

Systemic Reform: The Impact of North Carolina's State-initiated Policies on Local Gifted Programs
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This study considered the impact of North Carolina's reform policy for gifted education (Article 9B) on local school district's gifted programs. Additional considerations were brought forward with regard to how educational changes made in local gifted programs were related to other state-initiated reform efforts. The study was conducted in three phases: Phase I was a statewide survey to the total population of persons in charge of overseeing local gifted programs. Phase II was telephone interviews conducted with 11 respondents from the statewide survey sample (N=71). Phase III was a researcher-selected focus group session whose members represented contextual layers from Talbert and McLaughlin's (1993) conceptual framework.

The data strongly suggest that there has been a conceptual shift in gifted education in North Carolina into the fabric of general education and away from special education. The conceptual change has been operationalized at the school district level through changing services to gifted students, providing for professional development, increased awareness of gifted needs from multiple stakeholder groups, changing personnel roles of those responsible for meeting the needs of gifted learners, and allowing for local ownership and authority for implementation efforts. Secondly, North Carolina's school reform initiative for accountability, ABC's, has impacted the implementation of North Carolina's school reform initiative for gifted education (Article 9B), and due to the emphasis on testing from the ABC's, the ability to do anything meaningful and sustainable with gifted students by implementing Article 9B has not followed suit. Implications for further research, policy, and practice are discussed.