

Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Catawba County Schools (180) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

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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)

To discover, nurture, and develop the potential in all students, the Catawba County School System endeavors to meet the diverse cognitive and affective needs of gifted children through high-quality educational experiences. These services address the unique needs of gifted students who exist within all ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups. Therefore, we believe the school system, parents, and community have a shared responsibility to provide a quality education for gifted students that includes an emphasis on 21st Century Skills, enabling our gifted students to be productive citizens in a global society.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)

State Funding		Local Funding		Grant Funding		Other Funding	
* \$	951,240.00	* \$	0.00	* \$	0.00	* \$	0.00

Standard 1: Student Identification

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Standard 1: Student Identification

The LEA's student identification procedures for AIG are clear, equitable, and comprehensive and lead towards appropriate educational services.

*** 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.

The screening and referral process aims to find students with academic or intellectual needs beyond those provided in the regular education classroom.

Flowcharts, graphic organizers, narratives, and an AIG Leadership Team (AIGLT) Procedures document articulate the screening, referral, and identification processes (ScRIP) for student identification.

Initial Universal Screening/Referral (grade 3)

- The CogAT, an abilities test, is administered to all third-grade students and serves as a universal screener.
- Students scoring in the 89th percentile or above in the Quantitative Reasoning subtest, Total Nonverbal subtest, Total Verbal subtest, or Composite Score are automatically entered into the pool. Additional examination of CogAT scores is given to students who
- Previously received ESL services, Currently receive ESL services, or reside in a household where English is not the primary language.
- ESL teachers also refer students progressing much faster than their peers to the AIG Leadership Team for consideration. Once EOGs are completed, any student scoring a Level 5 in reading, math, or science is added to the screening pool.
- Teachers, administrators, other school-based personnel, parents/guardians, and students can use the AIG 1 form to nominate students to the AIG Leadership Team review pool.
- Teachers participate in specific professional development related to identifying characteristics of gifted learners and behaviors that may mask giftedness across all special populations so they can refer students to the AIG Leadership Team for review.

Ongoing Screening/Referral (grades 4-12)

- Nominations for AIG services are solicited throughout each year, grades K-12.
- At the beginning of the school year, AIG Leadership Teams (AIGLT) consult with the faculty at their school about accurate student placement.
- If anything is questionable about the services students need, consultation with teachers, past and present, and the AIG Coordinator will place that child back into the AIG Pool for reconsideration.

- The AIG Leadership Team considers initial testing and/or retesting requests at each school. Decisions about retesting are made after consultation with the AIG Coordinator, the principal, and/or his/her designee based on test data, observation instrument results, student motivation, and the criteria listed in the AIG Plan. The AIG Department will provide one retest per student.

- The results from the instruments are shared with the AIG Leadership Team and disaggregated to determine eligibility. NC EOG scores are examined at the end of each year to determine if a student needs to be considered for AIG services. The same criteria for identification continue through grade 12.

Screening/Referral K-3 Nurturing

- While a universal screener is not implemented before 3rd grade, referrals for AIG services are taken for students in grades K-3. mClass data, Reading BOG, kindergarten screening instrument DIAL, i-Ready benchmarking data, PETS records, and anecdotal teacher data are collated and examined throughout these grades to determine if there is a need for formal testing. K-3 teachers participate in professional development specific to the characteristics of primary-grade advanced learners. Teachers submit the names, anecdotal records, and work samples of students who meet the characteristics/criteria to the AIGLT.

Process for K-3 Identification

- Any of the elements below can be used to bring a K-3 student to the attention of the AIG Leadership Team.
- Early entrance to kindergarten
- Referral (parent, teacher, other school personnel): The team uses any available data
- Unusually high scores on any of the assessment instruments used in class, including teacher-made tests
- Rapid acquisition of knowledge
- Ability to retain information
- PETS performance
- If a student is referred for consideration, the AIG Leadership Team (AIGLT), principal or designee, and the AIG Coordinator will determine if there is a need for more data collection, including normed assessment instruments.

In identifying K-3 students for the AIG program, the CCS utilizes a comprehensive range of data sources, including formal assessments and teachers' anecdotal records. These various data points are integrated to form a detailed student profile. If there is a suggestion that further information is necessary, additional formal assessments may be administered, such as the CogAT, NNAT, TONI, KTEA, Otis-Lennon, and Iowa tests. Classroom observations in a variety of settings also contribute to building the profile. Once a student meets the post-assessment criteria, they may be placed into the AIG program. An Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) is created, detailing services for the current year while anticipating future needs throughout the student's academic journey. It's important to note that no criterion can solely determine eligibility; however, a single criterion can automatically include a student for consideration.

Criteria for AIG Identification for K-3

- 98th percentile or higher on a nationally normed aptitude test
- 98th percentile or higher on a nationally normed achievement test
- Teacher observation
- Principal or designee observation
- AIG Coordinator
- Social and emotional considerations;
- Information collected from the IAS and the GRS

Specific to grades 9-12 per feedback from DPI feedback on the previous plan:

- Nominations for AIG services are solicited throughout each year, grades K-12.
- At the beginning of the school year, AIG Leadership Teams (AIGLT) consult with the faculty at their school about accurate student placement.
- If anything is questionable about the services students need, consultation with teachers, past and present, and the AIG Coordinator will place that student back into the AIG Pool for reconsideration.
- NC EOC scores are examined at the end of each year to determine whether a student should be considered for AIG services.
- Students' SAT/PSAT and ACT results are examined to identify outstanding academic/intellectual strengths.
- The same criteria for identification continue through grade 12.

* 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.

Multiple criteria have long been a foundational element of the SCriP for CCS. Input from teachers and parents/guardians, along with data from the Gifted Rating Scale, End of Grade scores, and other nationally normed ability and achievement assessments, are integral to the needs determination process. A collection of evidence from student work products is also considered when evaluating a student's needs.

After the universal screening process in 4th grade, the student search process continues until a student graduates.

The referral process is the same for grades K-12 and begins with completing the referral form with the following information:

- Why do you believe this student needs gifted education services?
- Examples of students' extraordinary performance or intense interest

- Identify the student's learning style, preference, or habits
- What distinguishes this student from other high-ability peers?

The referral form is completed and submitted to the AIG Leadership Team to schedule a team meeting to discuss it. If the Team decides to continue, they create the learner profile based on the qualitative and quantitative data in the profile document to determine if further data is needed. If an assessment is required, a Request for Assessment document is submitted to the AIG department to schedule the appropriate testing with instruments that clarify the student's strengths and areas of need.

****The following information is provided to all administrators, classroom teachers, and AIG Leadership Team constituents. It is used during the determination/eligibility meeting and by teachers during parent meetings to explain the criteria and components of AIG requirements. It is posted on the district's AIG website.**

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI)

- 89th percentile or higher composite score on a nationally normed abilities test, and Achievement Level of 5 on the NC EOG (Reading and Math) or 89th percentile or higher on a nationally normed achievement test (Reading and Math).
- AI students demonstrate both high levels of achievement and high levels of aptitude in reading and math.

Intellectually Gifted (IG)

- Singleton indicator in the 98th percentile Composite Score on a nationally normed abilities test (no qualifying achievement test scores). Intellectual giftedness is an intellectual ability significantly higher than average and may involve a generally high ability or a single superior criterion. Gifted experts describe IG students as developmentally advanced in language and thought (Van Tassel-Baska, 2003), having a higher mental age compared with their chronological age (Binet), or having asynchronous development characterized by advanced cognitive abilities (Silverman, 2003).
- These students require an IDEP that includes strategies to address underachievement.

