

Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Avery County Schools (060) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

* LEA Superintendent's Name:

Terry Worrell

* LEA AIG Contact Name:

Burleson, Logan - loganburleson@averyschools.net ▼

This Local AIG Plan has been developed based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021, and 2024). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide Public School Units (PSUs) to develop, implement, and monitor thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs. The NC AIG Program Standards encompass six principle standards with accompanying practices. These standards articulate the expectations for quality, comprehensive, and effective local AIG programs and related to NC's AIG legislation, Article 9B (N. C. G. S. 115C150.5).

These best practices help to clarify the standard, describe what a PSU should have in place, and guide PSUs to improve their programs. In an effort to continue to transform AIG programs and align to the NC AIG Program Standards, each PSU has participated in a self-assessment process of their local AIG program, involving multiple stakeholders. The data gathered during this process has guided PSUs in their development of this Local AIG Plan for 2025-2028. This Local AIG Plan has been approved by the LEA's local Board of Education or charter school's board of directors and sent to NC DPI for review and comment.

For 2025-2028, the Local AIG Plan is as follows:

* Mission and/or Vision Statement(s)

Avery County Schools believes all students should have the opportunity to explore their individual interests and be intellectually challenged to ensure future success. Gifted learners present a wide-ranging set of attributes, gifts, and skills requiring intentional nurturing and fostered development. The vision of the Academically and Intellectually Gifted Program for Avery County Schools is to provide an enriched educational environment, bolstered by strong family and community partnerships allowing for gifted students to explore individual interests, achieve at high academic levels, and develop stronger leadership capacity that will support them throughout their lives.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* \$ 253,017.00	* \$ 6,828.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 0.00

Standard 1: Student Identification	
Avery County Schools (060) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0	
Standard 1: Student Identification	
<i>The LEA's student identification procedures for AIG are clear, equitable, and comprehensive and lead towards appropriate educational services.</i>	
* Practice A	
Develops both screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels. Provides opportunities, including universal screening, for every student to show their strengths and talents.	
Avery County Schools' Academically/Intellectually Gifted Program maintains clear and equitable processes for student screening and referral for AIG identification. Students are identified within the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) framework. School-level MTSS teams meet at least three times per year to examine the progress of all students and make plans to further support existing needs. MTSS teams collect and review a variety of data to form a comprehensive learner profile for potential AIG students. Data sources reviewed include prior scores above 95% on EOC/EOG, Amplify reading assessments in K-3, iReady math diagnostics in 2-8, and iReady reading diagnostics in grades 3-8. iReady assessments provide national percentiles, and they are computer adaptive which allows for off-grade level assessment. High school teams review standardized EOG/EOC results, as well as reports from PreACT, ACT, and PSAT testing sessions. In the spring semester, all 2nd grade students complete a group administered aptitude test (CogAT Assessment) as a universal screener. The Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted shares results with local MTSS teams for students scoring in the 90th percentile or above in either verbal or non-verbal portions of the assessment. Students in other grades may be assessed or reassessed during the administration of the universal screener if requested by a principal. Parents/guardians of students participating in the screener are informed of the purpose of the assessment and how the data will be utilized. Parents/guardians may choose to opt out of the process, if desired. Additionally, grade level teams/individual teachers may refer students to MTSS teams for potential placement using a case study approach. Teacher referrals include quantitative data (MClass, iReady, EOGs, etc.), anecdotal qualitative data describing student giftedness, as well as gifted behavior rating scales of students exhibiting gifted characteristics for the MTSS team to further analyze for identification. Upon review of all data, the team determines eligibility and proceeds to meet with parents regarding potential identification. Parents/guardians may refer students. They should discuss the process with the school's principal or AIG Specialist. They will then receive a referral form to complete. Parent/guardian request does not necessarily guarantee that the student will be identified as AIG.	
* Practice B	
Establishes a process and criteria for AIG student identification at all grade levels, K-12, that provides multiple opportunities to reveal a student's aptitude, achievement, or potential to achieve. The criteria may include both qualitative and quantitative data in order to develop a comprehensive learner profile.	
Avery County Schools utilizes multiple criteria in AIG student identification. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data are gathered and reviewed to develop a comprehensive learner profile. Student identification takes place as part of the school's MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) framework. At the elementary and middle school level, the MTSS team is comprised of the principal, school counselor, grade level teachers, and EC teacher. The AIG Specialist may also join meetings to discuss the needs and identification of AIG students. The Multilingual Teacher may also participate in certain instances.	

At the high school level, the MTSS team is comprised of members representing Student Services, Exceptional Children, various departments, and school administration.

In grades K-2, students are not typically identified due to younger students' rapidly changing academic, social, and intellectual development. However, when there is an extreme need for differentiation, a case study approach may be used to create a nurturing plan or for formal identification. MTSS teams review multiple data sources including MClass/iReady early literacy and math results denoting performance above the 95th percentile, recommendations from the AIG Specialist, school principal, and classroom teacher documenting student giftedness and interest, a portfolio of student work samples demonstrating exceptional ability, and scores on an adapted Renzulli-Hartman gifted behavior scale.

For students in grades 3-12, the Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted and/or the AIG Specialist reviews student performance on EOG/EOC tests. Non-identified students scoring in the top five percent according to state norms are entered into a screening pool for MTSS teams to review. Rosters are shared with school principals.

All second grade students complete a group administered aptitude assessment (CogAT) in their spring semester as a universal screener for the district. Student scores are shared with school administrators. Students scoring at or above the 90th percentile in verbal, quantitative, or non-verbal portions of the test are referred to MTSS for inclusion in the AIG screening pool for review.

The MTSS team uses multiple data sources, both qualitative and quantitative, to complete a student educational profile and identify students whose academic needs exceed those of the general education program. No one identification criterion prevents a student from being identified to receive services. In addition to quantitative measures, teachers complete a modified Renzulli-Hartman rating scale of gifted behaviors. The rating scale lists a variety of indicators, and teachers evaluate how often the behavior has been demonstrated in class on a scale of 1 (Rarely) to 4 (Consistently). Teachers also provide anecdotal evidence describing behavioral characteristics beyond grade level expectations. Student grades and work samples may also be reviewed to determine academic performance as compared to peers. Additional data and anecdotal evidence regarding student motivation, interest, and potential may be gathered from EC and ML teachers for multilingual or EC students. The collection of data to support nomination is the responsibility of the referring individual/team.

Students may be identified in one of five areas: Academically Gifted in Math (AM), Academically Gifted in Reading (AR), Academically Gifted in Reading and Math (AG), Intellectually Gifted (IG), and Academically/Intellectually Gifted (AIG). The following quantitative criteria are used, in combination with qualitative criteria mentioned above, to determine placement:

Academically Gifted in Math (AM) or Academically Gifted in Reading (AR)

At least two of the following:

- Scores at the 90th percentile or above in the verbal or quantitative portion of the CogAT or other nationally normed aptitude test
- Scores at the 95th percentile or above on the reading or math EOG or similar standardized academic test/subtest
- Grades of 90% or higher in reading or math

Academically Gifted in Reading and Math (AG)

At least two of the following:

- Scores at the 90th percentile or above on the verbal and quantitative portions of the CogAT or other nationally normed aptitude test
- Scores at the 95th percentile or above on the reading or math EOG or similar standardized academic test/subtest in one subject area and scores at the 90th percentile or higher in the other subject area

–Grades of 90% or higher in reading and math

Intellectually Gifted (IG)

–Composite or nonverbal scores at the 90th percentile or above on the CogAT or other nationally normed aptitude test

–Average or below average subject area achievement as measured by EOG/EOC and course grades

Academically/Intellectually Gifted (AIG)

–Composite scores at the 97th percentile or above on the CogAT or other nationally normed aptitude test

–Scores at the 95th percentile or above on the reading or math EOG or similar standardized academic test/subtest in one subject area and scores at the 90th percentile or higher in the other subject area

–Grades of 90% or higher in reading and math

Students who are not identified may be recommended for services that nurture their potential for future identification.



☒ Click here to remove the table and use only the narrative field.

*** Practice C**

Ensures AIG screening, referral, and identification procedures respond to under-represented populations of the gifted and are responsive to LEA demographics. These populations include students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, multilingual learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.

Avery County Schools is located in a small, rural community. The majority of our students are white (79.68%), and the second largest population is Hispanic or Latino (16.89%). Other groups account for approximately 3% of enrolled students. The district is roughly equal in the number of males (50.38%) and females (49.62%). The number of students who are economically disadvantaged as measured by free and reduced lunch numbers is 53.62%.

Approximately 7.7% of our students are identified as gifted, and 89.7% of identified students are white. 50.8% of identified students are female, and 49.2% are male. Based on current demographics, Hispanic/Latino students are underrepresented in the gifted program.

To help ensure that Avery County Schools has screening, referral, and identification procedures that are responsive to district demographics, a universal screener is administered to all second grade students. The district administers the complete CogAT every spring. Audio portions of the test are read aloud by the device and can be read in English or Spanish, depending on the needs of the student. Tests for second grade are not timed and are spread across multiple days. These accommodations help not only young students, but also students with exceptionalities and ML students. Administrators may also request CogAT screening for students in other grades on a case-by-case basis. Student scores on EOG/EOC tests may also be used to help determine placement. These tests are administered to all students in grades 3-8 in Reading and Math and to students in grades 9-12 for individual courses. NCDPI approved accommodations are provided on these tests for those students who qualify which can help ensure equitable screening for all students.

Identification takes place at the school level through MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Support) teams. Teams review data shared by AIG staff from the CogAT and state achievement tests. Results from other standardized assessments and student classroom performance are also evaluated. Anecdotal evidence and work samples from students exhibiting gifted behaviors who do not have standardized measures in place may also be reviewed. The team then evaluates all of the factors to determine placement.

The AIG Specialist works with MTSS teams and school administrators to help determine data to use for equitable identification and conducts professional development for schools on the characteristics of gifted students. Information on twice-exceptional students and multilingual students is included in the presentation. Data is shared at the beginning of the school year and after the administration of the universal screener.

A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is to strengthen our Talent Development program for K-2 students. Due to the large number of economically disadvantaged students in our district, early nurturing and enrichment programs may help mitigate some of the challenges these students face.

Another goal is to intentionally partner with Multilingual Teachers to help determine what talent development and learning opportunities will best support our multilingual students.

Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
Female	---	---	---	---	---	---	7.55%
Male	---	---	---	---	---	---	7.90%
Total	---	---	---	---	---	---	7.73%

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

*** Practice D**

Monitors the screening, referral, and identification processes for consistent implementation across the LEA.

To provide consistent practices in screening, referral, and identification procedures, the AIG Specialist meets with school administrators at the beginning of each school year to review guidelines. Administrators are provided with physical copies of the district's AIG plan, and key points and changes are discussed. Administrators are also sent access to digital copies of forms, checklists, and a PowerPoint on screening, referral, and identification procedures. These are provided via email and housed in a shared Google Drive which is accessible to principals and AIG staff at all times. Periodic emails are sent to principals throughout the school year containing links to these materials.

The AIG Specialist conducts professional development in schools at the principal's request. This can include information on screening, referral, and identification when needed.

The AIG Specialist maintains copies of AIG records including screening, referral, identification data, and DEPs. Files for currently identified students are reviewed at the beginning of the school year by the AIG Specialist. Files for newly identified students are reviewed on a rolling basis to check for accuracy of paperwork and consistency across schools.

* Practice E Disseminates information regarding the screening, referral, and identification processes to school personnel, parents/guardians, students, and the community-at-large.	Avery County Schools shares information with stakeholders in a variety of ways. Detailed information about screening, referral, and identification is contained within the district's AIG plan. A print copy of the plan is provided to school administrators, and a digital copy is available on the ACS AIG website, the primary method of communication with the public. The website also includes relevant presentations and charts. There is also a FAQ, contact information for AIG staff, and a contact/comment form. Additional information is provided to parents in letters sent home prior to the administration of the universal screener and during the referral process. If a student is identified as gifted, conferences are scheduled at the school to discuss the student's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) and available services and resources. For our Hispanic families, when needed, a translator will attend conferences and translate letters and forms. A presentation outlining the screening, referral, and identification processes is shared with school administrators to review the process. Administrators have access to the PowerPoint and may review it with MTSS teams to discuss procedures. Additionally, the AIG Specialist may also participate in MTSS meetings, PLCs, or faculty meetings throughout the year to share information about screening, referral, identification, and services. Digital AIG newsletters for parents and teachers are sent out regularly. The newsletters provide information about services, opportunities, best practices, and links for additional resources, including the district's AIG website.
* Practice F Documents the evidence gathered and analyzed to support an AIG identification decision. This documentation is reviewed with parents/guardians and maintained in student records.	Screening, referral, and identification for the AIG program for Avery County Schools is integrated within the MTSS process. The Director of AIG or the AIG Specialist reviews EOG/EOC scores, CogAT scores, and other available data to determine potential students for referral to the AIG program. This data is shared with school principals and the MTSS team. Additional referrals from teachers or other stakeholders are also shared with the principal and MTSS team. The MTSS team then makes a determination of which students to evaluate, and a consent form is sent home to parents/guardians if AIG testing is needed. Individual files are created and maintained for students who are identified as gifted. Each file should contain: the Student Eligibility Form, the Gifted Rating Form completed by the classroom teacher/s, documentation of scores (EOG reports, CogAT report, etc.), relevant student work or materials considered as part of the identification process (anecdotal evidence, teacher letters, etc.), the signed Invitation to Conference, and the Differentiated Education Plan. A copy of the file is maintained at the school in the student's cumulative folder, and a copy is maintained by AIG staff. Student documentation is reviewed with parents/guardians during initial placement conferences and the signing of DEPs. Once the DEP is signed, the student's placement category and DEP are recorded in the district's Student Information System. Files are kept for five years after the student's graduation from high school.
* Practice G Develops and documents a student plan that articulates the differentiated curriculum and instruction services that match the identified needs of the K-12 AIG student, such as a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). This document is developed and reviewed annually with parents/ guardians to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.	

Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) outline services a gifted student will receive based on his or her unique learning and social-emotional needs. DEPs detail modifications to the learning environment and content in the classroom and are developed by a variety of stakeholders including the parent/guardian, general education teacher, and the principal. Once a student has been identified for gifted services, parents/guardians are invited to a conference with the child's principal and/or teachers to discuss service options. The AIG Specialist or Director of AIG may also attend as needed. Depending on the availability of personnel, conferences may be conducted in group meetings or individually. However, parents/guardians may request individual meetings. Following initial placement, DEPs are reviewed annually and signed upon transition into new schools/programs. DEPs can be edited/adjusted at any time with the convening of the team. <u>K-8 DEP Service Options:</u> Learning Environment Modifications—In-class flexible clustering, flexible clustering, cross-age grouping, subject acceleration, grade acceleration, individualized services, early entrance, online coursework Content Modifications—learning contracts, advanced differentiated units, independent study, learning centers, individual/small group investigations, interdisciplinary thematic units, reader's workshop, writer's workshop, tiered assignments, Socratic Seminars, advanced Literature Circles, Problem-based Learning <u>9-12 DEP Service Options:</u> Learning Environment Modifications—flexible clustering, subject acceleration, grade acceleration, individualized services, advanced classes, online coursework, honors classes, early entrance, dual enrollment Content Modifications—advanced differentiated units, independent study, individual/small group investigations, interdisciplinary thematic units, reader's workshop, writer's workshop, tiered assignments, Socratic Seminars, advanced curriculum In cases where the options on the DEP do not meet a student's needs, an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) will be developed. Underachieving gifted students, twice exceptional students, highly gifted students, and K-2 students may require an IDEP. These students are likely to need a variety of service options, including counseling or behavioral support, to meet all their needs. For students transitioning to high school, there is a parent meeting in the spring of the 8th grade year. The principal, counselors, department representatives, and other personnel share information about high school schedules, pathways, honors and AP courses, and other pertinent information prior to high school registration. Copies of student DEPs are shared with counselors and students are encouraged to register for courses that align with their needs. A 9-12 DEP may also be signed during high school registration meetings. <u>* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard</u> —Increase the number of AIG licensed staff in each school to serve on MTSS teams. —Strengthen Talent Development for K-2. —Partner with ML teachers to better support the needs of multilingual students.
--

Planned Sources of Evidence		
* AIG Plan		
* AIG Website		
* MTSS minutes		
Type	Documents	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

Avery County Schools (060) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

The LEA provides a K-12 AIG program with an array of services by the total school community to meet the diverse academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners. These services will develop students' strengths through intentional learning experiences in various domains that are not dependent on the students' demographic background or economic means.

*** Practice A**

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the academic and intellectual needs of AIG students, across all grade levels, K-12, and learning environments, through collaboration with a variety of personnel. Services are aligned to students' advanced learning needs and AIG identification.

Avery County Schools strives to provide gifted education programming that meets each student's unique academic, intellectual, and social-emotional needs. Services are delivered in a variety of ways and by a combination of classroom teachers, assistants, tutors, and other personnel who work with the AIG Specialist and AIG certified staff in each building to determine which opportunities for enrichment, extension, and acceleration are most appropriate for each student.

Students in grades K-2 are not formally identified as gifted, unless a significant need for advanced differentiation is apparent. Instead, younger students receive talent development through their general education classroom. These services foster the development of gifted characteristics and promote higher-level thinking, creativity, and leadership skills. Services at each school include, but are not limited to: flexible groups for math and reading instruction, subject acceleration for math or reading instruction, independent projects or research in an area of interest, Literature Circles, problem solving activities, classroom centers, guest speakers, cultural activities and performances, classroom and school level leadership opportunities through the House system or classroom jobs, and school clubs.

Each elementary school has the We Thinkers! Curriculum to support social skills development in students in grades K-2.

Formal identification takes place in grades 3-12 for the majority of students. Students can be identified as gifted in Reading (AR), Math (AM), Both (AG), Intellectually Gifted (IG), and Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG). Students are identified by each school's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team, and student needs are routinely assessed by the MTSS team to determine if instructional and social-emotional needs are being met. Adjustments to instruction or social-emotional support can be recommended by the MTSS team, the AIG Specialist, classroom teachers, or other personnel who work with students.

Once a student has been identified as gifted, school personnel and parents work to determine a Differentiated Education Plan or Individual Differentiated Education Plan. This plan matches services to student needs. The AIG Specialist or Director reviews DEPs to make sure that AIG students are matched to appropriate services. Service options vary depending on the student's needs, resources in the schools, scheduling considerations, and other school-specific issues. As there is one AIG Specialist for the district, the majority of services are delivered by classroom teachers and school level personnel.

AIG students in grades 3-5 are grouped for reading and math instruction. The purposeful grouping of students is used to ensure students are taught at their demonstrated readiness level. Such instructional grouping is flexible within and between individual classrooms or within and between teams and enables students to move in and out of groups based on their needs and performance. Students may be placed in a group based on their ability and/or performance, or they may be placed in an option on a trial basis based on the recommendation of their teacher(s).

Students in grades 3-5 may also be taught at a faster pace via curriculum compacting or computer adaptive programs. Students may also have tiered assignments, differentiated projects, independent research, and differentiated learning centers. Cultural events, clubs, opportunities for leadership via the

House system, competitions such as Spelling Bee, guest speakers, field trips, and summer camps may also be available.

Students in grades 6-8 receive services in many similar ways to 3-5 students such as curriculum compacting, computer adaptive programs, tiered assignments, and differentiated projects. Advanced courses such as Math I are also available. Students may be clustered or grouped together based upon their AIG identification. Middle school students are also introduced to a variety of exploratory courses such as Yearbook, Chorus, Band, and CTE. Students also have increased opportunities for academic clubs and competitions through SkillsUSA, MathCounts, Beta Club, etc..

At the end of eighth grade, students register for high school. Each year, they self-select courses with the guidance of counselors and parents. Students have access to Honors level courses, dual enrollment courses taught in cooperation with Mayland Community College, and Advanced Placement courses taught online and in-person. Students may also apply to Mayland Early College at the end of eighth grade or apply for residential programs at North Carolina School of Science and Math or NC School of the Arts in high school.

High school students also have access to more elective courses, competitions, and clubs. Additionally, high school students have access to apprenticeships, internships, mentorships, and community service projects.

Students spend the majority of their educational day with their general education teachers. So, the AIG Specialist provides direct and indirect support for general education teachers and other school personnel to help meet the needs of gifted learners. This support can take the form of coaching, consulting, resource development, and professional development. The AIG Specialist also works with school-level MTSS teams to advocate for gifted students and help support their academic, intellectual, and social-emotional needs.

