

Championing Equity and Supporting Social Justice for Black Students in Gifted Education: An Expanded Vision for NAGC

Statement from the NAGC Board of Directors

NAGC's executive leadership previously issued a statement denouncing systemic racism and supporting racial injustice and stating the organization's commitment to ensuring Black lives matter. In this statement, the NAGC Board of Directors commits to ideals and actions to confront systemic racism and advance equity.

All gifted students won't matter until all Black gifted students matter, too. A society that values the development and education of each gifted student, regardless of race or class, is the only context in which every gifted child is truly valued.

We acknowledge the injustices of structural and systemic racism and recognize the field of gifted education has historically been part of the problem by promoting these injustices, even if inadvertently. Some early researchers and thought leaders who influenced the field were involved with the eugenics movement, and early gifted identification and programming practices often became vehicles for *de facto* segregation. The field has made tremendous strides in addressing these historical injustices in recent years, but we have not made sufficient progress.

NAGC will not endorse, support, or engage in any action that reinforces, promotes, or advances racism or racist movements, including but not limited to racial microaggressions, colorblind ideology, culture-blind policies and practices, and scientific racism in scholarship.

We apologize for any past failings of NAGC that have promoted or reinforced social injustices. In order to move forward, we must be prepared for challenging conversations about our past as an association and as a field. We pledge to examine our policies, publications, practices, attitudes, and approaches to ensure alignment with our commitment to anti-racism. This commitment extends to all NAGC stakeholders: the Board of Directors, Staff, Publication Editors, Network and Committee Leaders, Affiliates, and Members.

Future NAGC actions for changing minds, changing policies, and changing practices will align with our commitment to anti-racism to remedy the field's past missteps and to promote practices that will result in equity.

Eliminating systemic racism begins by engaging our stakeholders in intentional conversations to envision a more just and equitable future, identifying necessary actions to eliminate racism and planning new strategies to achieve equity and justice, and facilitating action among all NAGC constituents to accomplish our goals. Our plan is a working document that will be further informed by an organization-wide audit of our content and a thorough review of our policies, programs, and practices.

NAGC will address issues of anti-Black racism and inequity by re-visioning and building on the legacy of scholarly integrity and advocacy found in equity pioneers such as Alexinia Baldwin and Mary Frasier. Many former and current leaders within NAGC have been at the forefront of efforts to ensure

equitable approaches to talent development and identification practices for *all* students. They have worked in schools across the country to raise awareness about the needs of gifted Black students and the largely insufficient efforts to serve them, and they have conducted research on equity-focused topics such as universal screening, culturally responsive teaching, and anti-racist identification and teaching practices. Although we have made great strides, recent events have shined a spotlight on the fact that these efforts, in silos, are not adequate to impact systemic racism.

NAGC commits to addressing systemic racism in education and society that disadvantage gifted Black students and students in other marginalized communities. NAGC will devote efforts not only to apply anti-racist principles and address scientific racism, but also to become a leader on racial justice initiatives and social action within the broader field of education.

Living Out Our Values

NAGC acknowledges that we cannot address systemic racism in American culture and education until we address implicit and systemic racial bias within the organization. We commit to being intentional about:

- Developing inclusive member recruitment and retention strategies that increase racial diversity and engagement within the organization
- Strengthening leadership development to cultivate diverse leadership within the association and ensure equitable access to leadership opportunities for all members, especially those from groups traditionally underrepresented in NAGC leadership positions
- Reviewing and revising all policies and procedures to ensure equity is prioritized, well-represented, fairly treated, and emphasized within all networks, committees, work groups, the annual convention, and other programming efforts
- Examining NAGC content on an ongoing basis to ensure it adheres to anti-racist principles and guidelines for inclusivity and is free of implicit or explicit biases as a consequence of scientific racism and culturally unresponsive beliefs
- Reporting to our members annually on NAGC's progress toward meeting its equity goals and obligations

In addition, NAGC commits to a bold plan of action organized around NAGC's strategic priorities for the field of gifted and talented education.

