Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Columbus County Schools (240) 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)

Columbus County Schools recognizes that some students have the potential, or are capable of possessing, exceptional learning abilities and/or outstanding talent. Because these students are considered gifted, they demand experiences apart from but connected to the regular classroom. It is our responsibility to provide diverse, suitable, ongoing learning experiences and learning environments that integrate the academic, psychological and social needs of students. (Eckert and Purcell, pp. 18 and 19) We believe that the AIG program should be designed to challenge and stimulate the AIG student through a multi-dimensional teaching approach involving special curricula, enrichment opportunities, and the acceleration of course content. The AIG program at all levels should provide experiences that distinguish the regular non-gifted program from gifted services. Columbus County Schools further recognizes that outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups across all economic circumstances, and in all areas of human enterprise. Gagne, in his "Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent," offers the idea that natural abilities, like excelling in academic fields, are gifts, which must be developed to become talents.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* $ 314,548.00	* $ 0.00	* $ 12,193.00	* $ 0.00

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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 PROCESS

A universal screening will occur annually for every second-grade student in the spring of their second grade year. Informal screening is available K-12. This screening procedure ensures equal opportunities/access for all students, including minority students, multilingual students, students with disabilities, and students who are economically disadvantaged. Information collected at screening should lead to either automatic placement, further assessment, or to a decision that the student does not require differentiated services.

K-2 SCREENING SHOULD BE CONDUCTED AS FOLLOWS:

- Columbus County Schools recognizes K-2 students who exhibit AIG potential through talent spotting and behavioral observations. Each student receives differentiated instruction. The Pfeiffer and Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scale® can be used to document a pattern of gifted behavior. Teachers will utilize U-Stars Plus TOPS observational tool to recognize outstanding potential in children. CCS will provide programming services which may include a compacted curriculum, accelerated curriculum, and grade level acceleration as needed. K-2 student's talents are developed by teachers and data is utilized in an effort to document behaviors that reflect advanced learning, motivational characteristics, creativity, leadership, and adaptability. K-2 students served in the talent development program will be monitored from year to year and receive exposure to STEM and advanced materials. The watch list will be given to 3rd grade AIG specialists for monitoring and consideration.
- AIG Specialists and primary teachers use a variety of strategies to differentiate and meet the needs of students performing above grade level in literacy and/or math task assessments. Talent development groups and small groups are utilized.
- If a transfer student has been served in a talent development program previously, that student will immediately be placed in CCS Talent Development Program.
- Columbus County Schools will conduct a general screening of aptitude of all second grade students in the spring of their second grade year. Using district local norms students scoring 80% or higher on the assessment will be placed in the student screening pool. Using local norms casts a wider net for screening, follow up and tracking of students.
- The Needs Determination Team will accept teacher, parent, and community nominations/referrals. The Needs Determination Team will hold the right to test based on a review of evidence. Placement data will be valid for two calendar years. No evaluations will be repeated on the same student during this two year period unless deemed necessary by the AIG Coordinator.

3-8 SCREENING SHOULD BE CONDUCTED AS FOLLOWS:

- Grades 3-8 are given the NC Grade 3 BOG/End-of-Grade Assessment in reading and mathematics. Students scoring 92% or above or a level 5 on the 3rd grade BOG, or 92% or above or a level 5 on the EOG for two out of the most recent three years will be placed in the Student Screening Pool.

Underrepresented populations with academically gifted potential, 75% or greater on screeners, will be individually tracked by the AIG Specialist.

- If a transfer student has been identified as AIG in another school, that student will be placed automatically.
- The Needs Determination Team will accept teacher, parent, community, peer, and self-nominations/referrals. The Needs Determination Team will hold the right to test based on a review of evidence. Placement data will be valid for two calendar years. No evaluations will be repeated on the same student during this two year period unless deemed necessary by the AIG Coordinator.

9-12 SCREENING SHOULD BE CONDUCTED AS FOLLOWS:

- Students scoring 92% or higher or level 5 on standardized tests such as the End-of-Course will be placed in the Student Screening Pool.
- If a transfer student has been identified as AIG in another school system, that student will be placed accordingly.
- Needs Determination Team will accept teacher, parent, community, peer, and self-nominations/referrals. The Needs Determination Team will hold the right to test based on a review of evidence. Placement data will be valid for two calendar years. No evaluations will be repeated on the same student during this two-year period unless deemed necessary by the AIG Coordinator.

Students must meet screening criteria to be considered for identification.

* **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.

