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Department: The Learning Curve



Standards Soup: A Primer

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Many teachers, educators, and families are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of standards tossed around in education conversations at in-house and public meetings. NCATE, InTASC, Common Core, 21st century skills, state content standards, P-12 gifted programming standards. How can they all be important? What do they all do? How are they related?

The content taught and tested in school is determined by state standards, which in at least 46 states will be influenced heavily by the [Common Core State Standards](#) in mathematics and English Language Arts. Teacher qualifications are determined by each state, and again are also informed by a national standards initiative, [InTASC](#), which is coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers and through initiatives such as [21st century skills](#) that focus on the skills students need for the future. Schools of education that receive national accreditation, through [NCATE](#) for example, submit their specialty training programs (e.g., programs to train elementary special education, or gifted education teachers) to a review process guided by national standards to ensure that the graduates of those programs have the knowledge and skills necessary to work with students in those special areas. National organizations such as NAGC, working with CEC-TAG, developed the [NCATE standards](#) for university teacher training programs and [PreK-12 program standards](#) to help guide school districts in providing services and programs to high-ability students. States also adopt, wholesale,

or after adjusting for state-specific needs, one or more sets of the national program or teacher training standards for use as the state's standards.

The point? Subject matter content, teacher knowledge and skills, and programming for students are, or should be, all interrelated to yield high quality, positive outcomes for students. Think of standards as the roadmap to a stated goal. Many of the standards are being updated to reflect changes in schools and in our understanding of how students learn. Two common themes running through the newest versions of the InTASC, NCATE, and NAGC's Gifted Programming Standards are recognizing and supporting diverse learners and collaboration among educators. Those two goals, coupled with developing curriculum and instruction based on high quality math and language arts content standards (and other subjects, of course) are ideas gifted education advocates can get behind!

Consider using the [PreK-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards](#) in your advocacy efforts and as part of gifted program evaluations. The teacher preparation standards in gifted education, which are designed for university programs, can be adapted for professional development in the K-12 setting. In addition to producing books on these topics, [NAGC's Live Learning Center](#) has convention sessions, or Webinar on Wednesday (WOW) content on all these topics to help you not only understand the standards soup, but also develop skills to use the standards to guide gifted students to success.

Here are just a few sample titles from the dozens of NAGC Convention presentations and Webinars on Wednesday that feature material on standards that you'll find in the [NAGC Live Learning Center](#):

- Activities and Assessments for Gifted Middle School Students Using the Common Core Standards
- Persuading Instructors of Pre-service Teachers to Include Gifted Education
- Common Core Standards: What Does it Mean for Our Young Advanced Readers
- Action Plans: Bringing P-12 Gifted Programming Standards to Life (WOW for February 22, 2012)
- The Parallel of Practice: Designing Real World Learning Opportunities to Enhance 21st Century Skills