  Click here to remove the table and use only the narrative field.

* Practice B

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the social and emotional needs of AIG students, across all grade levels, K-12, and learning environments, through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.

The social and emotional needs of all students, including AIG students, are supported by a variety of personnel and resources. In 2022-2023, all teachers in the district completed book studies on the books *Relationship, Responsibility, and Regulation* and *Fostering Resilient Learners*. These books focus on the importance of building relationships with students and helping students who have dealt with trauma. These book studies were created in Canvas, and they remain available for principals who wish to have personnel hired since 2023 complete them. The book studies served to provide a framework and common vocabulary for dealing with social and emotional issues throughout the district. Additionally, all personnel are required to complete online Vector trainings about child abuse, trafficking, and mandated reporting.

Additionally, the AIG Specialist provides professional development that includes information on the characteristics of AIG students and their unique social and emotional needs. An AIG website is also maintained that has a resource section for teachers and parents about the social and emotional needs of gifted students. The district website also has information for families regarding counseling services, local agencies that provide services, and links to helpful resources.

The AIG Specialist and Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted work with counselors and administrators to help ensure the needs of AIG students are met. Each elementary school has a ½ time counselor who provides support to students and families as needed. The We Thinkers curriculum and SPOT SEL curriculum have been purchased for use in grades K-2. The district has also purchased Zones of Regulation and Superflex for use with 3-5 elementary classrooms. Additionally, members of the community come into the elementary schools to provide character education twice a month and sponsor YES Clubs.

There are two middle schools in our district. There is a full-time counselor at Avery Middle and a half-time counselor at Cranberry Middle. The counselors provide individual and small group counseling sessions for students who have been referred by classroom teachers, support personnel, administrators, or the MTSS team. Additionally, local organizations partner with our middle schools to provide services. Programs about vaping, healthy relationships, financial literacy, teambuilding and leadership, careers, and healthy living are provided by local agencies including OASIS, Western Youth Network, Grandfather Mountain, and Mountain Alliance. The high school has two counselors to provide course suggestions and complete registration for classes. Counselors meet with rising ninth graders and parents to provide information and support for the transition to high school. These counselors also provide counseling and support to students as needed. The high school also has a College Counselor and a Scholarship Counselor to help students complete testing requirements, apply for college, and complete financial aid and scholarship applications. The social and emotional needs of AIG students are reviewed at the school level during MTSS meetings. Teachers, parents, school nurses, or school support staff may bring up concerns during MTSS meetings. The MTSS team reviews observational and any available quantitative data to examine the relationship between academics and behavior. The team works to identify student needs and come up with appropriate interventions to support the student. The Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) may include strategies to meet social and emotional needs of AIG students, and relevant staff (counselors, EC, ML teachers, etc.) are included as needed in their creation to assist in determining appropriate strategies. These plans are regularly reviewed to make sure that the needs of the whole child are being considered. Relevant information about goals and services are shared with classroom teachers, counselors, and specialists.	  Click here to remove the table and use only the narrative field.
* Practice C Integrates and connects the AIG program and services with the district's priorities and resources through policy and practice. Avery County Schools is a small district. This requires personnel to often assume several roles and work together to meet the needs of students. Our Director of AIG is also the Director of Secondary Curriculum and Director of CTE. This position allows the Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted to work directly with multiple departments and programs to ensure that the AIG program is closely aligned with district initiatives and practices. Additionally, the Director of AIG regularly attends administrative meetings, cabinet meetings, and Board of Education meetings. This allows the Director of AIG to work closely with leadership to advocate for the needs of AIG students and to align AIG program goals with the district's strategic plan and goals. The AIG Specialist works with school level teams to advocate for gifted students and share information about the AIG program and resources. This can take the form of collaborating individually with administrators, teachers, or support staff, or it can include participating in MTSS team meetings, faculty meetings, or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Our district has an AIG Advisory Board with regularly scheduled meetings. Representatives from multiple schools serve on the Advisory Board which helps ensure that school-level AIG practices align with district and school goals. Additionally, the AIG Board helps facilitate access to AIG program resources. A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is to improve access to specialized curricular resources for AIG students. While our district strives to provide rigorous instruction and curricular materials for all students, funding for the purchase of AIG program materials has been limited. We are working to expand the purchase and availability of resources across the district. One goal is the creation of a lesson library for teachers to use in their classrooms. Another goal is the purchase of curricular resources. As there is only one AIG Specialist for the district, service delivery requires collaboration between teachers, administrators, and support staff. Currently, our district is working to create and share curricular resources online to ensure that all schools have access. Our Director of Elementary Curriculum has created	

shared Google Drives for Reading and Math materials, and our district purchases computer adaptive programs such as IXL for all schools in the district. Materials will continue to be added online for teachers to use.

*** Practice D**

Develops procedures for intentional, flexible grouping practices to facilitate the achievement and growth of AIG and other students with advanced learning needs.

Avery County Schools employs a variety of grouping strategies across grade levels to meet students' learning needs. At the elementary level, students are heterogeneously (varied ability) grouped in homerooms. Students are grouped for reading and math instruction based upon analysis of benchmark data, EOG scores, teacher observations and assessments, EVAAS data, and for AIG students, their area of identification. Decisions about instructional groupings in reading and math are made by classroom teachers/grade level teams working with the input of administrators and support staff (EC teacher, ML teacher, etc.). Students may receive reading and math instruction from their homeroom teacher as part of an in-class cluster group, or another grade level teacher, depending on the school's teaching structure.

Throughout the year, teachers monitor student progress and needs through various assessments (iReady, Amplify, teacher made), assignments, and observations. Students may be moved to a different group for instruction to better target their needs. Additionally, grouping strategies may vary for individual lessons or units. Students may work independently, in small groups with other AIG students, or in heterogeneous groups depending on the requirements of the task. These grouping decisions are made by the classroom teacher based upon knowledge of the curriculum and students.

At the middle school level, grouping strategies are similar to those at the elementary level. Students have heterogeneous homerooms and encores. Instructional groupings in core areas are determined by analysis of benchmark data, EOG scores, teacher observations and assessments, EVAAS data, and for AIG students, their area of identification. Students in seventh grade are screened to determine if acceleration in eighth grade math is appropriate. If so, those students are placed in Math I for high school credit. Middle school students have an intervention/flex time built into their schedules. During this time, AIG students may participate in enrichment and extension activities if they do not require support or interventions.

At the high school level, students and parents/guardians self-select courses. A variety of AP, Honors, and dual enrollment courses are offered, and AIG students are encouraged to participate in these courses. Within classes, students are grouped for individual lessons or units based on assessments, assignments, and teacher observations.

Throughout the year, best practices in grouping and differentiated instruction are discussed and reviewed during grade level meetings, PLCs, and professional development opportunities.

*** Practice E**

Informs all teachers, school administrators, and support staff about delivery of differentiated services and instruction for AIG students, regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program and plan.

Avery County Schools makes every effort to keep administrators, teachers, and support staff informed about gifted education laws, policies, and the local AIG Plan. The AIG Plan and information about state laws and local policies are available on the district website. There is also a Frequently Asked Questions section and information for parents and teachers.

At the beginning of the school year, the AIG Specialist meets with school principals to discuss the AIG program, policies, and the local plan. Principals are given a physical copy of the AIG Plan and handouts with pertinent information about identification and procedures. Principals also have access to a shared AIG Google Drive which contains copies of handouts, policies, procedures, and the local plan.

The AIG Specialist provides professional development for school personnel on procedures and policies relating to gifted education, and is available to meet with PLCs or MTSS teams to review identification procedures, program standards, and discuss delivery of differentiated services. Additionally, the AIG Specialist sends out a newsletter to schools outlining best practices, lesson ideas, and program updates. Additional newsletters are created for parents. All newsletters are also posted to the AIG website. The Director of AIG attends principal/leadership meetings and shares information about the AIG program as appropriate. Copies of Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) and lists of current AIG students and their area of identification are shared with administrators annually to keep for reference at the school level. A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is the creation of an AIG Quick Guide and/or brochures that explain essential components of the AIG Plan.	* Practice F Communicates among and between teachers and schools to ensure an effective continuation of K-12 services, especially at key transition points. Principals and teachers are informed annually of gifted student identification and service needs for their students. Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) are shared with school personnel, and the AIG Specialist meets with classroom teachers and/or administrators to discuss AIG student needs. A copy of information about identification is also placed in the student's cumulative folder at the school after identification takes place. Student records are transferred between schools when identified students move between schools in Avery County. If a student moves out of the district, a copy of their AIG documentation is included with other transfer information for the student's new school. Original files are kept, and the file is considered inactive unless the student returns to Avery County Schools. Inactive files are kept for five years past the student's anticipated graduation date. After that, they are destroyed. Key transition points include the move from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school. DEP conferences may occur at any time, but are at minimum held as students change schools and/or grade spans. Transition meetings are scheduled at the end of fifth grade/beginning of sixth grade and services for middle school can be discussed. In the spring semester, eighth grade students and their parents/guardians are invited to attend parent nights at the high school to learn about registration, course offerings, and the transition to high school. The meetings are managed by counselors and the high school principal and offer information about honors courses, dual enrollment, and other advanced options for students.
* Practice G Develops policies and procedures for a variety of acceleration opportunities, including compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, dual enrollment, subject and/or grade acceleration. Avery County Schools works to offer a range of programming options for acceleration for students. These include curriculum compacting, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, dual enrollment, subject or grade acceleration, and early entrance to Kindergarten. Early entrance to Kindergarten follows the criteria set forth in Avery County Board of Education policy 4100: Age Requirements for Initial Entry. The policy outlines the requirements and procedures and should be referred to for all questions. What follows is a brief summary: --The child must reach the age of four on or before April 16th. --The child is presented for enrollment no later than the end of the first month of the school year.	

--The principal of the school finds, based on information submitted by the child's parent or guardian, that the child is gifted and that the child has the maturity to justify admission to school.

Subject acceleration options are available when MTSS teams, teachers, administrators, and AIG personnel deem this an appropriate service. To determine the appropriateness of this option, grades in subject areas, scores on achievement tests, student interest and motivation, and other data such as benchmark scores will be reviewed. Additionally, the student's social-emotional needs will also be taken into account. While there is a large body of evidence to support acceleration as a beneficial service option, the individual student's needs will be considered.