In the K-2 setting, CCS develops potential in students who exhibit gifted behaviors. Each student receives personalized instruction. Services may include a compacted curriculum, accelerated curriculum, and/or grade level acceleration, as needed. Students are pulled out of the classroom once weekly for enrichment and critical thinking learning tasks.

Primary students may be identified as academically and intellectually gifted in grades K-2 if there is a body of evidence that indicates a need. The primary student should demonstrate an extreme need for differentiation before being considered for identification.

Primary students must meet the minimum requirements in all the following to be identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted:

- Demonstrated extreme need for differentiation as documented through the PACE Talent Development Program and regular classroom performance.
- 96% or above on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test administered by a licensed psychologist
- 98% or above in achievement for reading and math on a nationally normed test administered by a licensed psychologist
- Work samples and state assessments demonstrating mastery in reading and math
- Teacher and AIG Review Team recommendation

In grades 3-12, CCS uses six criteria to assess and develop a comprehensive profile for each student being evaluated. Multiple standardized measures, both traditional and nontraditional, that are based on current theory and research are used in the identification process.CCS uses both verbal and nonverbal assessments when measuring aptitude. These tests are the Cognitive Abilities Test®. The CogAT is made up of three sections: the Verbal Battery, the

Quantitative Battery, and the Nonverbal Battery. These batteries are designed to assess specific reasoning skills in each area that correlate strongly to academic success. It measures cognitive development, the ability to learn new tasks, and problem-solving abilities. Because much of its content is nonverbal, the CogAT is also very useful for testing students who are not native English speakers. The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test-Second Edition®(NNAT3) can be used for underrepresented populations. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills® (or the ITED at the high school level) and/or the Woodcock-Johnson IV® (WJ IV) are administered as alternate achievement tests.

In grades 3-12, Columbus County Schools AIG Program will use the following when identifying AIG students. Students must meet at least 4 out of 6 criteria. (One of which must be aptitude or achievement)

1. 90% or above on standardized aptitude test
2. 92% or above or level 5 on the 3rd grade BOG, or 92% or above or level 5 on the EOG for two out of the most recent three years
3. 92% or above on classroom performance
4. A score of 92% or above on the Pfeiffer & Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scales® (grades 3-8); Score of 109 -120 on the Renzulli-Hartman Gifted Behavior Scale (grades 9-12)
5. Score of 92% or above on the Pfeiffer & Jarosewich Motivation Scales® (grades 3-8); Score of 24-27 on Renzulli-Hartman Motivation scale (grades 9-12)
6. Documented interest survey(Students must meet at least 4 of 6 criteria, one of which must be aptitude or achievement)

Automatic qualifiers include:

- 98% or above in achievement (Student will be identified AG in Reading and/or Math.)
- 98% or above in aptitude (Student will be identified IG.)
- 98% or above in both aptitude and achievement (Student will be identified AI)

Columbus County Schools AIG Program may use the following when identifying AIG students:

- Pfeiffer and Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scales® (Includes motivation component) (grades 3-8) / Renzulli-Hartman Rating Scale (Includes motivation component) (grades 9-12)
- aptitude scores
- achievement scores (EOC, EOG, BOG)
- classroom performance
- Student Interest Inventory (Normed)
- motivation scale

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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.

Columbus County Schools AIG Program uses a variety of screening measures to assist with identifying underrepresented populations in the district. These populations include students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, multilingual learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional. These measures include the Cognitive Abilities Test® (CogAT), the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test® (NNAT3), the Pfeiffer and Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scales® (grades 3-8) or the Renzulli-Hartman Rating Scale® (grades 9-12), a motivation scale, and observations of teachers and other stakeholders. A universal screening of all second graders across the district is conducted annually (spring of second grade year) to ensure the consideration of all students. The district uses the online version of the CogAT aptitude screener to ensure equity for all students. A combination of assessment subtests, partial composite scores, and composite scores are used to give more opportunities for students to demonstrate their talents and strengths. AIG Specialists will share the Ability Profile available after testing with regular classroom teachers. The Ability Profile provides instructional suggestions linked to each student's areas of greatest cognitive strength.This allows for instructional opportunities and tailored instruction.The district currently uses a six criteria identification process which includes a verbal and a nonverbal assessment for aptitude as well as teacher input. The Needs Determination Team will conduct an intentional review of testing data to ensure consideration of underrepresented populations. The team will make a decision on placement.

Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
Female	---	<5%	<5%	---	---	---	11.03%
Male	---	<5%	6.56%	---	8.62%	---	12.00%
Total	---	<5%	5.67%	9.28%	6.99%	---	11.52%

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

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

AIG Specialists provide training for all certified staff using AIG procedural professional development to ensure consistent implementation across the LEA. Across the district, criteria are the same. Universal screening for AIG takes place in the spring of second grade with the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Referrals are accepted from stakeholders and processed according to AIG procedures. The AIG Specialists compile a student pool at each school that includes all available data for the consideration of the AIG Review Team. Student pool and nomination records are kept for reference throughout the school year. Student identification and placement records are compiled along with documentation of decisions made by the AIG Review Team. Parent rights and due process are detailed in Standard 6: Practice J. Random periodic AIG folder and Powerschool audits are conducted by the AIG Coordinator to monitor

screening, referral and identification procedural documentation and compliance. Monthly AIG department Google meet PLCs are held with the AIG Director, AIG Coordinator and all AIG Specialists to ensure that processes are consistent within the LEA.

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

Columbus County Schools maintains an online website that may be accessed by school personnel, parents, and the community-at-large. Comprehensive information about all processes and procedures are contained within the AIG website along with various AIG resources. AIG brochures are available throughout the schools and district office. The AIG Specialists provide professional development to school personnel that overviews the entire screening, referral, and identification process. Special attention is given to communicating with parents during the process. Teachers discuss ideas/concerns during weekly PLCs. Stakeholders address ideas/concerns during the annual AIG Showcase, DEP conferences, parent meetings, school improvement meetings, etc. Meetings of the AIG Advisory Committee (made up of various stakeholders including parents, teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, community members) are held to discuss any issues/ideas that may need to be addressed.

* **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.

Evidences gathered and analyzed to support an AIG identification decision may include:

- Identification Evidence tab in Powerschool (beginning 2021-2022 with newly identified students)
- CogAT Student Profile Narrative (4 copies - one placed in Cumulative folder, one placed in AIG folder, one provided to the teacher(s), one provided to the parent)
- BOG/EOG/EOC score report
- Pfeiffer and Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scales® (grades 3-8) or Renzulli-Hartman Rating Scale (grades 9-12)
- Classroom performance (grade print out from Powerschool)
- Student Interest Inventory (Normed)
- The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test-Second Edition®(NNAT3)
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills® (or the ITED at the high school level)
- Woodcock-Johnson IV® (WJ IV)

Initial placement conferences are held with parents. All information used to identify students for AIG placement is reviewed with the parents and classroom teachers at the initial meeting. Service matching for AIG students is reviewed at the beginning of each school year. New DEPs/IDEPs are then created for students. During scheduled conferences, AIG Specialists review the annual DEPs with parents to ensure service matching options are appropriate. AIG specialists in each school are responsible for conducting initial placement and annual review parent meetings. Parents will receive a copy of their child's

DEP/IDEP annually. They are also responsible for all AIG folders to ensure proper documentation of meetings, permissions, due process, and other actions. AIG Specialists monitor AIG folders to ensure that processes have been followed and properly documented, at least twice annually for the fall and spring headcount. Upon a student's graduation, AIG folders will be stored at each high school for one school 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.

The LEA collaborates with the Needs Determination Team and parents to develop an initial DEP (Differentiated Education Plan) or an IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) for identified AIG students. Each student's individualized instructional needs are considered when developing the DEP/IDEP. These documents are updated annually to ensure that effective programs and services are continued. A new DEP or IDEP is developed at the beginning of each school year. This document is then reviewed with parents during scheduled conferences and approved or amended based on teacher/parent/student input. Any concerns or adjustments that need to be made are discussed and resolved during this process. This process ensures that the continuum of services is commensurate to the needs of the students. Columbus County Schools will work toward utilizing the Program Services Tab in the statewide Powerschool system to enter DEP/IDEP information.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

We are dedicated to promoting both equity and excellence to increase access and opportunity for all students. By realizing equity and excellence in gifted education, student racial, ethnic, economic, or other demographic factors will not reduce their likelihood of AIG identification. We will continue to monitor our screening and referral processes to ensure our program is meeting the needs of our stakeholders.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Student Identification Placement Record
*	Differentiated Education Plan/Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (DEP/IDEP)
*	Invitiation to Conference Letters
*	Achievement, aptitude and performance scores

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link

AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A

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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.

Columbus County Schools 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.These services are aligned to students' advanced learning needs and AIG identification.