Academically Gifted Reading (AR) (Two out of Three Criteria)

- 89th percentile or higher composite score on a nationally normed abilities test or an 89th percentile or higher on the verbal subtest on a nationally normed abilities test.
- Local norms are also used.
- Achievement Level of 5 on the Reading NC EOG test or 89th percentile or higher verbal subtest score on a nationally normed achievement test
- A T-score of 60 or higher on the Gifted Rating Scale in both qualifying areas (A/I and C/M/L)
- Students who are identified as AR demonstrate high levels of achievement in reading.

Academically Gifted Math (AM) (Two out of Three Criteria)

- 89th percentile or higher composite score on a nationally normed abilities test or an 89th percentile or higher on the quantitative subtest on a nationally normed abilities test.
- Local norms are also used.
- Achievement Level of 5 on the NC Math EOG test or 89th percentile or higher quantitative subtest score on a nationally normed achievement test A T - score of 60 or higher on the Gifted Rating Scale in both qualifying areas (A/I and C/M/L)
- Students identified as AM demonstrate high levels of achievement in math.

Academically Gifted in Reading and Math (AG)

- Must meet the criteria for both areas listed above
- Students who demonstrate high levels of achievement in reading and math.

The AIGLT disaggregates all criteria. No one criterion is used to exclude a student from services; however, one superior criterion may be used to indicate a need for service.



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*** 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.

An analysis of the system's headcount indicates the disproportionality of underserved populations in terms of cultural/ethnic diversity and English language learners.

- CCS ensures that teachers are educated about the characteristics of non-traditional/underrepresented groups as part of the thirty-hour course "Introduction to Gifted Education."
- The district implements a K-3 Nurturing program that provides extensive and ongoing training for teachers to facilitate early identification measures.

Culturally/ethnically diverse and English Language Learners:

- CCS uses various standardized assessment measures, including non-verbal instruments (Naglieri Nonverbal Achievement Test, The Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, KBIT-Nonverbal subtest, and quantitative and nonverbal subtests from the CogAT).

- Through a partnership between the ESL Department, AIG, and regular education, ESL and regular education teachers receive training focused on the needs and identification of culturally/ethnically diverse students and English Language Learners.

Economically disadvantaged:

- Continued professional development on the impact of poverty on student development and learning and the implications of this impact on identifying giftedness is emphasized with all stakeholders
- District-wide training on the following: Resilience Training, Growth Mindset, Youth Mental Health, and Ruby Payne.

Highly Gifted:

- Highly gifted students have an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) that details how their needs are met. This includes subject advancement, grade advancement, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, online courses, concurrent enrollment, internships, apprenticeships, and individual studies. Counselors are educated about the needs of highly gifted learners, provide social and emotional support, and as inform parents/guardians about ways to support their children.

Twice-Exceptional:

- The Introduction to Gifted Education course addresses the needs and characteristics of twice-exceptional students.
- To help regular education and exceptional children's teachers recognize the characteristics of twice-exceptional students and how to serve them in the full continuum of service options, the AIG Department partners with specialists in the Exceptional Children's Department for specific training, which they share with their constituents.
- The AIG Coordinator participates in IEP meetings for twice-exceptional students as needed.
- An alternate pathway for twice-exceptional students, i.e., 504, LEP, EC, exists to help determine their giftedness without the other exceptionality impeding the determination of needs. The district's criteria remain the same, but a portfolio of student work over time is included.

Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
Female	<5%	---	<5%	---	<5%	---	7.31%
Male	<5%	---	<5%	---	<5%	---	7.67%
Total	<5%	---	<5%	---	<5%	---	7.50%

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

*** Practice D**

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

- The student pools are created by the AIG Coordinator, the Department of Testing and Accountability, the ESL Department, the EC Department, and school referrals.
- After carefully reviewing the data in the learner profile and the steps followed in the needs determination process, the AIG Coordinator signs the “Permission to Place” documentation for each student before entering PowerSchool.
- The AIG Coordinator meets with AIG Leadership Team Chairpersons as a group three times each year and individually to ensure that ScRIP procedures are congruent with the practices detailed in the AIG Procedures Manual.
 - AIG Leadership Team Chairpersons, in turn, work with teachers at their site to ensure that AIG documentation is completed accurately and in a timely fashion.
- The AIG Coordinator administers exit-year folder audits. These audits ensure conformity of documentation at each transition grade level and affirm that the AIG Leadership Teams implement ScRIP procedures detailed in the AIG Plan.
- ScRIP flowcharts, forms, and checklists are provided for all members of the AIG Leadership Teams.
- The AIG Coordinator attends monthly principal meetings and provides information in various formats to all stakeholders.
- The steps for maintaining documentation for students in the AIG process: Active files are kept at the current school for identified students, and documentation is maintained throughout the years until the building's exit grade. Then, the file is sent to the AIG Department for an audit before transitioning to the next level. Files for the students who were not identified are reviewed, and the next-level stakeholders are made aware of the inactive students.
- If a student moves out of the school system or drops out, their AIG folder is sent to the AIG Coordinator at the Central Office. Folders of students who have moved are archived and available if the student returns or goes to another school system.
- If a student drops out, the folder is sent to the AIG Coordinator. With the help of high school counselors, the student is interviewed, efforts are made to find out what led to the student leaving school, and efforts are instituted to get the student re-enrolled.
- The AIG Procedures Manual clearly states the annual processes for folder transfer from exit grade levels. After a student's graduation, his/her entire AIG folder is archived for five years.

*** Practice E**

Disseminates information regarding the screening, referral, and identification processes to school personnel, parents/guardians, students, and the community-at-large.

- The communication plan includes the Principal Primer, which details ScRIP procedures for school administrators.
- All faculty are provided with a screencast or turnkey presentation at the beginning of each year.
- The district's AIG webpage contains a narrative and graphic.

▪ All communication sent home is translated into Hmong and Spanish. When we cannot provide a written translation, a translator is provided for any additional language. ▪ AIG news and updates are included in the quarterly Curriculum & Instruction Newsletter from the district level.	* 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.
▪ Identification Process with Service Delivery Enters the pool Student Profile is created Information from the profile is compared to the Pathways to Identification document to determine which areas of service are indicated. AR: The minimum service delivery for any AIG reading student includes Essential question-based Thematic Units and Shared Inquiry discussions. Remember that minimum service delivery is required. Teachers have many other tools, including pathways, playlists, and paces. AM: The minimum service delivery for any AIG math student includes the opportunity to compact out of known material and either accelerate or enrich using contracts, time bought out, projects, and many other choices. If they have scored a level 5 on the math EOG, they enroll in advanced math. This allows them to compact enough math to take Math I in the 8th grade. AG: They have to meet the criteria for AR and AM to be AG AIG: If a student is AIG, they receive the same minimum service delivery options with the added options of grade or subject advancement. IG: If students are IG, their IDEP is explicitly written to their needs. Is the lack of achievement because they already know the material? Are there issues at home that prevent the completion of work? A thorough examination occurs to help eradicate barriers to the IG student reaching his potential. ▪ At the beginning of every year, teachers meet with parents/guardians to review the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). They discuss the student's service options and clearly explain the process by which needs for services were determined. A flowchart of the multiple pathways to identification is provided to share with the parents/guardians during these meetings. The Pathways to Needs Determination is posted on the district AIG site and each school's web page. All current files are kept at the school where a student receives services until the building's exit grade. Files are sent to the AIG Department for an audit before transitioning to the next level. ▪ Files for the students who were not identified are reviewed, and the next-level stakeholders are made aware of students who were considered for identification. However, the evidence did not manifest a need for services outside the regular education classroom. ▪ Once identified, all students' qualifications are entered into PowerSchool. ▪ Parents are kept apprised of their student's progress throughout the year.	* 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. Each student's DEP is created based on quantitative data and qualitative anecdotal records to match them with the appropriate service delivery. The student's area(s) of strength, aptitude, interest, and learning profile are included when the DEP is written. Other information relating to any particular social/emotional