Students in grades 3-5 receive advanced coursework in math through flexible grouping. In middle school, advanced students in sixth and seventh grade math receive a compacted curriculum which allows them to take Math I in eighth grade. Student grades, EOG scores in math, and EVAAS data are used for placement consideration. Additionally, the Math I teacher may have local questionnaires and data requirements for placement in the course.

In determining whether grade acceleration is an appropriate service, teachers, counselors, administrators, and AIG personnel will consult with parents to determine a student's readiness and likelihood of success. The student's interest and motivation, grades in all subject areas, previous achievement scores and summative assessments will be reviewed. Additional data may be gathered through the use of the Iowa Acceleration Scales to help make informed decisions.

Students in high school have several opportunities to participate in advanced classes. At the end of eighth grade, interested students may apply to attend Mayland Early College and upon successful completion will receive a high school diploma and an Associate's Degree. Students enrolled at Avery County High School may take dual enrollment courses. Classes are offered through Mayland Community College and various distance learning institutions (NCVPS, NCSSM, etc.). Students also have access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Successful completion of an AP course requires the student to take the AP exam. A limited number of AP courses are available in-person at the high school. Additional AP courses are available through NCVPS and NCSSM.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) allows students in grades 9-12 another pathway to subject acceleration. Based upon a body of evidence, students may receive credit for a particular course without completing it in the classroom or via NCVPS. Requirements for CDM are:

PHASE I: A STANDARD EXAMINATION

- Achieving a Level V score on an End of Course (EOC) test in a subject for which an EOC test is offered
- Achieving a score of 93% or higher on courses for which a CTE Post Assessment is available
- Achieving a score of 94% or higher on an assessment for a course in which an EOC or CTE Post Assessment is not available such as a North Carolina Final Exam (NCFE).

PHASE II: COMPLETING AN ARTIFACT (WORK PRODUCT)

The artifact will be a project that demonstrates the student's ability to apply the knowledge and skills of the course. It will be developed and assigned by the school and may take the form of a written project, a skills demonstration, an oral presentation or interview, and/or other assessments appropriate for the course.

CDM is available for most standard level high school courses in grades 9-12. The following courses are excluded from CDM:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) work-based learning courses (co-op, internship, apprenticeship)
- CTE courses that have a clinical setting as a requirement of the course, such as ProStart, Early Childhood Education I/II and Nursing Fundamentals

▪ CTE Advanced Studies courses or any CTE course without state technical standards ▪ English Language Learner (ELL) courses ▪ Healthful Living required courses ▪ Honors and AP Courses	* Practice H Cultivates and develops the potential of young (K-3) students with early intervention and talent development opportunities through purposeful and intentional programming. Classroom teachers and support staff (AIG Specialist, EC Teacher, ML Teacher, Technology Facilitator, Counselor, etc.) work together to develop and provide differentiated curriculum and instruction that nurtures all students in grades K-3. Avery County Schools utilizes the CKLA curriculum for ELA in grades K-5. This is a rigorous curriculum that focuses on interdisciplinary units. For example, a reading unit about insects incorporates fiction and nonfiction texts for reading instruction, and it incorporates science standards about lifeforms and activities, too. By incorporating science and social studies into reading units, students are able to explore ideas in-depth. Support staff work with classroom teachers to provide enrichment and extension activities for these lessons, or to provide interventions for those who need additional support. Support staff may work in the classroom with teachers, provide online lessons or resources, or they may pull students to work one-on-one or in small groups. The structure depends on the school and the availability of staff. Flexible grouping is used daily for reading and math instruction and differentiation. Grade level teams carefully review assessment data (MClass, iReady, etc.) and student work to determine groupings. Additionally, school MTSS teams meet regularly to review student data and anecdotal evidence of student achievement and behavior. These meetings bring together multiple teachers and staff members who work with students. This allows teachers to discover multiple perspectives on a student's learning and behavior. As a result, students' strengths and gaps become more apparent and can be addressed in a timely manner. School and district support staff also meet with teachers, as needed, to review student data. Staff development may also be provided to support teachers with effective differentiation strategies for various groups of learners. Goals for the 25-28 cycle include the creation of an online classroom/lesson library for teachers to pull from for differentiated lessons and materials and the purchase of supplemental materials such as the PETS (Primary Education Thinking Skills) curriculum designed specifically for use with early elementary students. * Practice I Develops mindsets, policies, and practices to promote equity and excellence by broadening access to advanced learning opportunities through a variety of talent development efforts, including frontloading, in grades 4-12. Avery County Schools is a small, rural district with limited cultural and ethnic diversity. Approximately 15% of our families are multilingual. We have a large population of economically disadvantaged students, and the number of students who qualify as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act has increased dramatically in recent years (3 in 2020 to 63 in 2023). Professional development is offered to general education professionals that focuses on characteristics of gifted students and the special needs of under-represented populations. Professional development is conducted by members of different departments including Multilingual Teachers, Exceptional Children's
--	--

Teachers, and the AIG Specialist. Topics addressed include: learning characteristics, differentiation strategies, cultural sensitivity issues, twice exceptional student learning profiles, and positive peer cultures. Increased student identification among under-represented populations becomes one outcome of these professional development sessions. Every effort is made to ensure that referral and identification of gifted students matches school populations. The AIG Specialist meets with administrators and faculty to discuss identification procedures and emphasis is placed on methods for identifying gifted students from under-represented populations and the various ways giftedness can manifest in different groups. A universal screener (CogAT) is administered each year to second grade students. Principals are encouraged to test additional students in other grades who demonstrate potential. The test can be administered in English or Spanish. Data on screening and placement of under-represented populations is collected and reviewed. In addition to promoting equity in identification procedures, opportunities are provided for all students to participate in advanced learning experiences. Coding Club is taught after school at the elementary level throughout the school year. STEM/CTE summer camps are available each summer for students in grade 5 and up. These camps allow students to participate in hands-on learning experiences and career exploration. These district sponsored programs are provided at little to no cost to district students. When funding is available, our district also partners with the YMCA for summer enrichment programs. Students in grades K-8 take field trips throughout the year. Fundraisers and donations are utilized to make sure that all students can participate in these activities. Additionally, counselors and administrators work closely with economically disadvantaged families to make sure that students have access to food, clothing, and necessary supplies that allow students to come to school ready to learn. Students who receive a level 5 on the math EOG are enrolled in higher level math courses or placed in advanced math groups. This can result in subject acceleration and completion of Math I in middle school instead of high school. Additionally, high school students are encouraged to take a variety of Honors and dual enrollment courses. Students also have the option to participate in a limited number of AP courses in person. However, distance learning options via NCVPS or NCSSM are also available to extend offerings. High school students also have opportunities to participate in internships.	* Practice J Enhances and further develops the talents and interests of AIG students through extra-curricular programming during and outside of the school day. Extracurricular activities are provided at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Elementary students participate in the House System. Each student is assigned to a house and attends house meetings regularly. These meetings are opportunities for students to learn leadership skills, social skills, and participate in service projects. For example, students may create cards or gifts for veterans, rest home residents, or various school personnel. Students may also participate in school clean-up or planting flowers as part of their house. The district offers Coding Club after school to all elementary schools. Additional clubs and offerings vary from one school to another. Some schools offer a club time once a month during the school day for students to explore an area of interest. Extracurricular opportunities increase at the middle school level. There are two middle schools in the district. One offers a club afternoon where club time is blocked off during the school day one Friday each month throughout the school year. Each teacher sponsors a two hour club that focuses on a career or area of interest, and students sign up based on their interests. Past offerings have included First Responders, Art, Yoga, Cooking, LEGO, and Coding. The other middle school offers clubs after school. These include BETA and MathCounts. Additionally, students who do not require interventions may participate during the school day in activities such as Yearbook or the school play during the school's intervention block. At the high school level, students have access to a variety of extracurricular activities. There are multiple clubs which students participate in. These include those with a career focus (FFA, DECA, SkillsUSA), an arts focus (Band, school plays/Drama), and service organizations (BETA Club, Key Club). Additionally, students are encouraged to participate in programs such as Governor's School or NCSSM camps.
---	---

A list of summer camps and enrichment opportunities is available on the AIG website, and it includes links to the various programs. Locally, the district offers CTE summer camps for district students to explore careers and STEM.		
* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard		
–Purchase AIG curricular resources for schools –Create online lesson library for district –Create AIG Quick Guide/brochures to explain essential components of the AIG plan		
Planned Sources of Evidence		
* AIG website		
* AIG plan		
* AIG Advisory Board minutes		
* Newsletters		
Type		Document/Link
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources		N/A

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

Avery County Schools (060) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

The LEA employs challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum and instruction to accommodate a range of academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of K-12 gifted learners.

*** Practice A**

Adapts the NC Standard Course of Study (SCOS) K-12 to address a range of advanced ability levels in language arts, mathematics, and other content areas as appropriate by differentiating curriculum and instruction, including enrichment, extension, and acceleration strategies.

All educators in Avery County Schools are expected to base instruction on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSOS) and to differentiate instruction. Differentiation is a dynamic and collaborative process that utilizes student data, interests, and pre-assessments to help teachers modify instruction based on content (what is taught), process (how it is taught), product (how learning is demonstrated), or learning environment (where learning occurs). In order to provide appropriate differentiation for gifted learners, classroom teachers work with support staff such as the AIG Specialist, Instructional Technology Facilitator, Multilingual Learner teacher, or Exceptional Children's teacher to modify instruction to maximize student learning. These staff provide support and instructional resources for classroom instruction. In some instances, they co-teach with the classroom teacher or work with individual students to provide direct instruction.

Differentiation begins with an analysis of student data and pre-assessment. Diagnostics and assessments are routinely administered via adaptive computer-based programs such as iReady, IXL, etc. to determine student readiness. Additional data comes from student work, teacher created assessments, and classroom observations. This information is used by teachers to determine how to build upon the NCSOS to extend, enrich, and accelerate for gifted students. Acceleration allows students to move through content at a faster pace. Students may have fewer introductory activities or repetition, for example. Enrichment provides opportunities for students to enhance their learning through creative and/or artistic activities. Field trips, project-based learning, and competitions are examples of enrichment. Extension delves deeper and adds more rigor, depth, and complexity. Examples include research projects, exploration of real-world problems, and interdisciplinary learning.