The Columbus County Schools AIG Program identifies students as either:

AG - Academically Gifted in Reading and Math

AR - Academically Gifted in Reading only

AM - Academically Gifted in Math only

IG - Intellectually Gifted

AI- Academically and Intellectually Gifted

In K-2, service delivery options are offered based on student interest and AI identification. Some of these service delivery options may include extension, acceleration and enrichment. These services are implemented through heterogeneous grouping, flexible grouping within the classrooms and independent enrichment opportunities provided by the classroom teacher. Subject acceleration, cross-age grouping, and grade acceleration are also options that may be accessed based on student needs. All students exhibiting gifted potential are provided advanced learning opportunities during the daily classroom enrichment block. AIG Specialists also provide STEM, critical thinking and enrichment opportunity direct services for these students weekly in small cooperative learning groups.

In grades 3-5, AIG students (identified AG, AR, AM, IG, AI) are appropriately clustered for instruction with other academically capable students. Classroom teachers serve students by differentiating for each cluster group. To support advanced learning opportunities provided by the classroom teacher, the AIG Specialist may serve AIG students by going into the classroom to work with the classroom teacher on differentiation/planning of instructional units. As defined in SB 500, any students scoring a level 5 on EOG will be offered advanced math learning opportunities.

AIG students will receive direct services a minimum of 1 hour per week by the licensed AIG Specialist. Direct services provide AIG identified students with an opportunity to participate in AIG Enrichment units of study, which extend the NC Standard Course of Study and meet CCS gifted education curriculum standards (see Standard 3, Practice d).

AI and IG students will be served through direct services with the AIG specialist according to identified strengths and interests as outlined in their DEP or IDEP. This can be done on an individual basis or with other identified students.

In grades 6-8, AIG identified students are cluster grouped based on area of identification (AG, AR, AM, IG, AI). Classroom teachers serve students by differentiating for each cluster group. These services are implemented through heterogeneous grouping, flexible grouping within the classrooms, subject acceleration, cross-age grouping, grade acceleration and independent enrichment opportunities provided by the classroom teacher. As defined in SB 500, any students scoring a level 5 on EOG/EOC will be offered advanced math learning opportunities (for example, Math 1 placement).

AIG students will receive direct services a minimum of 1 hour per week by the licensed AIG Specialist. Direct services provide all AIG identified students (AG, AR, AM, IG, AI) with an opportunity to participate in AIG enrichment units of study, which extend the NC Standard Course of Study and meet CCS gifted education curriculum standards (see Standard 3, Practice d). Students participate in direct service with the AIG teacher in the areas of reading, math, critical and creative thinking, writing and digital competencies and STEM activities. The AIG Specialist serves as an expert in the field, infusing rigorous differentiated curriculum and implementing best practices in gifted education.

In grades 9-12, certified AIG Specialists partner with high school counselors to provide additional academic and social-emotional support to students. AIG Specialists monitor the placement of AIG students in advanced classes and provide resources through the AIG High School Google Classroom. Some of these resources include scholarship information, tutorials on how to apply for FASFA, tips for applying for college and SAT, ACT and PSAT information. AIG Specialists also partner with the high school counselors to guide the gifted students in academic advising and college or career preparation. Honors courses, English and Math courses with AIG clustering, Advanced Placement Courses, Online courses, NC Virtual Public School courses, College and Career Promise are also available at this level. As defined in SB 500, any students scoring a level 5 on EOC will be offered advanced math courses. Heterogeneous and flexible grouping within the classrooms will be utilized as well as subject acceleration, cross-age grouping, and grade acceleration.

- Extra-curricular opportunities for gifted learners are offered such as Battle of the Books, Beta Club, National Honor Society, Future Farmers of America (FFA), service projects, field trips, etc.
- Credit for Demonstrated Mastery is offered in grades 6-12 for all content areas. The CDM process is available to students in grades 9-12 and students in grades 6-8 taking high school courses.
- Grade acceleration will be determined by the School Review Team and other stakeholders based on all evidence provided.

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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.

Columbus County Schools delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the social and emotional needs of AIG students, across all grade levels and learning environments through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs by:

- Participating in professional development opportunities that are related to the social and emotional needs of AIG students (for example, NC Association for the Gifted and Talented Conference sessions, NC DPI Social and Emotional Booster Shot Series, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Trauma Training, SEL Morning Meeting).
- Preparing and utilizing specific lesson plans and methods of instruction directed to address the unique needs of AIG students (bibliotherapy, etc.) are used by classroom teachers, AIG Specialists and school counselors with students.
- Gathering feedback with school counselors, students, teachers and parents in order to accurately identify and address the needs of the AIG students.