needs is addressed in an IDEP. Parents are asked to work with their student to complete a learning profile before the meeting so that teachers can include this information in the student learner profile when creating the DEP. Parents and students can participate in creating the DEP if they are inclined. The DEP is reviewed annually with the parent; however, if a review is necessary during the school year, the team will meet to consider the needs and adjust service delivery appropriately. It is also reviewed at the end of the year to determine if a change in services is needed.		
* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard		
We will continue to work with parents and community members to find more underserved student populations		
Planned Sources of Evidence		
*	AIG Leadership Team Chair Procedures Document	
*	AIG 10th Generation Plan	
*	Flowchart of Multiple Pathways	
Type	Documents	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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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.

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

In grades K-3, students who need services beyond what is provided in the regular education classroom may need enrichment grouping within their current grade based on their area of strength. Students with a more significant need for services beyond their peers can be subject advanced or grade advanced, depending upon the strength of need and social and emotional readiness.

For the 4th-grade to 6th-grade span, students may need regrouping within the grade level to be with their academic and intellectual peers. In grades 4-6, the regrouping could be cluster grouping in the areas in which they are identified or ability grouping in the areas of service. Subject or grade advancement is an option for students with significant needs beyond their peers.

Depending on the student's needs, in grades 7 and 8, ability grouping, subject advancement, or grade advancement are options. Students may need to take high school courses during middle school to meet their academic/intellectual needs.

During high school, there are many ways in which students' needs can be met. CCS has an open enrollment policy; students can enroll in multiple honors and Advanced Placement classes. The Career and College Promise avenue, as is the Challenger Early College High School, is available. Another opportunity available to students is enrolling at Lenoir-Rhyne University as a junior and senior and finishing high school while dually enrolled at LRU. Credit by Demonstrated Mastery is advertised, promoted, and readily available for students who want to buy time out from a course.

Extra- and co-curricular clubs and opportunities are available to students beginning at the elementary school level and continuing through high school. These clubs and opportunities facilitate the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and other 21st-century skills. Vertical and horizontal alignment meetings occur regularly.

Teachers working with advanced learners (including Honors and AP teachers) must obtain the local Professional Achievement Certification. AP teachers must attend the AP Summer Institute before teaching an AP course and are expected to attend the College Board's yearly updates.

Through the NWRESA CCS, 60 hours of training are delivered to all teachers assigned to teach AIG, Honors, and AP students. CCS provides local K-12 professional development to strengthen teachers' understanding of meeting the needs of gifted learners. The Identification and Service Option Match process fully aligns with the programs and services in each identification area, program goals, and resources.

Differentiated Education Plans (DEP) and Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEP) show how students are served. While in a secure location, DEPs are readily available to teachers, counselors, and instructional coaches.

Instructional coaches provide coaching, consulting, resource development and support, and professional development to support instruction for advanced learners.

Teachers, instructional coaches, LIEP teachers, and EC teachers collaborate to provide appropriate service delivery for students with IEPs, 504s, or multi-lingual learners.

The AIG Leadership Team in each school functions as part of the MTSS infrastructure. MTSS meetings are scheduled monthly, and protocols are collaborative and data-based.

Schools use I/E Time, Flex Time, or Genius Hour to implement the services the AIG Leadership Team recommends. These recommendations vary based on the students' needs.

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*** 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.

Traditionally, the classroom teacher creates the DEP independently unless a student is twice- exceptional or receives English as a Second Language service.

EC and AIG collaboration is a carefully constructed process scheduled to examine student needs and engage in proactive strategies designed to meet student needs before a crisis occurs. The AIG Coordinator assists with twice-exceptional students when needed and always during transition points from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school.

Parent/guardian nights include strategies to address the SEL needs of gifted students at home and how to support the school in addressing those needs.

Classroom teachers and counselors are also provided specific professional development on the intensity of AIG students' feelings and self-perceptions.

Professional development includes addressing the unique SEL needs of Gifted Learners. Perfectionism, asynchrony, excitabilities, emotional self-regulation, peer relationships, and self-esteem are significant components of this training.

Perfectionism is addressed as soon as it appears, even as early as kindergarten. Recognizing perfectionism can paralyze advanced learners, providing coping strategies is a priority. Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset research emphasizes valuing the learning process over striving for unrealistic perfection in outcomes. This aligns with the Learner's Mindset, part of the Durable Skills lessons teachers teach.

Teachers and parents are taught to use teachable moments to share their mistakes, modeling that imperfection is normal and acceptable. Rubrics are employed in the classroom to clarify project or writing requirements, helping students focus on specific goals rather than setting unrealistic expectations or placing undue pressure on themselves.

In Durable Skills lessons, students focus on personal responsibility, empathy, adaptability, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and a Learner's Mindset through practical activities taught by classroom teachers. The curriculum is integrated throughout the year. Asynchrony, a key SEL issue, is

addressed early. Students learn to recognize and manage feelings about lacking academic or intellectual peers and navigate friendships with peers who may think differently. Advanced learners are taught empathy to avoid making peers feel uncomfortable. Catawba County Schools includes empathy-focused lessons in the Durable Skills curriculum.

Teachers use bibliotherapy and role-playing (social stories) to help students learn self-regulation and emotional management. They emphasize validating students' intense emotions fostering self-awareness and self-acceptance. Beginning in kindergarten, students are taught to label and express their feelings using appropriate vocabulary. Strategies like counting to 10, deep breathing, using sensory tools, and incorporating movement are introduced to support emotional regulation.

In addition to the work by classroom teachers, counselors, and parents, existing school-based AIG Teams help problem-solve and anticipate SEL needs for gifted students.

CCS uses the Second Steps Curriculum K-12. Second Steps provides a universal, classroom-based, social-emotional learning curriculum.

CCS also contracts with Kintegra. Kintegra provides school-based behavioral health centers. Onsite healthcare professionals collaborate with schools to address the broad range of concerns and adverse experiences that affect students' healthy mental development.

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* Practice C

Integrates and connects the AIG program and services with the district's priorities and resources through policy and practice.

- The AIG Coordinator participates in the district Curriculum & Instruction Department meetings. This venue provides opportunities to collaborate with other departments and educate and inform other directors about AIG services and programming.
- The Coordinator is a de facto member of the AIG Leadership Team at each school and works with the AIG Teams and the building administrators to ensure consistent program implementation.
- The AIG Coordinator collaborates with the Director of New Teacher Support to educate teachers new to the school system and new to teaching about AIG programs and services.
- The Coordinator also collaborates monthly or more often as needed with the elementary and secondary AIG Leadership Team Chairpersons and school-based administrators regarding what professional development is necessary and being offered and how AIG aligns with the professional development goals of the school system.
- The AIG Coordinator integrates AIG services for gifted children, including Personalized Learning and STEM initiatives.
- The Coordinator also serves as an NCStar Coach for two schools.
- AIG also has a role in the Multi-tiered System of Support.
- All professional development and any new programs are considered from an AIG perspective.