Changing Minds

NAGC, its affiliates, and its members have long advocated for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to understand that giftedness is universal and present in students from all racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Much progress has been made in this regard, but recent events reinforce that biased and discriminatory views are still widely held in American society. NAGC commits to extending these previous and current efforts to help key decision-makers and society at large understand that giftedness and talent are not the domain of select groups of students.

Moving forward, NAGC will continue to promote equity and anti-racism in the area of changing minds by:

- Infusing a culturally responsive on-boarding process and training for all of its network, committee, staff, and board leaders
- Refocusing targeted NAGC professional development content with anti-racist principles in areas such as See Me, Understand Me, Teach Me, and Challenge Me
- Encouraging the development of positive race-conscious and culturally responsive attitudes and beliefs by supporting and modeling courageous conversations centered on individual lived experiences, scholarship, and personal reflections on race and privilege
- Collaborating with partners and affiliates to produce and disseminate anti-racist, research-supported resources to school district and community leaders
- Increasing support for and visibility of the Dr. Martin D. Jenkins Scholar program, which honors the academic achievements of highly gifted Black students

Changing Policies

NAGC, its affiliates, and its members have been instrumental in advocating for and supporting federal and national policy changes that benefit gifted Black students and close excellence gaps. Recent accomplishments include new education laws in several states in all regions of the country, all led by the NAGC affiliates in those states, to expand access to services and ensure more equitable identification strategies. We have a long way to go in this regard, and NAGC commits to capitalizing on these recent developments and helping create pro-equity education policy change in every state and at the national level.

Moving forward, NAGC will continue to promote equity and anti-racism in the area of changing policies by:

- Increasing the emphasis during NAGC events on the creation of equitable policies that reduce racial disparities
- Sharing and highlighting equity policy accomplishments by our members in a range of NAGC publications and outreach efforts
- Forming a working group to examine how NAGC can better support our affiliates who are the front lines of efforts to create meaningful anti-racist and equitable policy changes at the state level
- Continuing to advocate for policies and programs that expand access such as the Jacob Javits Act, the only federal program directly addressing gifted education and talent development and that supports the development of pilot projects and research regarding traditionally underrepresented gifted students

Changing Practices

NAGC members and affiliates are implementing research-supported practices in districts and schools around the country in order to provide more effective services for marginalized gifted students. From the expansion of universal screening and local norms to the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices and culturally relevant curricula, NAGC members and affiliates are tackling these important issues head-on. However, use of these and other important interventions are not yet widespread, and the research base on how best to design and implement such strategies is not as comprehensive as it could be. NAGC commits to building on this recent progress and helping create, study, and disseminate equitable practices in every state and at the national level.

Moving forward, NAGC will continue to promote equity and anti-racism in the area of changing practices by:

- Partnering with state affiliates to develop and implement strategic and focused anti-racist awareness and advocacy training programs for families of underrepresented students in gifted education
- Seeking and engaging in partnerships with other organizations outside of the field that share our commitment to equity and justice
- Prioritizing and featuring NAGC resources and content that incorporates anti-racist frameworks, directly addressing equity, access, and empowerment
- Identifying and disseminating research-based interventions for identifying and developing talent in Black students and students from other marginalized groups
- Featuring efforts to implement relevant practices in NAGC publications, at the NAGC convention and other events, and in our broader dissemination efforts
- Increasing opportunities through programs such as the Javits-Frasier Scholars Program, NAGC's professional development program for educators working in Title I schools

Acting Within Our Values

The action steps noted above are not intended to be exhaustive but rather to convey NAGC's commitment to the future, how we will make issues of equity and anti-racism central to our planning and activities, and how we will support our members and their needs moving forward. We realize these actions will require changes to NAGC's traditional models for planning, resource allocation, and leadership development. These value statements serve as a guide and standard for engagement by organizational leaders, members, and stakeholders carrying out the mission of NAGC. We are firmly committed to making NAGC a leading catalyst for solutions to systemic and institutionalized racism as the country strives to become a better version of itself.

Approved by the NAGC Board of Directors, July 8, 2020