- Utilizing AIG Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to share and create resources that support the social/emotional development of AIG students. These resources are available for classroom teachers and all professionals working with AIG students.
- Conferencing with members of the school MTSS team, classroom teachers, parents and school counselors to develop an intervention plan to meet the social and emotional needs of AIG students.
- Providing resources to support the social and emotional needs of AIG students during annual DEP/IDEP conferences with parents/families.

Program options/services available for CCS K-12 AIG students include:

Counseling Services

- Individual counseling: Providing one-on-one sessions with a trained school counselor to help students explore their feelings, manage stress, and develop coping strategies.
- Group counseling: School counselors may facilitate peer support groups where gifted learners can connect with others who share similar experiences and challenges.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs

- These programs are designed to teach skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and responsible decision-making. SEL programs can be integrated into the school curriculum to help gifted students manage their emotions effectively. The Second Step Program is one example of a SEL program used in Columbus County Schools. ALL students across the district participate in SEL morning meetings.

Peer Mentoring

- Paring gifted learners with older students, teachers or adults who have had similar experiences can help them build social skills, gain guidance, and feel more connected to others.

Support Groups for Gifted Learners

- These groups provide a safe space for gifted students to discuss common social and emotional issues such as perfectionism, feeling out of place, or dealing with heightened sensitivity. These groups are organized by school counselors as needed.

Talent Development and Enrichment Programs

- CCS Talent Development and Enrichment allows gifted students to explore areas of interest with like-minded peers and can help reduce isolation while providing opportunities for social interaction. These opportunities can include academic clubs, summer camps, or extracurricular activities specifically designed for gifted learners. CCS partners with UNCW Marine Quest to offer summer camp opportunities to gifted learners.

Differentiated Instruction and Counseling

- Teachers differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of gifted students not only academically but also socially and emotionally. They are sensitive to the pressures gifted students face and incorporate strategies from emotional well-being into the learning environment. CCS certified staff participated in the NC DPI Social and Emotional Booster Shots for gifted learners and uses that inforation to better serve our AIG students.

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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.

Columbus County Schools understands that the services of the AIG Program are a part of a gifted student's total education. The AIG Program, regular education program, and numerous extracurricular programs work collaboratively to recognize and celebrate the students' special gifts for learning and achievement by providing students with challenges and opportunities for academic growth. These programs converge and blend to teach students to be lifelong learners who are capable of thinking critically, working creatively, and achieving excellence.

Columbus County Schools AIG Program is an active partner in district initiatives, policies and procedures in order to support AIG students' needs. The AIG Program is committed to adhering to the comprehensive goals of our LEA. AIG Specialists serve on school based committees/teams and district-wide committees/teams in order to provide a gifted education perspective (MTSS Team, School Improvement Team, Leadership Team, School Advisory Boards, AIG Advisory Board).

The Columbus County Schools AIG Program integrates and connects the AIG program and services with the district's priorities and resources through policy and practice by:

- Focusing on an alignment to the district's strategic plans and goals.
- Focusing on an alignment to each school's comprehensive improvement plan and goals.
- Following school board policies related to AIG programming and services.
- Working with the Professional Development Coordinator to provide PD to all staff on differentiation, rigor, advanced learning strategies and social-emotional learning to meet the needs of all students.
- Working with and providing information about gifted instruction, strategies, and resources with classroom and resource teachers.
- Collaborating with school counselors in order to meet the social and emotional needs of gifted learners.
- Utilizing funding to employ AIG certified specialists.
- Provide funding for AIG Specialists to attend state and regional meetings and gifted conferences to learn more about policies and practices related to AIG programming and services.

Columbus County Schools has made the social and emotional needs of ALL students a large focus in the LEA 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. The following are district goals to promote the social and emotional well being of all students.

- By 2026, CCS will see an increase in the number of staff and students will become engaged and active learners who are self-aware, caring, respectful, responsible, decisionmakers and academic achievers with a 90% or higher satisfactory rate on the Student Learning Conditions Survey and the NC Teaching Conditions Survey.

Strategies include:

- All school staff will be trained in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), Culture Awareness Training, Mental Health Training and Social-Emotional Learning Training.
- Provide targeted SEL professional development for leadership teams, principals, assistant principals, teachers and support staff. (NCDPI SEL Booster Shot Series will be one of the targeted professional development requirements.)
- Establish MTSS Teams at each school. Provide a framework of operation for SEL implementation and monitoring.
- Review data sources (Panorama Screeners and daily check-ins) CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)

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

Columbus County Schools promotes collaboration and communication within the system. School and district personnel gather data from EOG scores to appropriately group students according to proficiency. AIG Specialists, regular education teachers, assistant principals, and principals participate in professional learning communities (PLCs) to develop expectations for all students and review data. This platform allows AIG Specialists the opportunity to advocate for the personalized needs and interests of their students.