Different strategies are used across subjects and grade levels. In grades K-8, learning centers, interdisciplinary and thematic units, experiential focus days, flexible grouping, project-based learning, choice boards, tiered assignments, and personalized online learning via apps and adaptive software are often utilized. The methods are determined by the classroom teacher and the requirements of the student's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). Classroom teachers are encouraged to collaborate with support staff. However, they are not required to do so.

Students in grades 9-12 self-select honors, dual enrollment, and/or Advanced Placement classes. While the nature of these classes provides additional rigor, that in and of itself, is not differentiation for gifted students. In every class, there are variations in students' interests, abilities, and readiness. Strategies such as tiered lessons, Socratic seminars, flexible grouping, rich course materials, problem-based learning, and computer-based instruction are often used with gifted students at the high school level. The methods are determined by the classroom teacher and the requirements of the student's DEP.

Efforts are made to provide materials, coaching, and instructional support to teachers who work with advanced students. The AIG Specialist provides professional development sessions on differentiated instruction and the needs of advanced students. Additionally, the AIG Specialist is available to collaborate with teachers to plan and implement lessons and units. A newsletter is regularly sent to schools with ideas for extension and enrichment as well.

Goals for the 2025-2028 cycle include the creation of an online AIG teacher training course which will contain a unit on differentiation and the creation of a lesson library for the district which will include lessons and materials for use with advanced learners.

*** Practice B**

Uses students' identified abilities, readiness, and interests to address a range of learning needs K-12.

Avery County Schools encourages the use of evidence-based instructional practices to support the learning needs of all students, including those identified as AIG. Teachers use a variety of strategies to integrate depth, complexity, sophistication, and rigor into differentiated instruction for gifted students. This is done through modifying content, process, product, learning environment, or a combination of these elements. Strategies used include, but are not limited to: tiered assignments, thematic/interdisciplinary units, technology enhanced instruction, Socratic/Paideia seminars, project-based learning, learning centers, curriculum compacting, flexible grouping, and alternative course delivery.

Information about students' abilities, readiness, and interests is gathered formally and informally. Computer-based assessments are administered regularly throughout the year in grades K-8 to progress monitor students to ensure that instruction is aligned to students' needs and abilities. Classroom teachers in all grades also use a variety of formative and summative assessments to determine student learning and readiness. Our district is small and rural, and our small class sizes allow teachers to build strong classroom communities where they know their students as individuals and discover their interests and talents. This focus on relationships and knowing learners, allows teachers to better tailor their instruction.

Additionally, our schools implement Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to help meet the needs of our students. MTSS teams meet regularly to discuss student academic and emotional needs and determine best practices to implement. For AIG students, this often means recommendations for faster pacing, higher-level content, or content enrichment or extensions. However, recommendations take into consideration the special social and emotional needs of gifted learners to help ensure that these students do not get overwhelmed and learn in the healthiest way possible.

Throughout the year, educators receive professional development and information on differentiation techniques from support staff (AIG Specialist, Instructional Technology Facilitators, Multilingual Learner, Exceptional Children, etc.) and external providers (NCWRESA, NCDPI, etc.). Additionally, support staff are available to model, co-teach, and co-plan with teachers to help deliver differentiated instruction. School-based teams meet regularly to discuss and plan effective instructional practices. These school-based teams may be formed from either teachers of the same grade level or same subject area, depending on the school's needs.

*** Practice C**

Incorporates a variety of evidence-based resources that address the range of academic, intellectual, and social and emotional needs of AIG students.

Avery County Schools incorporates a variety of evidence-based resources in grades K-12. K-5 ELA instruction is based on Core Knowledge's CKLA curriculum. This is a rigorous curriculum that integrates classic texts, informational texts, and primary sources. Instruction may be supplemented with resources such as Jacob's Ladder, Junior Great Books, challenging novels, or independent research. Other subject areas do not have a district mandated curriculum. Each school chooses textbooks/curricula for Math, Science, Social Studies, and Electives. The district purchases IXL and iReady for individualized, computer-adaptive lessons. Due to the breadth of materials used across the district, the AIG Specialist maintains a list of Open Educational Resources (OER) on the AIG webpage. These resources allow teachers to pull advanced content for students across grade levels, and teachers can choose how to best use these resources to differentiate for gifted learners based on the resources available to them in their individual school. OER materials can also assist in providing resources for twice exceptional and multilingual learners.

To help address some of the social and emotional needs of AIG students, efforts are made to encourage gifted learners to spend time with their peers and those who share their interests. Through our CTE department, our district offers summer camps for students in middle and high school to explore STEM activities and career pathways. Additionally, schools offer various clubs and activities. These include Coding Club, MathCounts, SkillsUSA, and BETA.

A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is the purchase of supplementary materials to create a small AIG library with materials that can be loaned to teachers to support differentiated instruction and the social and emotional needs of gifted students.

* Practice D Fosters the development of durable skills and mindsets which support post-secondary success. These skills include adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical and creative thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility.	Avery County Schools strives to foster durable skills and mindsets which support post-secondary success in all students. These skills and mindsets make up the Portrait of a Graduate and include: adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility. Many of these skills are embedded into academic coursework at all grade levels. Others take precedence in clubs, electives, Houses, and TAG (Teacher Advisory Group). Our elementary schools implement a House System. Each school has four houses which students are assigned to. Each school has their own method for placing students in houses. Teachers serve as mentors and a support system for the students in their house. House time is built into the schedule, and there are also various competitions and events that take place throughout the year. During house time, teachers engage students in team-building activities and character education. One resource that is used is the book, <i>The Essential 55 Workbook</i> by Ron Clark. This book provides lessons and activities that focus on collaboration, communication, empathy, learner's mindset, problem solving, and personal responsibility. Additionally, as part of the House System, the district sponsors The Amazing Shake. In this event, students from each elementary school compete in various real-world scenarios such as a job interview or customer service. Community members and business owners participate in and judge the competition. Students have the opportunity to meet, greet, and solve a variety of problems as part of the competition. This annual event is a way for students to develop a variety of soft skills needed for post-secondary success. Students in grades 6-8 have TAG every day. This is an opportunity for students to collaborate in team-building activities, discuss current events and topics of interest, develop empathy, participate in community service, and practice personal responsibility. Middle school students also have their own version of The Amazing Shake. Middle school and high school students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of clubs. SkillsUSA and Beta are available to both middle and high school students, and these clubs foster community service, collaboration, communication, creative thinking, and personal responsibility. Additional clubs are available which offer students a variety of opportunities to explore real-world interests, careers, and activities. At the high school level, students may participate in internships or the Teacher Cadet program which require students to actively develop and use the skills listed above. Additionally, instructional practices and resources are chosen and implemented to help foster these skills in students. Students at all grade levels work in small, collaborative groups to engage in critical thinking and creative problem solving. This happens across all subject areas. Curriculum is rigorous and relevant for all students, and advanced differentiated strategies are in place to assure appropriate challenges for advanced learners in all areas. In addition to the integration of critical thinking skills in core academic subjects, students in middle and high school participate in Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes, and students are required to develop a career pathway of study as they enter high school. CTE classes and career pathways allow students to explore real-world learning experiences and develop adaptive skills and personal responsibility.
* Practice E Uses ongoing assessment, both formative and summative, to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction.	Assessments are regularly used to gather student data and inform instruction. Pre-assessments are encouraged to determine student readiness and the possibility of moving the student through the material more quickly. Teachers use a variety of formative assessments (exit tickets, teacher observations, checklists, student work, quizzes, etc.) to help determine student understanding of the content and make decisions about pacing and grouping. District-wide benchmarks (iReady, NC Check-ins) are administered in elementary and middle schools to determine student proficiency in reading and math skills.

Summative assessments (End of Grade tests, End of Course tests, teacher created final exams, end of unit tests) help teachers determine if a student has achieved proficiency in a unit or area of study or if the student needs reteaching of the content. Test results are regularly reviewed and analyzed by classroom teachers and school-level MTSS teams to determine how to group students and how to provide targeted instruction based on student needs. Teachers learn strategies for analyzing student data and using it to inform instruction in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities). After reviewing student assessment data, collaboration between teachers and support staff (AIG Specialist, Instructional Technology Facilitator, Multilingual Learner teacher, Exceptional Children's teacher) is encouraged to provide guidance on best practices for differentiated instruction.	* Practice F Collaborates with a variety of personnel, based on student needs, to implement differentiated curriculum and instruction. Avery County Schools has one licensed AIG Specialist to work with all schools in the district. The AIG Specialist works with principals, teachers, and other personnel (EC Teachers, ML Teachers, Instructional Technology Facilitators) to provide professional development and support to teachers throughout the district. This support takes the form of co-planning and teaching units and lessons, guidance in best practices for differentiation for gifted learners, and resources to challenge advanced learners. The AIG Specialist also periodically participates in MTSS meetings to advocate for gifted students and appropriately differentiated instruction. There are four additional teachers with AIG licensure working in schools as classroom teachers. School level AIG licensed personnel provide information on delivering instruction through MTSS meetings/transition meetings, extracurricular enrichment opportunities, and through the sharing of lessons they have created. Our goal is to recruit at least one teacher from each school to attain licensure and serve as a school-level AIG resource. At the district level, the AIG Director advocates for differentiated curriculum and instruction at district-level administrative meetings. These meetings provide opportunities for conversation and collaboration with building administrators, Curriculum Directors, the Director of Exceptional Children, and the superintendent.
* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard –Increase number of AIG licensed teachers in the district –Have at least one AIG licensed staff member in each school –Create AIG training course –Create district lesson library –Purchase AIG curricular materials	Planned Sources of Evidence

* Teacher training course		
* CTE Pathway documentation		
* Student achievement data		
Type	Documents	Document/Link
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	Document Template	
	N/A	

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

Avery County Schools (060) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

The LEA recruits and retains highly qualified professionals and provides relevant and effective professional development concerning the diverse needs of gifted learners that is ongoing and comprehensive.

*** Practice A**

Employs an AIG-licensed educator as lead coordinator to guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program and plan.

The Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted is responsible for the implementation of the ACS AIG program at the district level. The AIG Director does not currently hold an AIG license. However, the director works in conjunction with a licensed AIG Specialist to support AIG services, plan development, and program oversight.

