

EIA Program Report for Fiscal Year 2011-12

Coversheet

EIA-Funded Program Name: High Achieving Students

Current Fiscal Year: 2011-12

Current EIA Appropriation: \$26,628,246

Name of Person Completing Survey and to whom EOC members may request additional information:

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Question 1: History of the program: Please mark the appropriate response (choose one):

This program:

- was an original initiative of the Education Improvement Act of 1984
- was created or implemented as part of the Education Accountability Act of 1998
- has been operational for less than five years
- was funded last fiscal year by general or other funds
- is a new program implemented for the first time in the current fiscal year
- Other

Question 2: What SC laws, including provisos in the current year's general appropriation act, govern the implementation of this program? Please complete citations from the SC Code of Laws including, Title, Chapter, and Section numbers.

Code of Laws:

59-29-170; Part 1B section 1A H63-DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION-EIA,
Provisos 1A.34 and 1A.37

59-29-170

Proviso(s): (If applicable. Please make references to the 2011-12 General Appropriation Act as ratified. www.XXXXX)

1A.34 and 1A.37

Regulation(s):

43-220

Do guidelines that have been approved by the State Board of Education, the Commission on Higher Education or other governor board exist that govern the implementation of this program?

- Yes
- No

Question 3: What are the primary objective(s) or goals of this program? Please distinguish between the long-term mission of the program and the current annual objectives of the program. (The goals or objectives should be in terms that can be quantified, evaluated, and assessed.)

The mission of the Gifted and Talented (GT) portion of the category is as follows:

- To identify gifted and talented students in the academic domain through Census testing in grade two and to provide access to the STAR Performance Task Assessment in dimension C for grades two through five;
- To provide state identified gifted and talented students with the programming through gifted and talented classes, taught by properly endorsed GT teachers (who provide differentiated instruction at the correct depth, complexity, pace, and accelerated level.); and
- To provide these students access to challenging curriculum to develop and nurture their potential.

Students may be identified in grades one through eleven. Students are also identified locally in the gifted and talented artistic domain, and services are provided to help these students reach their potential.

Furthermore, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) shall regulate district programs through three year plans, annual reports, and other surveys. The SCDE shall also provide technical support for the program and provide leadership on both state and national levels for gifted and talented programs.

The mission of the Advanced Placement portion of the category is to provide high school students the opportunity to participate in a college-level experience and to allow them to earn college credit by successfully participating in classes that are more rigorous and in-depth than other high school offerings. Additionally, students have equal access to the AP examinations through the state, contracting directly with the College Board to pay for the AP examinations.

The primary goals of the GT program are as follows:

- to provide opportunities for GT students to have access to academic and to artistic program offerings - even in lean budget years;
- to provide the appropriate on-going professional development to those professionals working with GT students by offering a comprehensive professional development series to increase understanding of GT students, to improve instruction and curriculum, and to offer better support structures for students' social emotional needs; and
- to continue to support an improved district program through better evaluation, continued planning support, and better communication from district to district through regional groups and electronic or online communication means.

The primary goals of the AP program are as follows:

- to increase the number of students scoring a three or higher on the AP exams;
- to increase the number of minority students enrolled in AP courses; and
- to increase the number of AP examinations taken by students and graduate courses and other technical support for teachers as needed.

Question 4: In the prior fiscal year, 2010-11, what primary program activities or processes were conducted to facilitate the program's performance in reaching the objective(s) as provided in Question 3? What, if any, change in processes or activities are planned for the current year?

Examples of program processes would be: training provided, recruiting efforts made, technical assistance services, monitoring services, etc.

Answers should be specific to the process undertaken at the state level to support the objectives of the program and should be quantifiable. Please include any professional development services provided.

IF the funds are allocated directly to school districts, please indicate any data collected at the state level to monitor how the funds are expended at the local level?

For Gifted and Talented, the SCDE partnered with ETV/ITV and The South Carolina Consortium for Gifted Education (SCCGE) to create over fifty videos to be used for professional development by the school districts around the state in 2010. In the most recent year, we have continued this project emphasizing "Gifted Classes in Action" and "Research Based Curriculum Training" offerings. The entire professional development library is now approaching eighty videos. The target audiences for these videos are administrators; and all teachers including artistic teachers, gifted coordinators, guidance counselors, and teachers of gifted students. These videos are available through DVDs (thanks to SCCGE), ITV broadcasts, and online at Streamline through ETV. In support of these videos, there is a companion Moodle Course Shell, which offers many resources, assessments, and discussion boards for each video. This series was created to ensure the availability of professional development amid educational funding cuts. Graduate level endorsement courses were offered to provide endorsement and certification opportunities for teachers across the state. Twenty-eight graduate level classes were offered for teachers of gifted and talented students around the state.