* Practice D

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

A cluster group is defined as a minimum of ten students. These grouping options allow teachers to differentiate within an appropriate student aptitude and ability spectrum. Cluster grouping and subject/ability grouping are data-driven based on student readiness, interest, and learner profile. Students are intentionally matched with teachers trained to differentiate for the needs of gifted students in mixed-ability classrooms. Formative and summative assessments lead to flexible groupings that can be within or across grade levels based on the needs of the individual student. Groupings can change according to student growth. Enrichment groups change regularly throughout the school year.	
* 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. ▪ All new administrators are provided with a thorough introduction to the AIG Program. ▪ The Principal's Primer is updated annually for new and experienced administrators to give them access to new information, practices, or policies affecting AIG programs and students. ▪ Teachers and administrators are provided with all of the information about the plan, policies, and regulations related to gifted education and the local AIG Program in various formats: face-to-face, screencasts, flowcharts, Google Hangouts, faculty meetings, and school and district websites.	
* Practice F Communicates among and between teachers and schools to ensure an effective continuation of K-12 services, especially at key transition points. ▪ At transition points, the AIG Coordinator creates a document that includes longitudinal test data, EVAAS data, teacher input, and areas of identification/service used by the receiving school to facilitate grade-level transitions. ▪ Elementary and middle school teachers use the spreadsheets to ease students' transition from elementary to middle grades. ▪ These meetings provide the opportunity to provide information about a student's strengths or needs that quantitative data may not show. ▪ The high schools and middle schools have intentional data-driven conversations about scheduling and placing AIG students into appropriately challenging courses. ▪ A print and web-based version of the high school curriculum guide provides information to parents and students regarding specific levels of high school courses available to all students. ▪ Parent nights are held to inform parents. ▪ Current CCS Board of Education policy allows students to choose their courses. Therefore, enrollment in all levels of high school core and elective courses is open to all students. ▪ During the high school course registration process, counselors meet with rising ninth graders to explain the different levels of academic and elective courses.	

*** 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.

The Identification and Service Option Match document and the high school curriculum guide delineate opportunities for acceleration, including compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, subject, and/or grade acceleration when an appropriate body of evidence indicates the need is articulated. Opportunities for dual enrollment in IHE are provided.

Students must be identified as AI to be considered for grade acceleration. By CCS definition, students who are AI

- 95th percentile or higher composite score on a nationally normed abilities test, and Achievement Level of 5 on the NC EOG (Reading and Math) or 95th percentile or higher on a nationally normed achievement test (Reading and Math).
- AI students demonstrate both high levels of achievement and high levels of aptitude in reading and math.

When students in grades 9-12 demonstrate an unusual precocity of knowledge in a particular subject, teachers, guidance counselors, or students themselves may consider Credit by Demonstrated Mastery as an option. All parents receive a letter detailing the schedule for assessments and artifacts and the criteria for CDM.

Rising 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students who score a Level 5 in the previous grade's math EOG are placed into a compacted math course that ultimately leads to Math I in the 8th grade.

*** Practice H**

Cultivates and develops the potential of young (K-3) students with early intervention and talent development opportunities through purposeful and intentional programming.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten:

To determine the eligibility of a four-year-old child to enter kindergarten under the provisions of G.S. 115C-364(d), the principal shall confer with a committee of professional educators to consider for each child the following factors:

Student Aptitude. The child shall be precocious in academic and social development and shall score at the 98th percentile on a standard individual test of intelligence such as the Stanford-Binet, The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, the Kaufman Anderson, or any other comparable test administered by a licensed psychologist.

Achievement. The child shall be functioning from two to three years beyond peers. The child shall score at the 98th percentile on either reading or mathematics on a standard test of achievement such as the Metropolitan Readiness Test, the Stanford Early School Achievement Test, The Mini Battery of Achievement, the Woodcock-Johnson, the Test of Early Mathematics Ability (TEMA), the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA), or any other comparable test administered by a licensed psychologist, a member of the psychologist's professional staff, or an experienced educator who is trained in the use of the instrument and who has no conflict of interest in the outcome of the assessment.

Performance. The child shall be able to perform tasks well above age peers as evidenced by behaviors in one or more areas such as independent reading, problem-solving skills, advanced vocabulary, and some writing fluency. The parent shall submit a sample of the child's work that shows outstanding examples of ability in any area, including art, mathematics, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, or social interactions. The principal may also require a teacher to complete an informal reading assessment of the child. Observable Student Behavior/Student Interest. The child shall demonstrate social and developmental maturity sufficient to participate in a structured setting for an entire school day. The child shall be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a group. The parent shall provide two recommendation letters with specific physical and social maturity documentation from preschool teachers, childcare workers, pediatricians, or others with direct knowledge of the child. Helpful documentation checklists include the California Preschool Competency Scale, the Harrison Scale, or any other comparable scale of early social development. Motivation/Student Interest. The principal or principal's designee shall conduct an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview with the parent to determine if the child is thirsty for knowledge and seeks new and challenging learning situations. The parent shall present the information this Rule requires to the principal within the first 30 calendar days of the school's instructional year. All testing shall be administered after April 16th, following the child's fourth birthday. The principal shall decide whether to grant the parent's request for enrollment within three weeks after receiving this information. The principal may conditionally enroll the child for up to ninety days to observe whether the child can adjust to the school setting. If the principal determines that the child has not adjusted to the school setting, the principal shall deny the enrollment request. However, before the child exits from school, the principal shall invite the parent to assist in developing intervention strategies for the child. If those strategies are unsuccessful, the principal shall provide the parent at least 10 days notice before exiting the child from school so the parent may arrange child care, if needed. LEAs may require parents to supply information in addition to that required by this rule. LEAs may also require specific tests or other measures to provide information relating to the factors listed in Paragraph (a) of this rule Early admission to kindergarten shall not automatically result in the child's placement in the program for academically gifted students. By the time the child has been enrolled for 90 calendar days, or at any earlier time that school officials determine that the child has adjusted satisfactorily and shall be allowed to remain in school, the gifted identification team shall review the child's information to determine if the child shall receive gifted services. If the team determines that the child shall receive gifted services, it shall develop either a differentiated education plan or an individual differentiated education plan for the child. We offer professional development in high-yield strategies for gifted learners to all of our K-3 teachers. Teachers are encouraged to obtain the Professional Achievement Certification (PAC) that the CCS offers in gifted education.	* 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. The AIG Department has been focusing heavily on coding and critical thinking for the K-3 population. We use two "unplugged" robots, Cubetto and Indi, to teach students the algorithmic thinking process behind coding, thus frontloading coding in the proximate grades. The AIG Department creates and funds STEM summer camps for K-3 students. The camps emphasize hands-on, inquiry-based problem-solving. These camps are open to all students, not just advanced learners. We contact STEM teachers to encourage all students to participate, not just currently identified advanced students. We have created Catawba Counts! An advanced learning opportunity in the elementary grades for math enrichment. There is a competition at the end of the year, and it is an excellent opportunity for us to celebrate academic effort and success.
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Teachers have trained in and are using PBLs. Our Media Centers have Maker Spaces. Interactive Multi-touch SmartBoards are used to foster communication and collaboration.	* Practice J Enhances and further develops the talents and interests of AIG students through extra-curricular programming during and outside of the school day. A comprehensive and varied menu of extra-curricular options is available to enhance and further develop the needs and interests of AIG students. Particular emphasis on robotics, coding, engineering, and other STEM activities is strongly encouraged, and financial support is provided. Robotics competitions are increasing in number and quality. Schools are developing fully staffed STEM labs, and instructors use student interests to keep students engaged while still challenging them appropriately. The AIG Department creates and funds STEM summer camps. The camps emphasize hands-on, inquiry-based problem-solving. The "challenges" require students to use teamwork, design thinking, and communication skills. The most substantial focus is on physics and math using round robots known as Spheros. Students begin with coding in blockly, frontloading the basics for learning Java and Python later on. We have partnered with AI for Education through a DLI Grant to develop an AI literacy course for all students. The program front-loads students, equipping them with the skills to use AI effectively and responsibly. With the help of AI for Education, we provide Prompt-a-thon competitions. Prompt-a-thons provide a hands-on learning experience where participants can practice crafting effective prompts for generative AI tools, thereby improving their understanding of how to best utilize AI technology, foster creativity, and discover innovative applications within their specific fields, all while collaborating with others to share insights and best practices; essentially, it's a way to boost AI literacy and proficiency by actively engaging with prompts in a structured competitive environment.						
* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard We are working on a grant that will provide us the funds and professional development to use with Quest our afterschool program. The program is designed to model and encourage critical thinking and computational thinking use STEM-based lessons and robots.	Planned Sources of Evidence <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1234 867 1318 2022">* Principal's Primer</td><td data-bbox="1234 67 1318 867"></td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1318 867 1416 2022">* AIG LT Procedures Document</td><td data-bbox="1318 67 1416 867"></td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1416 867 1500 2022">* DEP</td><td data-bbox="1416 67 1500 867"></td></tr> </table>	* Principal's Primer		* AIG LT Procedures Document		* DEP	
* Principal's Primer							
* AIG LT Procedures Document							
* DEP							