Responsibilities of the AIG Director include:

- Advocate for gifted students;
- Actively participate in district and regional meetings and professional development;
- Oversee the budget for the AIG program and communicate with the Finance Officer and Superintendent regarding budgeting needs and purchases;
- Help develop, plan, monitor, and evaluate the local AIG plan;
- Participate in and support AIG Advisory Board meetings;
- Communicate regularly with teachers and administrators to develop, plan, monitor, and evaluate the AIG program;
- Establish clear, equitable, and comprehensive student identification procedures;
- Monitor the identification process to ensure fidelity;
- Maintain an accurate program headcount and submit headcount to state authorities;
- Organize and oversee professional development required for teachers of gifted learners within advanced placement courses;
- Monitor the credentials of teachers serving AIG students;
- Collaborate with school personnel from multiple departments to ensure programming is monitored through the MTSS framework;
- Provide support to personnel overseeing the delivery and planning of AIG instruction;
- Inform AIG stakeholders of all aspects of AIG program;
- Communicate with the Superintendent, Board of Education, principals, and community members about the AIG program.

*** Practice B**

Engages AIG-licensed specialists in tasks that explicitly address the academic, intellectual, and social and emotional needs of K-12 AIG students and supports the implementation of the local AIG program and plan.

Avery County Schools currently employs one AIG-licensed Specialist to serve the district's eight schools.

Responsibilities of the AIG Specialist include:

- Advocate for gifted students and programs;
- Meet with school level administrators, teachers, and MTSS Teams to initiate, develop, and maintain student identification;
- Review AIG paperwork;
- Provide training and support to school administrators, teachers, and MTSS Teams in the completion of AIG paperwork;
- Provide testing, evaluation, and data summaries for student identification;
- Provide AIG Plan orientation/review for faculties, administrators, and parents/guardians;
- Participate in and support the AIG Advisory Board in the development, planning, and evaluation of the AIG program and district plan;
- Provide gifted education professional development for school personnel;
- Collaborate with classroom teachers to plan and deliver differentiated instruction to gifted students;
- Model differentiated instruction practices;
- Provide and facilitate direct and indirect differentiated instruction;
- Collaborate with support staff to address the needs of students from special populations and the social-emotional needs of gifted students;
- Inform stakeholders of AIG programming through a variety of media;
- Actively participate in regional meetings and professional development;

In addition to the district level AIG Specialist, Avery County Schools strives to have at least one AIG-licensed educator in each school to serve as a local, school-based resource for MTSS and information on best practices for working with AIG students. Due to staffing changes, retirement, etc., not all schools employ an AIG licensed educator. Currently, five schools (Avery Middle, Cranberry Middle, Freedom Trail Elementary, Newland Elementary, Banner Elk Elementary) employ a teacher with AIG licensure. An additional school (Riverside Elementary) employs a teacher who has completed AIG training through NWRESA but has not taken the Praxis to complete AIG licensure. A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is to have at least one teacher in each building who has completed AIG training through NWRESA and who has attained add-on licensure via the Praxis.

* Practice C

Establishes specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, instructional specialists, student services personnel, and school administrators.

Currently, Avery County Schools does not mandate professional development for personnel working with AIG students. However, classroom teachers, instructional specialists, student services personnel, and school administrators are highly encouraged to participate in AIG professional development offerings. In order to encourage best practices, the AIG Specialist offers professional development throughout the school year to all school-based professionals involved in gifted education. The focus and frequency of these offerings is determined formally and informally through the use of district surveys, NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey, conversations with school personnel, and input from the AIG Advisory Board. These sessions take place at district schools, and each school's principal determines who is required to attend.

Topics presented at the school level for teachers and student services personnel include:

- Identification of gifted learners
- Characteristics of gifted students
- Differentiation strategies
- Use of specific instructional resources with gifted students
- Social and emotional needs of gifted learners
- 2e students
- The role of gifted education within MTSS

School administrators receive an annual review of:

- Implementation of the AIG plan
- Identification of gifted students
- Overview of paperwork & DEPs

Additionally, classroom teachers and student services personnel are encouraged to participate in NWRESA's AIG course. This is a 60 hour course which provides an overview of gifted learners, legal requirements, and differentiation practices. Completion of this course prepares participants to take the Praxis for add-on licensure.

Goals for the 2025-2028 cycle include the creation of a self-paced Canvas course for those unable to attend school-based offerings and the development of offerings that target the specific needs of special populations.

* Practice D Provides general education services by personnel who have earned an AIG add-on license or have met the LEA requirements for that position.	Avery County Schools currently has one AIG licensed Specialist to serve the district and four AIG licensed classroom teachers. The district has eight schools. Due to our small, rural location, almost every general education teacher works with AIG students. We feel that expecting all teachers to obtain AIG licensure is an unrealistic goal. Instead, efforts are focused on making sure that teachers are highly qualified and that there is collaboration between AIG licensed personnel and classroom teachers to ensure quality instruction for gifted students through inclusion and grouping options. Student groupings and placements with school personnel are determined by principals in each school. We continue to monitor available data for achievement gaps, including AIG services, and structure professional development to match the combination of both student and staff needs. Data analysis should also be used by administrators to determine student groupings and schedules. We encourage educators to participate in NWRESA's AIG training in preparation for taking the Praxis, and a goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is to have one licensed AIG teacher in each school.
* Practice E Develops strategies for the recruitment and retention of AIG-licensed professionals, including those of diverse backgrounds.	Avery County Schools is committed to recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. Additionally, we believe that our district benefits from a diverse teaching community. To recruit teachers, our district partners with local colleges to welcome student teachers into our classrooms to fulfill their training requirements. We hope that these young professionals will return to our district to work. Additionally, job openings are posted online, and a diverse application pool is encouraged. Interviewers question applicants about their qualifications for meeting the needs of learners, including advanced learners. Avery County Schools utilizes NWRESA and the NCDPI website to provide information to prepare teachers and support staff to earn AIG licensure through the Praxis exam. In order to encourage more teachers to obtain AIG licensure, Avery County Schools will reimburse teachers for the cost of the Praxis exam in gifted education if there is a passing score. In order to retain and support teachers with AIG licensure, ACS allocates budget funds, when available, to attend professional development opportunities such as conferences. A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is to develop an AIG PLC to share ideas and strategies for challenging and nurturing gifted learners.
* Practice F Provides focused professional learning opportunities to realize equity and excellence in gifted education including changing mindsets, policies, and practices.	Avery County Schools utilizes MTSS teams to identify and support gifted students. In order to help promote equity and excellence, the AIG Specialist meets annually with school administrators to review best practices in identifying and serving gifted students. These are one-to-one meetings in which administrators can get individualized information for their specific school. This information helps promote data analysis and conversations in MTSS, which, in turn, helps promote more equity and excellence in identification and instruction. The AIG Specialist also provides mini workshops to teachers and support personnel on characteristics of gifted students, differentiating instruction for gifted students, and social-emotional needs of gifted students.

Teachers throughout the district are encouraged to use edWeb's free online resources and NCCAT's (North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching) online resources. Both offer valuable professional development to help teachers with differentiated instruction strategies. Offerings from Northwestern Regional Educational Service Alliance (NWRESA) and Western Regional Educational Service Alliance (WRESA) are also encouraged. For the 2025-2028 cycle, our goal is to be more deliberate in our communication of these opportunities. A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is to provide more professional development opportunities for our AIG licensed personnel. Membership in professional organizations and conference attendance helps keep educators abreast of the latest research and best practices for working with gifted learners. If funds allow, the district will send AIG licensed staff to the state's NCAGT conference. An additional goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is the creation of a self-paced Canvas course for the district's teachers. This course will provide more in-depth information about the characteristics of gifted learners, myths and misconceptions about gifted education, differentiation, and the social-emotional needs of gifted students.	* Practice G Aligns professional development opportunities with local AIG program goals, other district initiatives, and best practices in gifted education with opportunities to refine applications of professional learning. AIG professional development aligns with Avery County Schools' AIG program standards and district initiatives. Professional development opportunities that address best practices in gifted education are provided by the AIG Specialist. Sessions on the characteristics and social-emotional needs of gifted students and differentiation strategies are offered at the school level. The AIG Specialist provides individual support to teachers and staff to plan lessons, explore resources, coach, and co-teach. One of the primary goals of the AIG program is to have more teachers who have had training on best practices in gifted education and who ultimately attain licensure via the Praxis. NWRESA and WRESA offer AIG trainings, and a limited number of teachers may attend these programs, as funds allow. The district will also reimburse teachers for the cost of the Praxis in gifted education for those who pass. A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is the creation of an online course for district teachers who wish to take the Praxis in gifted education. This course will be created by the AIG Specialist and offered at no cost to the district's teachers. This will free up funds and allow more teachers to participate. The AIG perspective is also incorporated into other district initiatives. The Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted is also the Director of Secondary Curriculum and CTE, and this results in the integration of AIG best practices in many secondary and CTE topics. Additionally, district initiatives include the use of Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to monitor and respond to the academic, intellectual, and social-emotional needs of all students, including AIG. MTSS helps educators focus on the differentiated instruction and interventions that best support students. The AIG Specialist may attend school level MTSS meetings by the principal's request to explain AIG program goals, review data, discuss interventions/programming, and collaborate with educators to meet the needs of gifted learners. As the district has only one AIG Specialist, collaboration with other AIG professionals takes place during regional meetings and conferences. Membership in professional organizations also provides access to experts in the field, publications, and information on current research and best practices. Collaboration with classroom teachers and other professionals often takes place one on one during planning meetings or informal conversations. * Ideas for Strengthening the Standard –Increase the number of AIG licensed professionals –Develop an AIG PLC for the district
---	--

- Be more deliberate in communicating professional development opportunities
- Provide more professional development opportunities for AIG licensed personnel

Planned Sources of Evidence

* Rosters of teachers with AIG licensure	
* Online teacher training course	
* Rosters of teachers who participate in local professional development opportunities	

