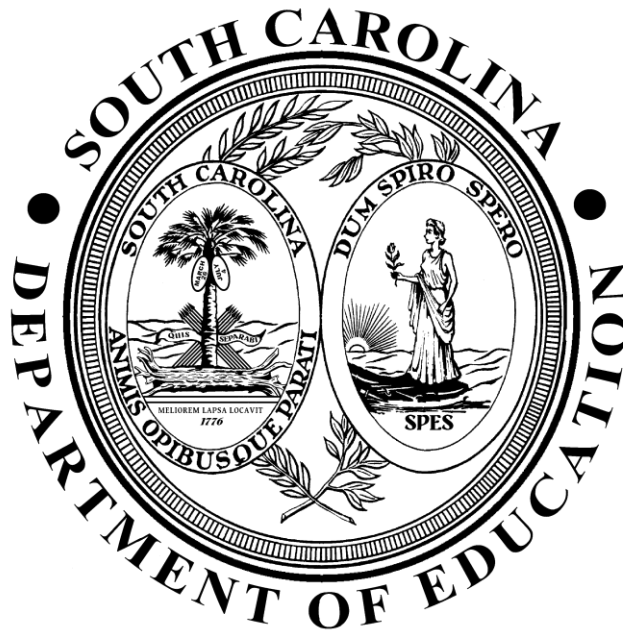


**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**  
*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*



**Gifted and Talented Best Practices Guidelines:  
Curriculum and Instruction**

Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-29-170  
and State Board of Education Regulation 43-220

June 2018

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## Introduction

Regulation 43-220 requires that South Carolina school districts provide programs for all gifted and talented students at the elementary and secondary levels. According to Regulation 43-220, these programs shall provide curriculum, instruction, and assessment that maximize the potential of gifted and talented students. More specifically, programs for the gifted and talented must reflect the following curricular and instructional components:

- a) content, process, and product standards that exceed the state-adopted standards for all students and that provide challenges at appropriate levels for strengths of individual students;
- b) goals and indicators that require students to demonstrate depth and complexity of knowledge, creative and critical thinking, and problem-solving skills;
- c) instructional strategies that promote inquiry and accommodate the unique needs of gifted and talented learners;
- d) a confluent approach that incorporates acceleration and enrichment;
- e) opportunities for the critical consumption, use, and creation of information using available technologies; and
- f) evaluation of student performance and programming effectiveness.

Powerful curricular experiences for high ability learners must align to and expand the South Carolina curriculum standards in all program models, including pull-out and special classes.

Further, successful programming models should align to the [National Association for Gifted Children \(NAGC\) Pre-K to Grade 12 Gifted Education Programming Standards](#) (NAGC, 2010), while simultaneously working to achieve the attributes of the [Profile of the South Carolina Graduate](#) (SCDE, 2018).

## The Legislative Mandate

Requirements outlined in these guidelines are provided pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-29-170 (Programs for Talented Students), which can be accessed at <http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/title59.php>.

Not later than August 15, 1987, gifted and talented students at the elementary and secondary levels must be provided programs during the regular school year or during summer school to develop their unique talents in the manner the State Board of Education must specify and to the extent state funds are provided. The Education Oversight Committee shall study the implementation of this section and report its findings to the General Assembly by July 1, 1986. By August 15, 1984, the State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations establishing the criteria for student eligibility in Gifted and Talented Programs. The funds appropriated for Gifted and Talented Programs under the Education Improvement Act of 1984 must be allocated to the school districts of the State on the basis that the number of gifted and talented students served in each district bears to the total of all those students in the State. However, districts unable to identify more than forty students using the selection criteria established by regulations of the State

Board of Education shall receive fifteen thousand dollars annually. Provided, further, school districts shall serve gifted and talented students according to the following order of priority: (1) grades 3-12 academically identified gifted and talented students not included in the state-funded Advanced Placement Program for eleventh and twelfth grade students; (2) after all students eligible under priority one are served, students in grades 3-12 identified in one of the following visual and performing arts areas: dance, drama, music, and visual arts must be served; and (3) after all students eligible under priorities one and two are served, students in grades 1 and 2 identified as academically or artistically gifted and talented must be served. All categories of students identified and served shall be funded at a weight of .30 for the base student cost as provided in Chapter 20 of this title. Where funds are insufficient to serve all students in a given category, the district may determine which students within the category shall be served. Provided, further, no district shall be prohibited from using local funds to serve additional students above those for whom state funds are provided.