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

Catawba County Schools (180) 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.

Catawba County Schools is committed to challenging and engaging gifted students by making learning more complex and personalized. Instead of simply following standard curriculum guidelines, teachers use advanced strategies to deepen students' understanding and encourage higher-level thinking.

To achieve this, teachers are trained in the Depth and Complexity Framework that helps students recognize patterns, explore big ideas, and think like experts in different subjects. This approach makes learning more meaningful and interdisciplinary. For example, in middle school, students might study a science topic by reading both a traditional novel and a graphic novel, allowing them to compare different storytelling styles while learning key science concepts. This is enhanced through interactive technology like Merge Cubes and augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR).

Hands-on learning is a priority. All elementary and middle school teachers incorporate Project-Based Learning (PBL), where students explore real-world problems based on their interests. These projects can extend beyond the school day, keeping students engaged and excited about learning.

Gifted students also participate in specialized learning experiences such as:

- Shared Inquiry Seminars – Deep discussions around complex topics. These seminars are a required element for ELA classes.
- Project-Based Learning – Solving real-world problems through research and creativity (elementary and middle grades)
- Curriculum Compacting – Skipping material they've already mastered to focus on new challenges. The most obvious example of compacting involves using Advanced Math classes to complete Math I in 8th grade. However, compacting occurs in other courses based on students' prior knowledge and desire for knowledge.
- Independent Studies – Exploring issues of personal interest in-depth. Time bought out in math classes is an example of an independent study.
- Learning Contracts, Pathways, and Playlists – Personalized learning plans that allow students to move at their own pace

One unique aspect of the program is pathways, which let students start learning at their appropriate level instead of repeating what they already know. Similarly, elementary schools set aside daily enrichment time, where students from different grades work together on cross-curricular projects based on their interests.

In math, students can “buy time out” of class if they have mastered a topic. Instead of repeating content, they work on long-term math projects, many culminating in an end-of-year math competition.

To support teachers and ensure gifted students get the best possible learning experience, District Instructional Coaches are available to assist in classrooms whenever needed.

* Practice B Uses students' identified abilities, readiness, and interests to address a range of learning needs K-12.	Conceptually based topics are organized to include tiered vocabulary across multiple disciplines to develop learners' more complex reading, writing, and speaking skills. Abstract thinking and reasoning are fostered by developing early numeracy skills, number sense fluency, and the ability to establish relational correspondence between concepts. These foundational skills enable students to problem-solve and effectively apply their understanding to real-world situations. To create evidence-based products that showcase students' diverse learning styles, teachers utilize pathways, playlists, and paces to engage students through voice and choice. These approaches are informed by student questionnaires or teacher anecdotal observations, allowing for a more personalized and practical learning experience. Assessments and benchmarks are integrated throughout the instructional process to adjust teaching, monitor student progress, and assess mastery. Pre-assessments provide valuable insights into students' prior knowledge, ensuring that students are not held back while others catch up. The results of assessments and data-driven learning profiles inform the implementation of tailored instructional strategies to support each learner's needs. Embedded professional development focusing on Shared Inquiry and curriculum compacting is required for anyone teaching gifted ELA and math teachers. SI is required for Gifted ELA students. Curriculum compacting is another data-driven strategy that allows students to accelerate through a condensed curriculum. The Advanced Math pathway for grades 6-8 is for advanced math learners. Pathways (standards-based choice board that allows students to have a voice in how they learn a topic). Playlists allow students to have their entry point into a topic based on their prior knowledge and skills. Pacing is available for students to progress at a rate different from their age/grade peers. Contracts/Individual Studies are used when students have mastered content and bought time out of a class or when a student has a passion for a particular concept or skill. Contracts can be long-term studies in areas of interest or explicitly focused on a topic determined by the teacher or student.
* Practice C Incorporates a variety of evidence-based resources that address the range of academic, intellectual, and social and emotional needs of AIG students.	The AIG Department provides supplemental resources that are congruent with the goals of the District Strategic Plan and are aligned with the recommendations of NAGC. Print resources are placed in the professional library at schools, and a variety of support mechanisms, including embedded staff development are in place to help teachers access and learn how to implement the content in the resources. How a Mathematician Read the Newspaper is used in studying statistics. PBL units from the College of William and Mary serve as exemplars to our teachers as they work to produce quality PBLs of their own. Primary Thinking Skills are used grades K-3 to support the talent search by providing opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate their critical thinking.

Visible Learning by John Hattie is used with teachers to focus on high yield, research-based instructional practices. Literature Circles by Harvey Daniels is used to help teachers sharpen their skills in developing literature circles that are rigorous and student centered. How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms, Carol Ann Tomlinson is a valuable resource since CCS does not track students and the text has multiple suggestions for managing to teach bright students while meeting the needs of struggling 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. Catawba County Schools is dedicated to providing gifted learners with the durable skills and mindsets they need for success beyond high school. Recognizing that gifted students often require differentiated instruction, enrichment opportunities, and unique challenges, we intentionally design programs that cultivate adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical and creative thinking, empathy, a learner's mindset, and personal responsibility. Adaptability is encouraged through acceleration options, independent study, and flexible curriculum pathways that challenge gifted students to think beyond conventional frameworks. Exposure to real-world problem-solving through mentorships, research projects, and interdisciplinary studies ensures they develop resilience in dynamic environments. Collaboration is nurtured by engaging gifted students in peer-driven learning experiences, debate teams, and leadership programs that require them to work effectively with diverse groups, honing their ability to share ideas and respect differing perspectives. Communication skills are developed through advanced writing workshops, public speaking opportunities, and participation in competitive academic events. The speech contest, Catawba Counts (system-level math competition), robotics tournaments, Sumobots showcases, and Mechanical Minds competitions help gifted learners articulate complex ideas clearly and confidently. Critical and creative thinking are central to gifted education. Through inquiry-based learning, problem-based challenges, and exposure to advanced coursework such as dual enrollment and AP classes, students refine their analytical skills and develop innovative solutions to real-world issues. Empathy is intentionally fostered through service-learning initiatives, ethical discussions, and literature that challenges students to consider diverse perspectives. Gifted learners are encouraged to engage in mentorship roles and community projects, helping them develop emotional intelligence alongside intellectual growth. A learner's mindset is instilled by promoting intellectual curiosity, self-directed exploration, and the pursuit of passion projects. Our district supports this through independent research opportunities, personalized learning plans, and access to experts in various fields. Personal responsibility is emphasized through rigorous academic expectations, goal-setting exercises, and opportunities for leadership in clubs, organizations, and internships. Gifted learners are taught to manage their time effectively, advocate for their needs, and take ownership of their educational journey. We empower students to excel academically and become adaptive, thoughtful, and responsible leaders by embedding these skills and mindsets into our gifted education framework.
* Practice E Uses ongoing assessment, both formative and summative, to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction.	

