gifted education services, strengthen professional development efforts, focus attention on high-ability students in low-income schools, and restore funding to support vital research to develop best classroom practices with high-ability learners from underrepresented populations.

At the state level, there have been some positive changes for gifted students in several states, including increased attention to diverse learners and technological advances that have expanded curriculum offerings, but much more needs to be done. NAGC urges lawmakers

and education leaders to develop a comprehensive state strategy that removes barriers and expands access for more students to a full range of high quality gifted education services, including:

- training in gifted education for all teachers and school leaders
- state policy allowing a wide range of acceleration options
- following gifted and talented students as a separate population in student achievement accountability measures.

Developing and supporting high levels of talent in every area requires national, systemic attention by all stakeholders. This is a commitment we have not seen in more than two generations, when an investment in education and technology as part of the space race yielded decades of benefits. Unfortunately, those advantages in science, technology, security, medicine, and beyond have eroded over time. To thrive in the 21st century we need a renewed commitment to excellence. Education reforms at the state and federal levels that support identification and development of talent and help students achieve beyond grade level are necessary to restore the assets lost and place our nation on more solid footing in an increasingly competitive global ecosystem.

“To thrive in the 21st century we need a renewed commitment to excellence.”



FEDERAL ADVOCACY

NAGC advocates on behalf of gifted and talented children before the Congress and the executive branch on a range of issues including teacher preparation, accountability for student learning, equity issues, and funding for research and services for gifted learners.

NAGC members and the general public may join these efforts by becoming part of NAGC's Legislative Action Network, a grassroots outreach program, to increase awareness of the needs of gifted children through local media

efforts and direct contact with Members of Congress. Visit NAGC's website to learn more and to join.

Visit the "Legislative Update" section of the NAGC website to learn more about NAGC's federal legislative agenda and how you can help. We also have compiled some "how to" advocacy strategies and links to national reports on STEM issues and the "Excellence Gap," among others, in the NAGC online advocacy toolkit.



NAGC RESOURCES

NAGC has several publications to assist state and local advocates with key policy and practice issues, along with helpful leave-behind materials for meetings with education leaders and policymakers.

Visit the NAGC website at www.nagc.org for the following:

- *2012-2013 State of the States in Gifted Education* (Report and data available on flash drive) — \$15.00/\$18.00
- *Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy* (free downloadable pdf)
- NAGC position statements on key topics

- Administrator Toolbox (free downloadable pdfs and links to 2-minute videos)
- *NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards* (free downloadable pdf)
- *NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards: A Guide To Planning And Implementing High-Quality Services* — \$35.95/\$39.95
- *Unlocking Emergent Talent: Supporting High Achievement of Low-Income, High-Ability Students* (free downloadable pdf; multiple print copies available for purchase)
- *Myths in Gifted Education* brochure — \$5.00
- *Maximizing Student Achievement brochures* (for elementary, middle, and high school level administrators) — \$2.00/3 for \$5.00



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