Regulation 43-220 (2013) states the following pertaining curriculum and instruction:

To provide curriculum, instruction, and assessment that maximize the potential of the identified students, educational programming for academically gifted and talented students must reflect the following characteristics:

- (a) content, process, and product standards that exceed the state-adopted standards for all students and that provide challenges at appropriate levels for strengths of individual students;
- (b) goals and indicators that require students to demonstrate depth and complexity of knowledge, creative and critical thinking, and problem-solving skills;
- (c) instructional strategies that promote inquiry and accommodate the unique needs of gifted and talented learners;
- (d) a confluent approach that incorporates acceleration and enrichment;
- (e) opportunities for the critical consumption, use, and creation of information using available technologies ; and
- (f) evaluation of student performance and programming effectiveness.

### **Curriculum for Students with Gifts and Talents**

Regulation 43-220 requires districts to develop a plan for gifted and talented instruction that maximizes the potential of state identified students. Six specific characteristics are outlined in the regulation.

School districts must provide a curriculum for students with gifts and talents that is designed to support specific learning outcomes based on their unique characteristics and needs. Curriculum should align, differentiate, and expand the state standards (see [NAGC Standard 3](#)). Additionally, curriculum should contain the following objectives to achieve student learning outcomes.

#### *Curriculum Planning and Instruction*

- 1) To support mastery, depth, and acceleration of content standards at a pace, complexity, and abstractness appropriate for students with gifts and talents.

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Using theory and research-based models, the curriculum will meet the diverse needs of identified students including twice-exceptional, highly gifted, and English language learners (NAGC 3.3.1, NAGC 3.1.3). Curriculum will be differentiated based on a balanced assessment system that ensures student growth and progress (NAGC 3.1, NAGC 3.1.4.). Educators use research-based curriculum that is differentiated through pace, complexity, abstraction, and depth using acceleration and enrichment.

Student Outcomes – Students with gifts and talents will demonstrate growth commensurate with aptitude during the school year (NAGC 3.1).

2) *To develop understanding of the concepts, themes, issues, and relationships which are fundamental to the disciplines*

Educators will employ curriculum, instruction, and assessment so that students with gifts and talents will articulate the underlying structure of the discipline(s), explaining the interconnectedness of knowledge within and across the disciplines.

Student Outcomes – Students with gifts and talents will:

- a) demonstrate comprehension of a discipline as a system on knowledge.
- b) analyze the content of a discipline in terms of major concepts, themes, and issues of that discipline.
- c) analyze a concept, theme, problem, or issue within and across disciplines by using the different perspectives of those disciplines.
- d) analyze the ethical dimensions of ideas, issues, problems, and themes.
- e) explain the dynamic nature of knowledge and the interaction between culture and knowledge.

3) *To develop self-directed inquiry and research skills.*

Educators will ensure that students with gifts and talents acquire the skills necessary to become independent investigators (NAGC 3.4) by providing opportunities for students to explore and evaluate existing research as well as identify new areas of interest.

Student Outcomes – Students with gifts and talents will:

- a) explore, develop or research areas of interest and/or talent (NAGC 3.3.3).
- b) utilize current research processes and procedures appropriate to the domain of learning.

4) *To develop the skills of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, decision-making and metacognition to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents.*

Educators will incorporate research-based models of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, decision making and metacognition so that students develop a repertoire of strategies to apply within and across various content areas.

Student Outcomes – Students with gifts and talents will:

- a) demonstrate effective use of strategies and skills associated with critical and creative thinking models (Profile of SC Graduate, 2018; NAGC 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).
- b) demonstrate effective use of reasoning, problem solving and decision-making strategies (Profile of the SC Graduate, 2018; NAGC 3.4.3).
- c) utilize metacognitive strategies to analyze and monitor assumptions or errors in thinking (Profile of the SC Graduate, 2018; NAGC 3.2.2; Stambaugh & VanTassel-Baska, 2017).
- d) evaluate the quality and appropriateness of arguments, lines of reasoning, and solutions in terms of both ethical and intellectual standards.

5) *To develop fluency and expertise in communicating abstract and complex ideas, relationships, and issues.*

Educators will provide learning experiences for students with gifts and talents to develop the ability to effectively communicate abstract and complex ideas, relationships and issues through various forms of media and technologies ([NAGC 4.5](#)).

Student Outcomes – Students with gifts and talents will:

- a) communicate and demonstrate transformation of learning through the creation of products and presentations appropriate for both content and audience.
- b) analyze and evaluate the quality, effectiveness, and substantive content of products and presentations.