Our district ensures that gifted learners receive appropriately challenging and engaging instruction by utilizing ongoing assessment, both formative and summative, to differentiate the curriculum and instruction. Formative assessments, such as teacher observations, discussions, exit tickets, and portfolio reviews, provide real-time insights into students' understanding. These allow educators to adjust instruction dynamically, offering deeper enrichment, acceleration, or scaffolded support as needed. This provides for flexibly grouping students in class and during enrichment time. Summative assessments, including performance-based tasks, advanced problem-solving challenges, and standardized assessments, help evaluate mastery and inform long-term instructional planning. These assessments guide decisions about curriculum pacing, compacting, and opportunities for independent study or project-based learning. These allow for flexible entry points at the beginning of a topic of study. All grouping is flexible and dynamic, responding to students' needs.	
* Practice F Collaborates with a variety of personnel, based on student needs, to implement differentiated curriculum and instruction.	Classroom teachers receive specialized training to support gifted students in mixed-ability classrooms. Through collaboration with grade-level peers, Instructional Coaches, the AIG Coordinator, and specialists in ESL and EC, educators develop differentiated curriculum and instruction that meet the diverse needs of gifted learners. These collaborative efforts involve analyzing student data to assess readiness and determine appropriate entry points within the curriculum. Once data is disaggregated, an instructional pathway is designed and implemented to ensure targeted learning experiences. The principles of Personalized Learning are deeply embedded within AIG services, offering customized pathways and learning playlists that align with each student's academic strengths while fostering holistic development. This approach ensures that instruction is rigorous and responsive, supporting the growth and well-being of the whole child.
* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard We will renew professional development devoted to Personalized Learning to ensure that our new teachers are onboarded and primed to implement the practice.	
Planned Sources of Evidence	
* AIG PD Spreadsheet	
* Minutes from PLCs and BLTs	
* Formative Usage Documentation	

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

Catawba County Schools (180) 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 AIG Coordinator is state-licensed in Gifted Education. She guides, plans, develops, implements, revises, and monitors the local AIG program and plan.

The following list details some of the tasks that the role encompasses:

- Coordinates implementation and evaluation of the AIG plan
- Ensures the implementation of K-3 Nurturing services
- Assists middle schools with the identification of students eligible for advanced math and language arts classes
- Facilitates the transition of AIG students from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school
- Consults with teachers/administrators regarding the AIG Plan, AIG Leadership team responsibilities, identification, and planning for students
- Develops/oversees or conducts enrichment opportunities for AIG students, parent sessions, and professional development opportunities for district staff
- Disaggregates data concerning AIG students
- Disseminates information regarding the AIG Plan and current research to all constituent groups
- Ensures that school-based scheduling and grouping are congruent with the AIG Plan and best practices in gifted education
- Meets with parents to resolve disagreements
- Monitors AIG student course selection (Grades 7-12)
- Observes students and assists with identification, placement, and service delivery issues
- Coordinates the Governor's School Program
- Coordinates the AIG Advisory Board
- Reviews AIG folders and initial placement of students
- Serves on the Administrative Placement Committee AIG Advisory Board and is a de facto member of all school-based AIG Leadership Teams

▪ Serves as testing coordinator for Advanced Placement exams ▪ Compiles and disaggregates data for AP classes/Honors classes ▪ Serves as LEA liaison with High School Scholars Academy (HSSA) at Lenoir-Rhyne University ▪ Implements CDM according to state guidelines ▪ Compiles data for Advanced Math legislation	* 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. While CCS does not employ specialists devoted solely to gifted education, teachers who provide services to AIG students focus on meeting the needs of advanced learners in various ways. ▪ They coach other teachers in their school when needed. ▪ Instructional Coaches are available to support teachers as the needs of gifted students are addressed. ▪ AIG Leadership Teams help problem-solve student needs. ▪ Administrators ensure that guidance counselors work with teachers on SEL of gifted students. ▪ Each school has an AIG Leadership Team chairperson and AIG teachers in grades 4-8. All of these teachers are required to participate in the local Professional Achievement Certification program. ▪ A section of this professional development focuses specifically on AIG students' academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs.
* 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. Anyone teaching AIG students or Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) courses must obtain the local Professional Achievement Certification (PAC) in gifted education, have state licensure, or pursue either credential. CCS local PAC consists of a sixty-hour online course provided through NWRESA. AP teachers must attend a week-long summer institute sponsored by the College Board. After the initial one-week professional development, they must stay updated yearly. Additional professional development is required based on non-negotiable elements in student Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs). This includes, but is not limited to:	

▪ Shared Inquiry or Socratic Seminar ▪ Compacting ▪ Concept-Based Units Canvas provides professional development as needed. Targeted professional development is offered based on stakeholder groups: ▪ Principals have AIG primers and regular updates ▪ Media Coordinators are invited to all AIG PAC courses ▪ Counselors are provided specific PD through the Second Steps curriculum ▪ Instructional Coaches participate in Gifted Education PD	* 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. Principals submit a list of classrooms where AIG students are served each year. This list is compared to the licensure/PAC information. If there is a disconnect between the two, then affected teachers are given priority enrollment into AIG courses. The AIG Coordinator maintains documentation that details the licensure and PAC status of any teacher who serves AIG students. Regular updates to this document are provided to administrators to supply needed information when making student assignment choices. During yearly administrative retreats, principals are reminded that the CCS BOE requires that all AIG teachers have licensure, achieve PAC status, or pursue either.
* Practice E Develops strategies for the recruitment and retention of AIG-licensed professionals, including those of diverse backgrounds. As part of the orientation, individuals attending recruitment events are briefed on the district's specific needs for grades and subject areas requiring staffing. Principals are encouraged to maintain consistency by avoiding frequent reassigning AIG teachers to different grade levels and recognizing the time and effort needed to deliver an appropriately challenging curriculum for gifted students. The district supports teachers' success on the Praxis exam through Local Professional Achievement Certificate (PAC) courses and AIG courses offered by RESA, which are accepted across the region.	