For Advanced Placement, the Summer AP Institutes for Teachers were offered throughout SC. The SCDE offered over eighteen classes through grants with Institutes of Higher Learning in SC to enable AP teacher endorsement opportunities. In partnership with the College Board, the SCDE created the AP Teacher Network in order to create more collegial sharing between AP teachers who are successful and those who are seeking to elevate their teaching to enable more AP students to be successful in passing the AP exam.

Question 5: In the prior fiscal year, 2010-11, and using the most recent data available, what were the direct products and services (outputs) delivered by this Program?

Examples of program outputs would be: number of teachers attending professional development seminars, number of and passage rates on AP exams, number of students served in the program, improvements in student achievement, retention and graduation.

In gifted and talented, there were 78,406 academic students who were served and 17,050 artistic students who were served during the school year 2010-2011. The number of teachers who took GT endorsement courses or courses towards certification was approximately 560. There are a total of 8004 GT endorsed or GT certified teachers in the database, but there is still a need for approximately 600 more to become endorsed this year.

In Advanced Placement, there were 18,757 public school students who took 30,845 AP exams. These numbers increased more than 5.6% and 7.2% respectively from the prior year. Of those, 17,424 exams earned college credit for the examinee. The number of minority students who took AP courses was 5109 (increase of 28%) and they took 8194 AP exams (increase of 30%). Of those, 3712 earned a passing score of 3-5 on the AP exam, which is an increase of 39%. Overall, the number of students who passed AP exam this year increased 10% over last year. For all passed examinations, students receive college credit, as well as high school credit.

The number of International Baccalaureate Examinations this year was 3222. Of those, 69% percent received a passing score of 4 or higher. For all passed examinations, students receive college credit, as well as high school credit.

Data may be found at the following Web address:
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/cfo/finance/old/finance/student_data/DSA11135.txt,
<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ac/Data-Management-and-Analysis/old/research/APIB.html>

Question 6: What are the outcomes or results of this program?

Outcome can be both quantitative and qualitative and should address the program's objectives. Please use the most recent data available:

Examples of outcomes would be: results of surveys, student achievement results, increases in participation, reduction in achievement gaps, loans awarded, textbooks purchased, etc.

Based on the 135th day reports, the numbers of students participating in the GT areas were 78,406 in academic programs and 17,050 in the artistic programs, for a total of 95,456 students. In the AP area, the number of participants was 30,355. For GT identification screening, 98,496 students participated in CogAT testing (54,741) and ITBS testing (43,755) for screening of second graders. The number of participants in the STAR Performance Task Assessment for 2011 was 19,770. The 2011 Academic GT percentage of students meeting the standard on the spring 2011 PASS was as follows:

Grade	ELA	MATH	SCI	SS
3	99.3	98.8	97.1	98.4
4	98.3	98.6	97.6	97.7
5	97.7	97.7	95.3	96
6	96.9	97.7	95.2	97.2
7	96.8	97.1	97.5	94.4
8	95.9	96.5	97.2	96.1

These percentages do not take into consideration the student's area(s) of strengths. These figures reflect if a student was coded as GT even if the student was only served in one content area; their results were included in these percentages. Most of the GT population is gifted in only one area, but the scores reflect all of their scores on the PASS test.

Approximately 760 teachers took grant funded endorsement classes in GT and AP. These graduate courses offer the professional pedagogy and content knowledge for teaching GT and AP students. Over 85% of the districts utilized the Gifted and Talented Professional Development Outreach Series of videos for professional development in the first year of existence. The SCDE expect these numbers to grow as the series was released in the fall after school began.

For the AP areas, there were increases in participants (5.6%), exams taken (7.2%), and those scoring 3-5 (10.3%). The number of minority students increased 28% in South Carolina and of these, 39% more exams were passed by these students over the prior year. In other words, more students from all ethnicities are gaining access to these college level courses in South Carolina, and more are being successful at gaining college credit for the courses. Research has shown that even by taking the course (and not passing the national exam), the student is more likely to finish college in four years compared to those who do not take an AP class.

In South Carolina, 1,290 students took 3222 International Baccalaureate Exams in school year 2010. This is a decrease from 2009 where 3856 exams were taken. (At least three IB Diploma programs were eliminated in 2009 due to budget cuts in the districts.) These classes also earn college credit based on the passing the exam with a 4 or higher. In 2010, the passage rate for exams statewide was 69%.

Question 7: Program Evaluations

What was the date of the last external or internal evaluation of this program?

2005-2006

Has an evaluation ever been conducted?

Yes

No

If an evaluation was conducted, what were the results and primary recommendations of the most recent evaluation?

This information can be found on the EOC reports on GT programs at <http://eoc.sc.gov/reportsandpublications/publications.htm>. Significant achievement gaps exist for all target ethnic and poverty status groups. At a few under performing schools, the GT students are not being adequately served. Teacher turnover and administrator turnover at underperforming schools impact offerings and performance. The size of service disparities is impacted immensely by lack of funding to provide adequate training, resources, and services. High student performance in science needs to be addressed.