Cluster grouping allows for homogeneous instruction. This research supported grouping allows teachers the opportunity to plan for differentiated instruction and supplemental enrichment activities while challenging other advanced learners in the classroom. These groups are crucial to the social-emotional needs of our students. AIG students are scheduled in classes with like-ability learners. Clustering is mandated for reading and math based on student area(s) of identification. Other subject areas may also be clustered.

Flexible grouping allows administrators flexibility in the design of intervention/remediation/enrichment time. Fluidity in groups and schedules allows for individual movement depending on need/interest. Students who have mastered the content in the general education classroom have the opportunity to participate in curriculum compacting, tiered assignments, etc. These groups change based on students' needs.

* **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.

Columbus County Schools has an AIG link and webpage on the district website. The current AIG plan is available to all stakeholders. AIG Specialists provide a review of the AIG program and local plan each fall to all certified staff.

The AIG processes and procedures along with a document outlining screening, referral and identification is housed in the Columbus County Schools AIG Google Classroom which all teachers and administrators are members of. The CCS AIG Google Classroom contains resources, monthly AIG newsletters, upcoming events, professional development opportunities, and all NCDPI documentation related to AIG.

AIG Specialists provide support with differentiated instruction in the regular classroom. AIG Specialists review annual DEP/IDEPs outlining student services with classroom teachers. Teachers also receive a list of AIG students organized by each student's identification. Monthly district meetings inform administrators and other central office staff about AIG regulations and the current program. The AIG Coordinator also attends the annual Administrative Retreat each summer to provide AIG program updates and reminders. A K-12 AIG Continuum of AIG Services and Advanced Learning Opportunities also available to all stakeholders.

* **Practice F**
Communicates among and between teachers and schools to ensure an effective continuation of K-12 services, especially at key transition points.

CCS communications between teachers and schools to ensure effective continuation of services. Records are transferred as necessary in June of transition years in order for the receiving AIG Specialist to have adequate time to review and make appropriate plans. Transferred records are promptly processed. AIG Specialists establish a vertical line of communication between teachers and schools. This ensures the appropriate continuation of all services. Virtual AIG services will be provided to identified students on an as needed basis. (Global pandemic, illness, homebound, etc.) When AIG students transition from one school to another (ex: from elementary to middle), transition days and nights are held for students and parents. Schools choose one day in the spring to offer tours and provide information about the school. Students and parents are invited to go to the transition school, complete activities and meet personnel. Annual

professional development is provided for teachers during district-wide professional development and weekly PLCs. AIG Specialists work with students continually to prepare students for transition years. Counselors assist students and help with the social/emotional needs of students during these key transition points and support teachers with appropriate professional development.

* **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.

AIG policies and procedures are developed by a district AIG team. Stakeholders come together to advocate for students and develop policies to best serve our students. Meetings are held to review current policies and procedures and if changes are necessary, they are taken into consideration based upon NC AIG Standards and best practices.

General education teachers and AIG Specialists modify the content of the current curriculum to meet the needs of gifted learners. This may include curriculum compacting. Lesson plans and DEPs/IDEPs reflect these modifications.

Policies and Procedures for Compacted Content

1. Teachers will select relevant learning objectives in a subject area or grade level.
2. Teachers will find an appropriate way to pretest the learning objectives.
3. Teachers will identify students who should take the pretests based on previous data.
4. Teachers will pretest students to determine mastery levels.
5. Teachers will streamline practice or instructional time for students who show mastery of the objectives.
6. Teachers will provide small group or individualized instruction for students who have not yet mastered all the objectives, but are capable of doing so more quickly than their classmates.
7. Teachers will offer academic alternatives for students whose curriculum has been compacted.