Type	Documents	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources		N/A	

Standard 5: Partnerships	Avery County Schools (060) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0
Standard 5: Partnerships <i>The LEA ensures ongoing and meaningful participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the local AIG program to develop strong partnerships.</i>	* Practice A Develops intentional, two-way partnerships with parents/guardians to support the following needs of AIG students: ▪ academic and intellectual ▪ social and emotional. Avery County Schools strives to create meaningful two-way partnerships with parents/guardians to better support students. Relationships between parents/guardians and a variety of school personnel encourage opportunities for collaboration and communication. Multiple methods are used to build relationships, communicate, and support the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted students. Regular education teachers communicate with parents/guardians during one-on-one conferences, parent/family nights, and school events. This allows parents/guardians to learn more about their child's progress and discuss any concerns or needs. Regular updates about academic progress occur via classroom LMS pages, emails, phone calls, handouts, and report cards. Apps such as Remind, Class DoJo, and Bloomz are also used to share information with parents/guardians about school, club, and classroom activities. School counselors meet with parents/guardians and students to provide college information and address scheduling concerns. They also host informational nights about colleges, applications, and financial resources. Additionally, counselors provide direct support for students' social and emotional needs in each school. Counselors also work with parents/guardians to provide access to community services and providers when there is a need. EL staff work with multilingual families and school personnel to ensure that language barriers do not limit students' participation in educational opportunities. Differentiated Education Plans provide opportunities for collaboration between teachers, parents/guardians, and support staff to address the unique needs of gifted students. The creation and updating of these plans helps ensure that parents/guardians and schools are working together to provide the best possible learning environment for gifted students. News about the AIG program, student opportunities, and resources to support AIG students can be found on the district website. Contact information for AIG staff is available so that parents or guardians can ask questions or voice concerns. There is also a contact form which can be filled out online to request a call or conference with AIG staff. Pertinent information is also included in an AIG newsletter that is shared with parents/guardians via email and on the website. There is also an AIG Remind account to provide text alerts to parents about AIG events and updates. Parents/guardians are surveyed annually to gather input about the strengths and weaknesses of the AIG program, and parent involvement with the AIG Advisory Council is encouraged. Ways to strengthen two-way communication are solicited and explored in Advisory Board meetings and on the survey. Parent and community involvement is also sought through extracurricular activities. Partnerships include service projects, performing arts opportunities, guest speakers and career fairs, competitions such as the Amazing Shake, and chaperoning field trips.

* Practice B Partners with community stakeholders, such as institutions of higher education, local business and industry partners, and others to enhance and support the local AIG program and services.	Avery County Schools recognizes that partnerships with community stakeholders are vital to the success of the AIG program and provide many opportunities for our students. Parents and community partners are encouraged to participate in the AIG Advisory Council to provide ideas and insights for strengthening the AIG program. While the Advisory Council serves a vital role in AIG program decisions, other partnerships provide important enrichment, extension, and acceleration opportunities for our gifted students as well. Local organizations such as the Kiwanis Club and the Avery Educational Foundation provide grants to teachers and schools for supplies and scholarships to students pursuing academic goals. Local businesses provide valuable employment and internship opportunities for older students, and their employees serve as mentors and judges for local events such as career days, financial literacy workshops, and the Amazing Shake. Local businesses also provide sponsorships for field trips, competitions, and classroom supplies. Our district also partners with local non-profits such as Mountain Alliance, OASIS, and Grandfather Mountain to bring in guest speakers and programs to our schools. Avery County Schools partners with local Institutes of Higher Education to support students and teachers. Mayland Community College offers Mayland Early College to students in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties. Students may apply in eighth grade to attend. Those who complete the program graduate with a high school diploma and two years of community college credit. Additionally, Mayland Community College offers several dual enrollment courses for our high school students. Students may also take online courses from the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) or North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) to extend their learning opportunities during the school year. Additional programming is provided by Lees-McRae College and Appalachian State University in the form of guest speakers and tutors. Professional development for teachers is available through WRESA, NCSSM, and the NC Center for Advancing Teaching (NCCAT). Teachers are encouraged to participate in these offerings to incorporate best practices and rigor for gifted learners. The Appalachian State University Public School Partnership provides professional development opportunities for teachers and enrichment opportunities for students through programs such as the Mountaineer Readers summer reading program. Summer enrichment programs are also provided through partnerships with the local YMCA, NCSSM Morganton, Mayland Community College, Lees-McRae College, and ASU. Older students also have summer enrichment opportunities provided at the state level through Governor's School and Summer Ventures. We hope to continue fostering local partnerships within the community and across the state. Specifically, we want to focus on bringing more participation and sponsorship to events, competitions, and summer enrichment. Cost is often a barrier that prevents our students from participating in these opportunities, and we hope to find ways to partner with local organizations to overcome the cost barrier. We also want to connect with state agencies and institutions both online and in-person to provide learning opportunities for our students and teachers.
* Practice C Establishes and utilizes an advisory group to develop, implement, monitor, and revise the local AIG program and plan. This advisory group is representative of the diverse populations of the district and is at least comprised of community members, AIG parents/guardians, AIG teachers, and other instructional and support staff.	Avery County Schools has an AIG Advisory Board that meets to develop, implement, monitor, and revise the local AIG program and plan. In a regular year, the committee meets quarterly to monitor progress and provide feedback on the AIG program. In a plan writing year, the group meets more often to review the practices for each standard of the AIG plan. As part of this process, they review survey feedback, share their own experiences, and offer opinions on what is

working and what needs to be added, modified, or removed. The committee reviews the final draft of the plan before it is submitted to the local school board for approval. The committee is comprised of the AIG Director/Director of Secondary Curriculum, the AIG specialist, a principal, a school counselor, teachers, parents/guardians, and a community member. Invitations are issued to all schools to provide representation. Finding parent and community representatives is often challenging. During the 2025-2028 cycle, we plan to work on recruitment efforts in these areas. We would also like to recruit someone from the district's ESL Department to serve on the committee to provide more insight into the needs of this demographic.	* Practice D Informs all students, parents/guardians, and the community of the following: ▪ Local AIG Plan ▪ Local AIG program services ▪ Policies and procedures relating to advanced learning and gifted education ▪ Ways to access advanced learning opportunities Communication is ongoing and responds to the diverse language and other needs of the community.	Avery County Schools uses multiple methods of communication to inform students, parents/guardians, and the community about the AIG plan, program, policies, and learning opportunities. The AIG plan, identification procedures, and policies are posted on the district's AIG website. Hard copies are printed and distributed to each school. A shared Google Drive that contains copies of the policies, procedures, and plan is also available to all school administrators. Documents are translated into home languages, usually Spanish, as needed. Translations may be done by computer programs such as Google Translate due to staffing issues. The website also contains information about summer learning opportunities, camps, and programs at local colleges and universities. This information is also available in a Google Doc that is shared with counselors and principals. Additionally, the website offers links to useful websites regarding the social-emotional needs of gifted learners, parenting gifted students, NCDPI resources, and resources for students and teachers. An AIG newsletter is distributed throughout the school year. The newsletter provides information on the AIG program, learning opportunities, social and emotional resources, student achievements, and upcoming events/meetings. AIG information is shared with school stakeholders via emails and meetings, and school administrators share information that is relevant to their students. This information may be shared in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, the district's automated phone system, school webpages, Facebook posts, Class DoJo, Bloomz, and Remind. Additionally, schools publish student accomplishments, including those of AIG students, in the local newspaper and on social media. It is a goal for the 2025-2028 cycle to create brochures and videos for parents to inform them of the local plan, policies, and procedures. Another goal is the creation of an accurate email distribution list for parents.	* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard
--	---	--	--

- Increase sponsorship of events and enrichment opportunities
- Improve parent and EL representation on AIG Advisory Board
- Create a parent email list for notifications
- Create brochures and videos for parents

Planned Sources of Evidence

* AIG website	
* AIG Advisory Board minutes	
* Parent brochures	

Type	Documents	Document/Link
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	Document Template	N/A

Standard 6: Program Accountability	
Avery County Schools (060) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0	
Standard 6: Program Accountability	
<i>The LEA implements, monitors, and evaluates the local AIG program and plan to ensure that all programs and services are effective in meeting the diverse academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.</i>	
* Practice A	Develops a written AIG plan to describe the local AIG program, in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy (N.C.G.S. §115C-150.5-.8 {Article 9B}), based on a comprehensive program evaluation. This Local AIG Plan has been approved by the local board of education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.
	Avery County Schools has a written AIG Plan that is aligned with state and local legislation and policies. The plan covers a three year cycle, and schools in the district follow this plan when developing and implementing AIG programming. This plan has been approved by the Avery County Board of Education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.
	In a plan adoption year, a comprehensive program evaluation is completed by the AIG Advisory Board. This committee is comprised of parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, Central Office personnel, and other stakeholders. The AIG staff and school administrators recruit committee members to serve on a voluntary basis. Members are recruited from a variety of areas, and efforts are made to ensure the committee represents the diverse cultures in the district. This Advisory Board meets throughout the plan adoption year to review the plan, share and examine feedback from various stakeholders, and look for ways to improve the AIG program.
	AIG staff send out surveys to teachers, administrators, and school personnel to monitor and evaluate the program. Feedback from the surveys is shared with the AIG Advisory Board during meetings. Additional feedback from parents and students is gathered through informal conversations and through more formal meetings/focus groups. This feedback is also shared with the AIG Advisory Board. Additional sources of data that may be used for plan development include formal and informal conversations with teachers, administrators, and school staff in PLCs and administration meetings.
	A draft plan is developed for the district taking into account the size and location of the district, the lack of large businesses and infrastructure, diverse student populations, and socioeconomic needs as well as the suggestions of the AIG Advisory Board for program improvements. The plan includes procedures for student identification, comprehensive services, differentiated instruction, personnel, professional development, community partnerships, and program accountability. The draft plan is reviewed and revised. It is then submitted to the local school board for approval. It is then submitted to NCDPI for review and approval.
* Practice B	Monitors the implementation of the local AIG program and plan in accordance with current legislation and state policies to ensure fidelity of implementation for all AIG program components.
	Avery County Schools monitors the implementation of the AIG program and plan in accordance with Article 9B. The Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted, the superintendent, school administrators, and the AIG staff monitor the components of the plan throughout the year.
	AIG staff and the AIG Director communicate regularly about AIG issues and ensure that policies relating to identification, program quality, and services are implemented at the school level. Additionally, at the school level, the MTSS team meets quarterly to monitor student progress and needs. Any issues or

