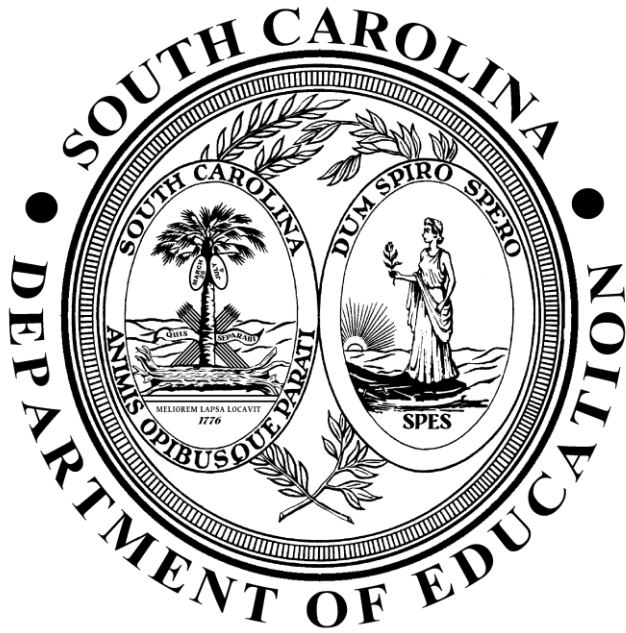


STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



**S.C. Gifted and Talented Best Practices
Guidelines:
Professional Development**

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

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Introduction

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is revising the *South Carolina Gifted and Talented Best Practices Manual* (2d ed. May 2006). Based upon input from stakeholders, the topics in that *Manual* are being updated and issued as separate documents in a series, the *South Carolina Gifted and Talented Best Practices Guidelines*. This document, the *South Carolina Gifted and Talented Best Practices Guidelines: Professional Development* replaces Chapter 6 in the 2006 *Manual*.

Regulation 43-220 calls for staff development as part of gifted and talented support services and requires that appropriate, on-going staff development in gifted education be provided annually by districts. Furthermore, districts are required to provide training regarding characteristics of academic giftedness for all staff involved in the identification process.

Professional development in the area of gifted and talented education should be an integral part of a school district's staff development plan. It is essential that the plan include professional development experiences for the total school staff, as well as specialized experiences for teachers in the gifted and talented program.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) collaborates with the South Carolina Consortium for Gifted Education to provide regional and statewide professional development for gifted and talented coordinators and teachers.

The Legal Mandate

Although some districts in the state began as early as 1973–74, planning and starting gifted and talented programs ([Monrad](#) at 1 2005), the South Carolina Education Improvement Act (EIA) in 1984, authorized gifted and talented programs for all districts, and the law is codified at S.C. Code Ann. § 59-29-170 (Programs for Talented Students), which can be accessed at <http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c029.php>

State Board of Education (SBE) Regulation § 43-220 sets out the framework for gifted and talented programs authorized by S.C. Code Ann. § 59-29-170. The regulation specifically references the *South Carolina Gifted and Talented Best Practices Manual* on several topics. The regulation specifically references professional development requirements for staff:

Appropriate, data-driven and research-supported ongoing staff development activities in gifted and talented education shall be provided and documented annually as required in the annual reporting required by the SCDE.

Regulation § 43-220.II.C.2.

Competencies Needed by School Staff

Administrators

Administrators must be able to communicate knowledgeably with parents and the public about the gifted and talented program. The following competencies are needed:

- Knowledge of Regulation 43-220 to ensure district and building level compliance,
- Understanding of characteristics of gifted and talented students and their special needs as the basis for gifted and talented education, and
- Familiarity with the curriculum and the instructional practices in the gifted and talented program.

School Counselors

School counselors require depth of knowledge about the gifted and talented program and about gifted and talented students, including their identification, needs, and special problems. The competencies required of school counselors include the following:

- Knowledge of Regulation 43-220,
- Knowledge of characteristics of gifted and talented students,
- Knowledge of the identification and placement process,
- Knowledge of record keeping requirements,
- Ability to provide counseling appropriate to the special needs and problems of gifted and talented students, and
- Ability to provide appropriate academic, college, and career guidance for gifted and talented students.

General Education Classroom Teachers

To better meet the needs of gifted and talented students, teachers in the general education classroom require the following competencies:

- Knowledge of the characteristics of gifted and talented students,
- Understanding of the diversity among all students,
- Knowledge and understanding of twice exceptional students, and
- Skills in differentiating curriculum and instruction for all students in the classroom.

Requirements and Competencies Needed by Teachers of Gifted and Talented Students

To enter the field of gifted education as professionals, teachers require formal education in recognizing the characteristics and needs of gifted and talented students and in developing and implementing curriculum appropriate to those needs. South Carolina requires the Gifted and Talented Endorsement for teachers working with gifted and talented students.

Teachers of gifted and talented students must possess a high level of the knowledge and skills required of regular classroom teachers. In addition, they require exceptional competencies in the following areas:

- Advanced knowledge and skills in their certification area/discipline,
- Knowledge of historic and current gifted and talented issues, research, and practices,
- Skill in presenting gifted and talented topics and issues to school staff, parents, and the community,
- Skill in developing collaborative and positive relationships with all staff, families, and students,
- Skill in developing and implementing challenging educational experiences that help students go beyond their current level of competencies, and
- Skill in providing an environment conducive to exploration, trial and error learning, and investigation.

Gifted and Talented Teacher Endorsement

South Carolina requires the Gifted and Talented Endorsement for teachers of gifted students. South Carolina funds some graduate courses in the nature and needs of gifted learners and introduction to curriculum for gifted learners. These two courses are required for teacher endorsement in gifted education and address foundational professional development needs of teachers of the gifted and talented. Although these courses are beneficial and will continue, best practices suggest that more extensive training that is ongoing is necessary for teachers to establish full professional credentials in the field of gifted education.

On-Going Professional Development

Along with a solid foundation in gifted education provided through initial coursework, teachers of the gifted and talented require on-going professional development. It is the professional responsibility of each teacher in the gifted and talented program to seek opportunities for continued growth, including membership in relevant professional organizations, access to journals in the field, and attendance at relevant conferences, workshops, and institutes. The following are some examples of each.

Relevant Professional Organizations

- [National Association for Gifted Children \(NAGC\)](#)
- [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\)](#)
- [South Carolina Consortium for Gifted Education \(SCCGE\)](#)

Journals in the Field

- *Gifted Child Quarterly*
- *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*
- *Roeper Review*
- *Gifted Child Today*

Conferences, Workshops, and Institutes

- NAGC annual conference
- SCCGE annual conference
- Opportunities offered by The College of William and Mary

As stated in Regulation 43-220, school districts are required to provide appropriate, on-going staff development activities for teachers of the gifted and talented. The district staff development plan may include in-district or out-of-district professional development on topics such as underachievement, instructional strategies, special populations, and differentiated curriculum.

Consortia arrangements and regional groups with nearby districts can facilitate the availability of appropriate staff development for teachers of the gifted and talented.

Conclusion

Other information on Gifted and Talented programs may be found on the SCDE's webpages at <https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/advanced-academic-programs/gifted-and-talented/>

Reference

Monrad, D.M., McGuiness, P.L., Chandler D., Gallant, D., Gareau, S., & Rawls, A.M. (2005) *A Descriptive Study of South Carolina's Gifted and Talented Program* (at 1). Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.693.2241&rep=rep1&type=pdf>