The possibilities for replacement activities include:

- Providing an accelerated curriculum based on advanced concepts
- Offering more challenging content (alternative texts, fiction or nonfiction works)
- Adapting classwork to individual curricular needs or learning styles
- Initiating individual or small group projects using contracts or management plans
- Using interest or learning centers
- Providing opportunities for self-directed learning or decision making
- Offering mini-courses on research topics or other high interest areas
- Establishing small seminar groups for advanced studies

- Using mentors to guide in learning advanced content or pursuing independent studies, or
- Providing units or assignments that are self-directed, such as creative writing, game creation, and creative and critical thinking training
- Teachers will keep records of the compacting process and instructional options for compacted students.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is a program offered by Columbus County Schools, aligned with the NC Department of Public Instruction, to allow eligible students to earn course credit by demonstrating a deep understanding and mastery of content without completing the traditional course. This opportunity is available to students in grades 9-12 for high school courses and students in grades 6-8 for high school-level courses taken in middle school.

Policies and Procedures for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

(Policy Code: 3420 Student Promotion and Accountability)

1. Eligibility & Application Process:

- Student Eligibility: The CDM process is available to students in grades 9-12 and students in grades 6-8 taking high school courses.
- Application Deadlines: Students must submit a CDM application at least one week prior to the testing window.
- Testing Windows: Students must complete assessments during designated testing windows.

2. Application Submission:

- Forms: Obtain and complete the CDM application form from your school's counseling office.
- Submission: Submit the form to your school's guidance office by the specified deadline.
- Approval: School personnel will review the application for eligibility based on local criteria.

3. Phase I: Standardized Assessment (Demonstration of Foundational Knowledge)

- Assessment Type: Depending on the course, students will take one of the following:
  - End-of-Course (EOC) exams (e.g., NC Math 1, NC Math 3, Biology, English II)
  - Career and Technical Education (CTE) course assessments
  - Locally developed assessments for local CCS electives
- Passing Criteria: Students must achieve the following scores:
  - EOC Courses: Scale score thresholds (e.g., NC Math 1 > 563, Biology > 261).
  - CTE Courses and Other Courses: Students must score 90% or higher.
- No Retakes: Retesting is not permitted for Phase I.
- Online Testing: For EOC assessments, tests must be administered online and follow North Carolina Testing Code of Ethics.

4. Phase II: Artifact Development (Demonstration of Deep Understanding)

- Artifact Submission: Students who pass Phase I will move to Phase II, where they must submit an artifact demonstrating deep understanding of the course content. This could include:
  - A project designed by Columbus County Schools
  - An authentic assessment designed by Columbus County Schools
  - Other locally required artifacts or performance tasks
- Evaluation: The artifact will be evaluated based on locally developed criteria to determine whether the student has demonstrated mastery.

5. Results & Credit Awarding:

- Phase II Results: If a student passes Phase II, the credit will be awarded, and it will be reflected on the student's transcript with the designation "CDM."
- Non-passing Result: If the student does not pass Phase II, they will not receive credit for the course, but the result will not affect their GPA or future eligibility.

6. Additional Considerations:

- EOC Courses: EOC scores for students who successfully complete both phases will count toward school and district accountability measures for the same school year.
- Documentation: School officials must maintain a signed copy of the CDM Student Record or district documentation of awarded course credit on file.

Dual enrollment is an option for high school students to accelerate learning through partnerships with the local community college and the College and Career Promise Agreement. Students participating in dual enrollment have the opportunity to earn an Associate's Degree upon graduation from high school.

Policies and Procedures for Dual Enrollment (Policy Code: 3101)

In its effort to provide a rigorous expanded curriculum that will adequately prepare students for future educational and workplace endeavors, the board will support high school students who also wish to enroll in classes taught by a college, university, community college or other approved entity in accordance with the requirements of this policy, state law and State Board of Education policy.

Career and College Promise

The Career and College Promise program is designed to offer qualified high school students structured dual enrollment opportunities that provide both entry-level job skills as well as pathways leading to a certificate, diploma or degree.

The board, in collaboration with local community colleges, may provide for dual enrollment of a qualified high school student in community college courses through (1) a Career and Technical Education Pathway leading to a job credential, certificate or diploma aligned with one or more high school Career Clusters or (2) a College Transfer Pathway leading to college transfer credits.

The board may also partner with institutions of higher education to establish cooperative innovative high school programs that enable a student to concurrently obtain a high school diploma and (1) begin or complete an associate degree program, (2) master a certificate or vocational program or (3) earn up to two years of college credit within five years. Students are eligible for these programs beginning in ninth grade.

College Transfer Pathway Student Participation Guidelines

The Career and College Promise College Transfer Pathway requires the completion of at least thirty semester hours of transfer courses, including English and mathematics.