The College Board annually provides reports on AP participation and performance. These may be accessed at <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/data-reports-research/ap>.

Can you provide a URL link, electronic version, or hard copy of this evaluation to the EOC?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide URL link here.

<http://eoc.sc.gov/reportsandpublications/2007andbelowarchivedreportsandpublications.htm>

If no, why not?

Question 8:

While EIA revenues increased in 2010-11 over the prior fiscal year and no mid-year cuts were made to any EIA programs, programs and agencies continue to implement conservative budget practices.

Please describe how the program and/or organization would absorb or offset potential EIA reductions totaling 5%, and 10% in the current fiscal year, Fiscal Year 2011-12?

Most of the High Achieving Students funding is "flow through" to the districts. The limited funding retained by SCDE is dedicated to Gifted and Talented Identification Assessments, Advanced Placement Exams, International Baccalaureate Examinations, and professional development or initial teacher training through grant funded courses for both GT endorsement and AP endorsement. Over the past four years, the funds allocated for these students have not increased. The number of students has increased significantly due to flexibility of certain programmatic requirements which help insure gifted and talented students are properly challenged and properly instructed by endorsed teachers who understand the unique needs of gifted and talented students. The numbers have greatly increased in the upper middle grades and the high school grades due to the allowances of non-endorsed teachers in providing instruction and class size ratios being suspended. Over the past four years, the number of state identified gifted and talented students has increased about 15 % due to the flexibility measures. This increase along with the stagnated funding has forced some districts to cut back on serving these students to a minimal programmatic position. These cutbacks mean students may not have access to the proper academic and artistic programs in their areas of strength, which hampers them reaching their full potential.

If 5-10% of the funding were cut, the only areas for which the cuts could be made would be to eliminate some of the GT and AP teacher training. The elimination of this requirement would allow teachers who lack the proper training to teach these high ability students. Research has demonstrated that students are more likely to reach their full potential with teachers who are properly trained and who understand how to teach these students with special needs. Any additional cuts would have to be absorbed directly by the districts, which further hinder students from reaching their full potential. Some districts are currently only offering gifted and talented classes in one academic area (rather than a minimum of mathematics and English language arts) and they are using the funding cuts to justify this limited programming offering. Another district announced it was eliminating the Advanced Placement program due to budget cuts. The AP program is required by regulations and denying access to these high level programs for any district is not allowable.

Question 9:

If no additional EIA revenues were appropriated to this program in Fiscal Year 2012-13 above the current year's appropriation level, how would the objectives, activities and priorities of this program change?

Please be specific to address the impact to students, teachers or schools. Are there regulatory or statutory changes that you would recommend to the legislature that would assist this program/organization in meeting its objectives?

The mandate for identifying and serving the state's gifted and talented students would remain. The mandate for providing Advanced Placement classes and examinations would remain in place. Since International Baccalaureate Programs are not mandated, and they only receive limited support from the state (through partial reimbursement of IB exams for the high school level programs), districts would continue to drop these programs, although research has clearly demonstrated how successful these programs are for students and how much parents love having this public school choice. The IB programs were beginning to start in some of the middle and elementary schools before the implementation of conservative budget practices.

No further support for Advanced Placement would lead to teachers not being properly trained, more of the examination burden would shift to students (creating access and equity issues), and more schools would scale back the AP course offerings. In these economic times, earning college credits in high school and attempting college level courses while having the extra supports in the high school setting is advantageous to students. Student to teacher ratios would likely increase leading to less individualized assistance with this extremely challenging curriculum.

In Gifted and Talented Programming, limited funding may lead to a reduction in GT artistic funding that flows through to the districts. Continued district cuts will further scale back the GT artistic programming options to a limited grade level and in only one core artistic area. Currently, there are districts that do not offer services in the GT artistic area although this area is mandated. The number of districts who do not offer services at all would likely increase. Districts have already cut services for these high achieving students, and they are using budget cuts as an excuse to not provide proper services these students need.

Gifted and Talented professional development and initial training (areas noted as weak in the EOC's program evaluation) would continue to be cut. South Carolina is in year four of the teacher's GT endorsement requirements being suspended, so some students may not have had a highly qualified GT teacher for the last four years!

Regulatory changes suggested:

- Drop the GT and AP teacher endorsement suspensions in Proviso 1A.34 as they are greatly hindering the students from access to highly qualified teachers.
- Fund the program at the levels named in the SC Code of Laws 59-29-170 (1986). Presently GT funding and the whole High Achieving Student Category is being funded by less than half of what is required by the gifted and talented statute. The statute states the weighting for GT students should be Base Student Cost (BSC) plus an additional .30 of BSC per student.
- Raise the minimum funding a district receives (for 40 or less state identified students) to at least half of a teacher's salary.

If you want to provide supporting documents or evaluation reports, either reference a website below or email the report directly to mbarton@eoc.sc.gov.