The AIG budget includes a reimbursement line item for teachers who pass the Praxis, and teachers receive a \$250 stipend upon completing the Local PAC course. Additionally, teachers are celebrated for these achievements. The Board of Education recognizes them upon earning the local PAC or passing the Praxis, with further acknowledgment featured in the monthly C&I newsletter shared with all CCS employees. CCS employees participate in ongoing professional development to ensure culturally responsive practices are integrated into the school system's culture, fostering a supportive environment for teachers from diverse backgrounds.	* Practice F Provides focused professional learning opportunities to realize equity and excellence in gifted education including changing mindsets, policies, and practices. Professional learning opportunities to support shifting mindsets, policies, and practices to achieve equity and excellence in gifted education will focus on fostering inclusivity, cultural responsiveness, and using evidence-based strategies. These opportunities include: Equity in Gifted Education Workshops ▪ Objective: Address biases in gifted identification and programming to ensure equitable access for underrepresented student populations. ▪ Focus Areas: • Understanding the impact of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors on student identification. • Exploring data-driven strategies to identify and nurture giftedness in underserved populations. • Highlighting the importance of creating culturally responsive environments to support diverse learners. Culturally Responsive Teaching Training ▪ Objective: Equip educators with strategies to recognize and nurture potential in all students by incorporating culturally responsive practices. ▪ Focus Areas: • Building cultural competence and addressing implicit biases. • Integrating diverse perspectives into curriculum and instruction. • Using students' cultural and experiential backgrounds as assets in learning. Universal Screening and Alternative Identification Methods (We have always used a Universal Screener, but teachers must understand what one is and why it is crucial to have it in place.) ▪ Objective: Ensure all students have an equitable opportunity for identification in gifted programs.
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▪ Focus Areas: • Training on universal screening processes and the use of nontraditional assessments. • Implementing teacher referral systems supported by observational checklists for identifying traits of giftedness in diverse populations. • Analyzing and addressing gaps in gifted identification data. Growth Mindset and Learner Potential Development ▪ Objective: Promote a growth mindset among educators and students to encourage effort-based success and reduce the perception of fixed intelligence. ▪ Focus Areas: • Training on Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset principles. • Implementing strategies that emphasize effort, persistence, and learning through challenges. • Developing programs to encourage risk-taking and resilience among students. These professional learning opportunities will equip educators with the knowledge, tools, and mindset necessary to create an inclusive, equitable gifted education program that identifies and supports the potential 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. All professional development in the district is congruent with the district's strategic plan. The AIG Coordinator is a member of the team that creates the long-term professional development plan for the school system. As the team assesses the needs of the district, how AIG students are served is taken into account, ensuring that teachers are given the necessary knowledge and skills to provide curriculum and instruction appropriate for gifted learners. The AIG Coordinator serves on the Strategic Planning Committee. For major initiatives, the Coordinator has a seat at the table to advocate for advanced learners. For example, STEM initiatives, Personalized Learning implementation, MTSS committee, and NCStar Building Leadership Team coach at two schools are part of the Coordinator's roles. Individuals providing professional development are expected to differentiate their content to focus on the needs of gifted learners, pushing participants to focus on ways to implement the strategies for gifted students. Our instructors will include ways for teachers to utilize the techniques taught to their advanced learners in their presentations. Professional Development, AIG 101, is provided to all K-3 teachers. The opportunity to attend the same session is offered to all teachers K-12. The content and instructional design of the local AIG Professional Achievement Certification is consistently being re-tooled to meet changing research and instructional advancements in Gifted Education.
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Technology tools are integrated throughout and adjusted to meet the needs of teachers so they can utilize the latest technology to differentiate efficiently and address student needs.

* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard

Provide specific coaching to AIG Leadership Team chairs so as to build capacity in leadership for the AIG program in CCS.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*
AIG PD Spreadsheet

* Stakeholder chart from AIG Plan

* Timeline for coaching with agendas specifying the necessary tasks.

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

Standard 5: Partnerships	
Catawba County Schools (180) 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.	The AIG Department provides district-level parent/guardian nights focusing on gifted learners' academic/intellectual and social/emotional needs. The AIG Department, with the assistance of local partnerships, hosts several community events such as Battle of the Books, Sumo Fest, Science Olympiad, Little Read, Math Olympiad, Catawba Counts, and summer STEM camps. Parent/guardian feedback is requested after parent/guardian nights to solicit parent/guardian interests for upcoming meetings. Feedback is also requested at the end of any of the enrichment competitions to solicit parent/guardian requests for other academic enrichment topics.
* 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.	Catawba County Schools has an exemplary relationship with Catawba Valley Community College. This relationship is clarified through the Career and College Promise (CCP) initiative. The elements of the CCP include the Cooperative Innovative High School Program (Challenger Early College), High School College Transfer Pathways, and the Career Technical Education (CTE) Pathways. We have partnered with Temprano Techvestors to provide support for summer STEM camps
* 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.	

The AIG Advisory Board comprises a diverse population, including teachers in various stages of their professional careers, administrators, parents/guardians, students, community members, and district office support. Each feeder area within the district is represented. The board constituency is reflective of the multiple ethnicities within our schools. The Advisory Board meets at least twice yearly. In the fall of non-plan years, the Advisory Board reviews AIG student performance data, budget expenditures, and results from stakeholder surveys. During the second semester, the Advisory Board makes programming recommendations for a tentative budget and suggestions for improvement to the program.	
* 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. The local AIG Plan, program services, policies relating to advanced learning and gifted education, and ways to access opportunities available to AIG students are posted and shared through many channels. This includes: ▪ School-based parent/guardian nights ▪ Virtual parent/guardian nights ▪ CCS AIG district web page ▪ Parent Square (School-Home Communication Platform email and phone) All of the information is available in the native languages of our constituents. Appropriate accommodations are made for the hearing or visually impaired.	
* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard Go out into school communities when schools have planned events that are designed for parent/student/community involvement and promote information about how school/community/parents work together to provide appropriate and challenging opportunities for gifted students. Events such as the Hmong Festival, popsicle nights at local parks, and events sponsored by Los Juntos are a few examples of pathways into the school/parent/community.	

Planned Sources of Evidence

* Agendas from school-parent advisory nights.	
* CCS AIG Website	
* Parent Square Communications	