concerns are shared with AIG staff. The AIG Director, superintendent, and school administrators meet monthly and discuss the AIG program as needed during these meetings. Surveys of stakeholders are conducted annually. They are distributed via email or the AIG website. The following procedures help ensure program accountability: --Maintain AIG rosters, student rosters, and headcounts; --Maintain data about teachers with AIG credentials; --Post the AIG plan on the website; --Conduct stakeholder surveys; --Monitor student performance, achievement, and growth; --Monitor representation of underrepresented populations.	
* Practice C Develops and monitors a budget using allotted state funds, and local funds if applicable, to address the needs of the Local AIG Plan in accordance with state policy. Funds are monitored by the Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted, along with the district's Chief Financial Officer. AIG funds are used to support the programming and education of gifted students consistent with state policy. Specific use of funds are used to hire AIG certified staff, support professional development, including staff pursuing AIG certification, and support AIG student activities. Additional fund sources, including general curriculum and local funds are used to help strengthen AIG goals as well.	
* Practice D Maintains and analyzes multiple sources of student achievement and growth data, as well as annual dropout data for AIG students. Data is disaggregated to recognize patterns and trends over time and inform mindsets, policies, and practices for equity and excellence. The AIG Director and Director of Testing and Accountability work together to maintain, analyze, and share data about the performance, growth, and dropout rates of AIG students. Growth and achievement data are determined by End of Grade (EOG), End of Course (EOC), ACT, EVAAS, and other standardized measures. Results of these tests are reviewed at the district level by school administrators and the AIG Director. This information and any relevant AIG dropout data is shared by the principal with the SIT in each school. This data analysis informs school and district programming choices, and changes are made to respond to student needs. In elementary and middle schools, teachers, principals, and other staff analyze data on an ongoing basis. Formative assessments from iReady, Amplify, Check-ins, and classroom work are used for this throughout the school year. Summative assessments from BOG/EOGs/EOCs are also reviewed. Teachers use this data to drive instruction in their classrooms for all student populations, including AIG students. Formative assessment data is shared with parents through various reports. Data may also be shared in the school's MTSS process to look for trends and drive student placements and programming.	

At the high school level, data is also analyzed by teachers, principals, and relevant staff. CTE certifications, AP and dual enrollment completion rates, ACT, and PreACT scores are considered in addition to EOC scores, other summative assessments, and formative assessments. Data is reviewed by teachers to determine instructional needs.	* Practice E Maintains and analyzes multiple data sources focused on the referral, identification, services, and retention of students within the local AIG program to ensure that students' racial, ethnic, economic, or other demographic factors, including other exceptionalities and language differences, do not reduce their likelihood of access to and participation in gifted education. Avery County Schools recognizes that academic and leadership potential and levels of giftedness exist among all populations of students, including those with multiple exceptionalities and those from culturally, linguistically, or ethnically diverse backgrounds. Referral and identification of AIG students take place at the school level as part of the school's MTSS process. MTSS procedures include communication among counselors, Exceptional Children's educators, ESL teachers, AIG staff, teachers, and administrators. This approach helps ensure that those who work the most with underrepresented populations have an avenue to recognize, refer, and help identify gifted students. Additionally, AIG staff provide training and materials to promote educator awareness of the role of racial, ethnic, economic, and other demographic factors in AIG referral, identification, services, and retention. The AIG Director monitors the bi-annual headcount data and EVAAS data to review and analyze AIG representation from underrepresented student groups and their growth. Relevant data trends are shared with AIG staff, administrators, and the AIG Advisory Committee. A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle is to improve educator awareness of gifted student attributes with the purpose of nurturing potentially gifted students/talent development. This will be accomplished through professional development and discussions between AIG staff and classroom teachers.	* Practice F Maintains and utilizes current data regarding the credentials of personnel serving K-12 AIG students to align with the goals and strategies outlined in the Local AIG Plan. Current funding does not allow Avery County Schools to maintain multiple AIG Specialists throughout the district. Regular education teachers deliver instructional services to gifted students in all schools. Avery County Schools employs one AIG Specialist to collaborate with regular education teachers on differentiated instruction for their students. Teachers are encouraged to attain AIG add-on licensure. A local endorsement is available upon successful completion of a program through NWRESA. Teachers who choose to take the Praxis in AIG are reimbursed for the cost of the test if they pass. Human Resources maintains personnel files, and licensure information is maintained in the state's online system. Continuing education credits in AIG are recorded and maintained in this system, too. A list of personnel who have attained AIG licensure and/or completed the local endorsement training is maintained by the AIG Director. As of the 24-25 school year, seven regular education teachers have completed AIG training through NWRESA, and four have added licensure via the Praxis. Additional staff are being encouraged to seek licensure.
--	---	--

The AIG Director works with principals to ensure that professional development needs are addressed and aligned with the AIG plan and strategies.	* Practice G Elicits regular feedback from students, parents/guardians, families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the ongoing implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program to support continuous program improvement. Avery County Schools elicits feedback from stakeholders, both formally and informally to identify areas of AIG program improvement and effectiveness. Annual surveys aligned with the self-assessment tool are sent to administrators, school personnel, and parents. Survey results are shared and discussed with administrators in annual meetings with AIG staff. These meetings allow principals and AIG staff to reflect on survey feedback and discuss ways to improve AIG services in their schools. They also allow AIG staff to ensure that each school is aligned with the district's plan and goals. School level MTSS teams meet regularly to discuss the needs of students, including AIG students. The AIG Specialist attends MTSS meetings when requested by the principal. The AIG Specialist is also available to meet with individual teachers to plan instruction and discuss student progress and needs. These meetings allow for ongoing feedback throughout the school year. The district has an AIG Advisory Board. This committee is comprised of district and school administrators, teachers, parents, and interested community members. This committee meets at least once a semester to review the AIG program and goals, discuss improvements, share knowledge about current programs and best practices, and advocate for gifted education initiatives. In a plan revision year, the committee meets multiple times during the year to analyze survey results and discuss the district's AIG plan and goals in depth. Due to student privacy concerns, students are not surveyed. However, informal feedback is gathered via discussions with students, and students may be interviewed or take part in a focus group discussion at the school level. Additional feedback from parents and community members may be gathered during school events such as parent nights. Parents may also provide informal feedback during meetings with their child's teacher, principal, or other staff. There is also a survey on the website that allows for feedback throughout the year.
* Practice H Shares local AIG program evaluation data with school and district personnel, students, parents/guardians, families, and other community stakeholders. The local AIG plan is posted on the Avery County Schools website and presented to the local Board of Education. Additionally, the website is updated regularly to include information on upcoming opportunities for advanced learners and parent/guardian information. The AIG Specialist regularly emails school personnel with updates about AIG programming and opportunities for advanced learners. Information from surveys and program evaluation is shared with the AIG Advisory Board. It is also shared with school and district administrators. The committee and administrators disseminate relevant information to stakeholders and faculties. Also, as part of yearly reporting to the Board of Education, the Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted highlights successes of all academic programs, including AIG, CTE, and Accountability results.	* Practice I Safeguards the rights of all AIG students and their parents/guardians through established written policies, procedures, and practices. The LEA plan includes: informed consent regarding identification and placement, reassessment procedures, transfers from other LEAs, and procedures for resolving disagreements.

Avery County Schools has policies, procedures, and practices to protect the rights of all AIG students. The district plan, updated and revised at least every three years at the system level, looks at fairness and equity issues relating to student screening, referral and identification processes. These policies and procedures are posted on the district's AIG website. Documents are translated into students' home languages via the use of online translation tools.

Policies are in place for the identification and placement of students. Forms for consent for screening are sent to parents prior to the administration of the universal screener. Signed consent for any additional evaluations is obtained at the time of student referral. At the time of student identification and placement, parents/guardians must sign a Differentiated Education Plan in order for students to receive services. The Differentiated Education Plan is also signed by teachers and school administrators and approved by the AIG Director. Parents may request a change of services at any time. The request will be reviewed and changes made if deemed necessary.

Student records are reviewed for students who transfer into the district. Data managers or the principal will report the student's information to AIG staff for students who have been identified as AIG by other school districts. Parents will be contacted and a DEP will be completed and signed before services begin. Students from other public schools in North Carolina will be placed in services according to their identification from their previous district. Students from private schools or outside of the state will be evaluated the same as a new referral.

Re-evaluation will occur if requested by the parent, or if school personnel determine the student would benefit from reassessment.

Due process procedures are contained in local board policy, posted online and shared among all stakeholders. The full Student and Parent Grievance Procedure Policy 1740 may be accessed at:

https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/3480/ACS/2591227/1740-4010_Student_and_Parent_Grievance_Procedure.pdf

For convenience, a summary of the policy follows. However, what is written in the official policy applies:

1. Reporting the Grievance

- a. A student or parent may file a grievance.
- b. The grievance should be filed within 30 days of the discovery of the facts that give rise to the grievance.
- c. The following information must be provided to the principal in writing: the name of the person whose decision is at issue, the decision at issue, any policy or law that has possibly been violated, and the desired resolution.
- d. If federal law is at issue, the grievance must be given to the superintendent.
- e. If the grievance is about the superintendent, the grievance should be given to the assistant superintendent.

2. Investigation at School Level

- a. The principal will hold a meeting with the parent within 5 days of receiving the request. The principal will conduct any investigation into the facts as necessary.
- b. The principal will provide a written response within 10 days of the meeting which includes the principal's decision.

3. Appeal to Superintendent

- a. If the grievant is dissatisfied with the principal's decision, the decision can be appealed within 5 days to the superintendent.

- b. The superintendent will review relevant information and may schedule a conference with the parent and any other individuals who the superintendent determines to be appropriate within 5 days of receiving the appeal.
 - c. The superintendent will provide a written response within 10 days after receiving the appeal.
4. Appeal to the Board
- a. If the grievant is dissatisfied with the decision of the superintendent, a request for a hearing may be made to the board of education.
 - b. If granted, a hearing will be held according to the guidelines in policy 2500.
 - c. The board will provide a final written decision within 30 days.

  Click here to remove the table and use only the narrative field.

* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard

- Improve educator awareness of gifted student attributes with the purpose of nurturing potentially gifted students.
- Provide additional professional development about gifted student characteristics

Planned Sources of Evidence

* AIG website

* AIG Advisory Board minutes

* Survey responses

Type	Documents	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources		N/A	

Avery County Schools (060) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:

05/13/2025 

AIG Related Documents

Avery County Schools (060) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Required Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
Local Board of Education Approval Signatures [Upload at least 1 document(s)]	Local Board of Education Approval Template	Avery AIG Plan Board of Education Approval

Optional Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	

Phrase		Definition	