

Recommendations for Topics of Interest to Washington State Gifted Educators/Teachers

To address the current concerns from teachers, district administrators, and specialists in gifted education, the following topics would be most relevant to preparing proposals for NAGC 2024.

Universal Screening

In 2023 [WA State passed a law](#) requiring all public school districts to conduct universal screening for highly capable programs. Universal screening must occur once in or before second grade, and again in or before sixth grade. The law does not require the use of an additional assessment and screening may be conducted using existing data. How to conduct universal screening, steps needed to create a universal screening process, and evaluation methods of the effectiveness of universal screening methods are of primary concern to districts.

Normed Data

[WA State law](#) requires districts to make decisions regarding highly capable program identification based on criteria that has been benchmarked on local norms. This component of the law has now become even more paramount with the new requirement of universal screening. Sessions should provide guidance on how to develop local norms, the do's and don'ts of norming, the impacts and importance of normed data, and how normed data supports the development of inclusive highly capable programs.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

MTSS are a coherent continuum of system-wide, data-based practices supporting the academic and social-emotional needs of students. Each district in WA State is required to have a MTSS in place to support students. Currently, many district's systems in our state do not address highly capable students even though these students need specific interventions that provide high quality, rigorous, and appropriate challenges to grow and thrive. Districts need guidance, resources, and tools to help shape and mold their MTSS to meet the needs of all students. Sessions should highlight practices and deepen understanding on how MTSS is an opportunity to capitalize on a system that districts are required to have in place as one pathway to provide highly capable services.

[Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction guidance on MTSS](#)

Rural and Remote Gifted Services

Washington is a very diverse state, with over 295 districts located across its 71,362 square miles. These districts range in size from 10 students, up to 50,000. Geographically, we have two mountain ranges that also separate our technology hubs from our agricultural economy. Many of the conversations and resources in our state are so often geared toward large, urban, business-rich districts. However, nearly 65% of the districts in our state have an enrollment of less than 2,000 students. Sessions should provide small, rural districts resources and guidance on how to identify and plan for services that will reduce the predictive power that demographics and location can have on student outcomes, including talent development opportunities for all students.

Serving and Identifying Indigenous and Multilingual Students

WA State is home to 29 federally recognized Indigenous Tribes. The Duwamish, Wanapum, and Chinook tribes are not recognized by the federal government, but have a long history in present-day Washington. Some of our districts report over 140 languages spoken in their schools.

Historically, Native American and multilingual students are underrepresented and underserved in our gifted identification and programs. Districts would benefit from best practices and guidance on how to increase the visibility of diverse learners during screening and resources to improve culturally responsive program supports for exceptional multilingual and indigenous students. Sessions should describe the best practices, resources, and guidance that would help appropriately identify, serve, and support culturally diverse students.

Providing Single Domain Services

WA State defines highly capable students as “students who perform or show potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels when compared with others of their age, experiences, or environments. Outstanding abilities are seen within students' general intellectual aptitudes, specific academic abilities, and/or creative productivities within a specific domain.” Sessions should provide guidance on how to define, develop, and provide services in “specific”, single domains and move away from the practice of only providing services to students with gifts and talents in all academic areas.