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

Standard 6: Program Accountability	
Catawba County Schools (180) 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.
	An Advisory Board of stakeholders from all the feeder districts, different school levels, teachers, parents, students, administrators, and community members is formed.
	The Advisory Board convenes and, after studying the AIG Standards and Practices, creates a survey to elicit feedback from all constituents.
	The survey data is used in the self-assessment process, as is the feedback from NCDPI from the previous AIG plan.
	Once the self-assessment is complete and areas of need are identified from high priority to medium priority to low priority, Standards Teams are created.
	Standards Teams are individuals from the Advisory Board who work together on a specific standard.
	Once they meet and take a deep dive into the standards, they draft their response.
	When the Standards Teams regroup, all of the responses are examined by the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board looks for consistency and accuracy and provides feedback to each Standards Team.
	Standards Teams will reconvene and rework the response using their feedback if needed.
	Once everything is drafted, reviewed, and edited, the plan is submitted through the NCCCIP portal.
	The CCS BOE members will receive a copy of the first reading in March.
	In April, the BOE will provide feedback and suggestions for changes. Once those are met, the BOE engages in the second reading of the Plan.
	Once they have completed the second reading, if there are no more suggestions, the BOE approves the plan, signs the appropriate documents, and is submitted to DPI through the NCCCIP portal.
	Data used to review and revise the local AIG program and plan include AIG parent and teacher surveys, student focus group interviews, Strategic Plan surveys, and growth and proficiency data from the Testing and Accountability Department.
* 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. The AIG Advisory Board regularly reviews the program to ensure it aligns with the requirements and intent of Article 9B. This includes evaluating data on service options, student growth, the effectiveness of services, identification of underserved populations, and how gifted education integrates into the overall school system. To support underserved populations, the Director of EL collaborates with the AIG Coordinator to train EL teachers on recognizing and addressing the unique characteristics of gifted students within their communities. The AIG and EC Departments work together to support twice-exceptional (2e) students, ensuring that school psychologists, counselors, and AIG Team Leaders understand and can meet their needs. They also collaborate closely to identify these students accurately. The Directors of Elementary, Middle, and High School Education oversee the implementation of gifted services across grade levels, ensuring all AIG students receive appropriate support. At the school level, Principals and Assistant Principals structure schedules to allow high-ability learners to engage with peers of similar intellect, particularly in reading and math, to maximize their academic growth. The Human Resources Department maintains records of teachers who hold local PAC or state licensure in gifted education, ensuring that qualified educators are available to support gifted learners. To maintain financial accountability, the Finance Department regularly audits the AIG budget to ensure that all expenditures align with the program's goals and benefit gifted students effectively. This collaborative approach ensures that AIG students receive high-quality, equitable services throughout the district.	* 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. Budgeting priorities are created in the spring of the prior school year in collaboration with the Curriculum and Instruction Department. Using the AIG and Strategic Plan for Catawba County Schools, a zero-balance budget is made. Any expenditure from AIG funds can be traced directly to the goals and objectives of the AIG Plan. The AIG administrative assistant, AIG Coordinator, and Chief Financial Officer review the budget monthly. * 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. Most local, state, and federal assessments, including those involving AIG students, can be analyzed by specific subgroups. This data is shared with school administrators to guide instructional decisions. In Catawba County Schools, extensive professional development is provided to help teachers and administrators interpret and analyze this data effectively. These insights drive intentional adjustments in instructional practices to better meet student needs. EVAAS data tracks AIG student growth at the teacher, school, and district levels. By identifying educators who excel in advancing gifted learners, the district ensures that their expertise is shared with other teachers who may benefit from additional support in differentiating instruction. This data also helps administrators determine which teachers are best suited to support AIG students.
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The AIG Department collaborates closely with EL, Testing and Accountability, CTE, and Student Services to maintain open communication and ensure program alignment. The CTE Department provides valuable data on internships and apprenticeships, including information on underserved populations. The CTE Special Populations Coordinator and AIG Coordinator work together to analyze state post-assessments and WorkKeys results for students completing CTE programs. Additionally, all students enrolled in AP courses take the AP exam. The district consistently maintains AP success rates above state and national averages, demonstrating the effectiveness of its advanced learning programs.	* 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. Twice a year, demographic data for AIG students is analyzed and compared to the overall student population to assess proportional representation. Data is examined at the school and feeder-area levels to identify trends in gifted identification and address any underrepresentation. Schools closely monitor AIG student performance using benchmark and summative assessment data, which is tracked over time. Each year, AIG Leadership Teams, in collaboration with the AIG Coordinator, review this data to guide referrals and ensure appropriate service delivery—particularly for underrepresented populations. To support equitable identification, the CogAT is used as a universal screener, helping to identify gifted students from underrepresented groups, including EL students who may excel in nonverbal reasoning. When combined with EOG achievement data, this screening helps pinpoint students whose abilities may not yet be reflected in their academic performance, highlighting potential underachievement or learning differences. In high school, counselors play a key role in supporting advanced learners, guiding them during course registration to ensure they select appropriately challenging classes. If students struggle academically, counselors hold one-on-one check-ins to identify barriers to success and provide intervention strategies. Beyond academics, counselors also support students' social, emotional, and physical well-being, working closely with families to ensure all needs are met and that students thrive in and out of the classroom.	* 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. Since implementing Article 9B, our district has consistently offered courses leading to state licensure and a local Professional Achievement Certification (PAC) in Gifted Education. The AIG Department maintains a comprehensive record of these courses, tracking which teachers have completed them and their corresponding level of certification or licensure. This information is shared with principals, finance, and human resources to support strategic decision-making. Principals use the data to place teachers with specialized training in classrooms where they can best serve gifted students. It also helps them build a pool of prepared educators to work with advanced learners across different grade levels. For the finance department, tracking teacher credentials ensures that funds are allocated efficiently to support gifted education initiatives. Human resources uses this data for recruitment, hiring, and teacher placement, ensuring that highly qualified educators are positioned where they can have the most significant impact on gifted learners.
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* 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.	Students are surveyed at the end of each AP class using questions similar to those in the self-assessments. After any parent nights, feedback is solicited using surveys and polls as well as face-to-face discussions regarding the effectiveness of the AIG program. The feedback is used to improve the AIG Program.
* Practice H Shares local AIG program evaluation data with school and district personnel, students, parents/guardians, families, and other community stakeholders. All AIG program information, including budget expenditures, Advisory Board constituency, service delivery options, and AIG student growth, is shared on the district website in multiple languages. It is made available during DEPs and Parent Nights. Once the Advisory Board receives feedback from DPI, the evaluation is shared with principals, assistant principals, and teachers and is made available to parents and community members. It is shared on the web and in all our constituents' languages.	* 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. The CCS AIG plan includes many documents designed to protect the rights of all AIG students through policies, procedures, and practices. Parents' and students' rights are delineated during initial placement and DEP conferences in subsequent years. Documents that evidence Parent's/Student's rights include Permission to Evaluate, Permission to Place in the AIG Program, Notice of Placement, Federal Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). Procedure to Resolve Disagreements According to Chapter 115C, Article 9B of the General Statutes of North Carolina, a parent or guardian who disagrees with a school's AIG Leadership Team's decision concerning the identification of a student for differentiated services in the school's AIG Program or appropriate services for the student has the right to appeal that decision. Step One Conference with the teacher/principal. If the matter is unresolved at this level, the parent will proceed to Step Two. Step Two

The parent may request a conference with the AIG Coordinator and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and

Instruction. The AIG Coordinator/Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction reviews the concerns with the

parents. The AIG Coordinator/Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction grants the conference within ten working days of the request and responds in writing within ten working days of the meeting.

Step Three

The parent may appeal the AIG Coordinator/Assistant Superintendent's decision to the Superintendent or designee within five days of receiving the response.

The Superintendent or designee reviews the concern within ten days of receipt of the appeal.

The Superintendent responds to the parent and principal within ten working days concerning the review outcome.

Step Four

According to **General Statute 115.C-45:**

All decisions made by school personnel may be appealed to the Board of Education.

115C-150.8 Review of Disagreement

If the procedure developed under G.S. 115C-150 fails to resolve a disagreement, the parent or guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

The scope of review shall be limited to (i) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted student or (ii) whether the local plan developed under G.S.115C-150.7 has been implemented appropriately concerning the child.

Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the administrative law judge's decision becomes final, is binding on the parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B. Attorney's fees are not available to parents if they prevail in a due process matter. The District appeals process is shared with parents during DEP meetings and on school and district websites.

A "Permission to Place" document is required before any student is entered into Infinite Campus

Rights are translated and available in various formats and in the student's native language(s).

Reassessment At the end of each academic year, AIG Leadership Teams conduct another student search to seek out advanced learners using available test data, anecdotal records, and recommendations.

Transfers from LEAs within NC are automatically accepted. Students from other states are evaluated individually through an examination of permanent folders, other assessment information from their prior school, and teacher observation.

 [Click here to remove the table and use only the narrative field.](#)

* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard Use focus groups to solicit feedback twice a year even on non-plan years.		
Planned Sources of Evidence		
*	Identification Pathways for Parents	
	Parent's Rights Document	
	BOE Agendas	
Type		
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources		Documents Document Template Document/Link
N/A		

Catawba County Schools (180) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:

04/28/2025 

AIG Related Documents

Catawba County Schools (180) 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	 Catawba County School BOE 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	