### **Instructional Provisions in the General Education Classroom**

In addition to the services provided through gifted and talented program models, districts should attend to instructional provisions for gifted and talented students in the general education classroom. Depending on the nature of the gifted and talented program being implemented, identified students may spend the majority of their school time in a regular heterogeneous classroom. These students are gifted and talented one hundred percent of the time, not just the percentage of time spent in a pull-out program or special class.

When considering the needs of gifted and talented learners in the general education classroom, teachers need to consider the diversity of the learners they serve. Equal opportunity for all students in the classroom does not and should not mean identical content and activities. To accommodate the needs of gifted and talented students in the general education classroom, curriculum and instruction must be flexible in aspects such as pace, depth, complexity, and novelty. This is accomplished by considering the varied readiness levels, interests, passions, and learning styles of the students, and using effective differentiation practices to meet the individual needs of students. All students – even those who demonstrate mastery of the curriculum – are expected to learn and grow.

What, then, can teachers do to meet the needs of gifted and talented students in the general education classroom? Presented in the following sections are recommended curricular and instructional provisions with regard to content, process, product, and the learning environment.

### *Content*

#### The Knowledge, Understandings, and Skills We Want Students to Learn

- Develop lessons and activities that align with content standards and include tasks that support mastery, depth, and [acceleration](#) of those standards (Cotabish, Dailey, & Jackson, 2017; Kettler, 2018; Rimm, Siegle, & Davis, 2018; Stambaugh & VanTassel-Baska, 2017).
- Use pre-assessment techniques to establish what students already know as well as what they don't know (Inman & Roberts, 2018; Tomlinson, 2014; VanTassel-Baska, 2014).
- Increase the pace of learning for gifted and talented students through acceleration or [compacting](#) of the curriculum in terms of skills and/or knowledge areas. Do not re-teach the mastered content standards (Assouline & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2018; Riley, 2009; Robinson, Shore, & Enersen, 2007).
- Adjust the complexity for gifted and talented learners by providing more complex/abstract materials for gifted and talented learners (Tomlinson, 2014).
- Select research-based resources.
- Use effective [grouping practices](#) during instruction (Gentry, 2014; Gentry, & Tay, 2017).
- Use ongoing formative assessments to pace instruction based on the learning rates of gifted and talented learners (Tomlinson, 2014).
- Provide mentors for gifted and talented students who demonstrate unusual interest in specific content areas (Robinson, Shore, & Enersen, 2007).
- Allow students time to reflect and construct meaning.

### *Process*

#### How Students Come to Understand or Make Sense of the Content

- Teach strategies that students need to process content and to create products.
- Provide tiered activities where students learn information, strategies, and skills, but proceed at different levels of support, challenge, and [complexity](#) (Rimm, Siegle, & Davis, 2018; Tomlinson, 2014).
- Give students choices throughout the instructional process—in topics, ways of learning, modes of expression, and working conditions.
- Use a variety of modes to present or introduce information.
- Give students open-ended tasks to encourage exploration, collaboration, and discourse.
- Use flexibility in assigning groups and tasks.
- Allow students to work independently some of the time and collaboratively in groups at other times. (The majority of a student's time in group-work should be spent with intellectual peers.)
- Structure a metacognitive approach for accomplishing academic tasks.
- Make sure that all students are actively participating in the learning process. It is essential that gifted and talented students be engaged in their learning.

### *Product*

How Students Demonstrate What They Have Come to Know, Understand, and Are Able to Do

- Encourage student choice and originality in the creation of products. Allow students to use a variety of media and techniques to produce their creations.
- Provide examples of exemplary products at varied levels of complexity.
- Encourage students to create products that demonstrate more complex and in-depth mastery of content—e.g., independent study projects, special reports, research summaries, simulations, presentations, demonstrations.
- Require self-evaluation of all products as part of the metacognitive process.

### *Learning Environment*

The Physical and Emotional Context in Which Learning Occurs

- Be responsive to the interests and cognitive needs of the learner.
- Be respectful and supportive of the cultural and language diversity of gifted and talented learners from varying backgrounds.
- Provide opportunities to encourage personal responsibility and initiative.
- Develop positive leadership roles and opportunities to affect positive change as leaders in a community setting.
- Create a safe, risk-free learning environment to facilitate student selection of appropriately challenging tasks.
- Encourage and model acceptance of the unique abilities and needs of each student in the classroom.
- Provide opportunities for students to share in the decision-making process about routines and individual responsibilities in the classroom.
- Expect and encourage students to work to their highest potential.
- Balance teacher-talk with student-talk.
- Create an inviting environment for advanced learning with a wide variety of available resources.



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