1. To be eligible for enrollment, a high school student must:

• Be a high school freshman or sophomore meeting the following criteria:

a. Identified as AIG as defined by local and state plans.

b. Completion of Eligibility Packet

• Be a high school junior or senior meeting the following criteria:

a. Have an unweighted GPA of 2.8 on high school courses; and

b. Demonstrate college readiness on an assessment or placement test (see below).

- A student must demonstrate college readiness in English, reading and mathematics to be eligible for enrollment in a College Transfer Pathway. (See chart on next page).

2. To maintain eligibility for continued enrollment, a student must

a. Continue to make progress toward high school graduation, and

b. Maintain a 2.0 GPA in college coursework after completing two courses.

3. A student must enroll in one College Transfer program of study (see program of study areas below) and may not substitute courses in one program for courses in another.

4. A student may change his or her program of study major with approval of the high school principal or his/her designee and the college's chief student development administrator.

5. With approval of the high school principal or his/her designee and the college's chief student development administrator, a student who completes a College Transfer Pathway while still enrolled in high school may continue to earn college transfer credits leading to the completion of the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, or Associate in Engineering, or Associate in Nursing. **CCP students may not enroll in developmental courses.

6. With approval of the high school principal or his/her designee and the college's chief student development administrator, a student may concurrently enroll in:

a. Two Workforce Continuing Education Pathways

b. One College Transfer Pathway and one Workforce Continuing Education Pathway or

c. One Career Technical Pathway and one Workforce Continuing Education Pathway.

Columbus County Schools is also fortunate to offer high school students the opportunity to attend our non-traditional high school, Columbus Career and College Academy. All Columbus Career and College Academy students are eligible to acquire Career and Technical Education credentials as well as enrolling in college courses throughout high school. Students graduate from high school with a high school diploma, Associate's Degree and Career and Technical Education credentials.

Policies and Procedures for Grade acceleration/Subject Acceleration

(Policy Code: 3420 Student Promotion and Accountability)

Some students may need less time to learn the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to challenge these students by expanding the curriculum, providing opportunities to explore subjects in greater detail, or providing different types of educational experiences. To sufficiently challenge a student, the principal may reassign the student to a different class or level of study and/or may identify concurrent enrollment or other curriculum expansion options (see policy 3101, Dual Enrollment).

The principal, after consulting with the professional staff and the student's parents, may determine that grade acceleration/subject acceleration is appropriate.

Students also have the option of using an accelerated pathway to complete high school in three years rather than four (see policy 3460, Graduation Requirements).

Parents may request grade or subject acceleration.

Teachers will use formative and summative data to evaluate if subject acceleration is an appropriate level of service or if whole grade acceleration is recommended.

All of this information is available to parents, students and all stakeholders in the *High School Registration Guide* located on the Columbus County Schools webpage. This guide is a comprehensive document that provides the following:

- High School Graduation Requirements
- High School Program Information
- High School Testing Program Information
- College Opportunities and Information
- Columbus County High School Course Descriptions
- Career and College Program Information
- Scholar Athletes Information

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

In the K-3 classroom ALL students receive talent development through district core and supplemental programs. These programs provide opportunity for creativity, curiosity, critical thinking and access to advanced content. In addition to district wide talent development, AIG Specialists provide intentional enrichment to students who are exhibiting academically gifted potential. Curriculum such as verbal analogies, picture analogies, logic puzzles, creative problem solving exercises, critical thinking activities and brain teasers stimulate high potential and advanced achievement. The AIG Specialist offers resources and specific strategies based on displayed mastery skills. Compacted lessons and accelerated subject matter are used as needed. Revised Blooms is utilized to make lessons more rigorous and relevant to students. AIG Specialists also conduct higher order thinking mini lessons in each second grade classroom each spring helping to prepare students for the universal screener. This creates equitable opportunity and access for all students. Students participate in

academically stimulating enrichment classes within the regular classroom. In all schools, needs based enrichment/intervention is offered to students. Small grouping is utilized to serve high performing students. They are challenged based on their academic level. Columbus County Schools uses various methods to determine which students should be served. Teachers play a vital part in our talent development program due to their hands-on, daily interactions with students. The NCDPI math and literacy assessment data are formal methods used to determine which students should be served in talent development groups facilitated by the AIG Specialist. Acceleration in subject and/or grade is possible based on the advanced level of the student. Curriculum compacting is used to foster the potential growth that is possible with K-3 students. Many students transition in and out of this program fluidly based on interest, ability, and performance. To ensure equity for ALL learners, AIG Specialists push-in all district Kindergarten classes for Talent Development critical thinking mini-lessons. This ensures multilingual learners, economically disadvantaged learners, potential twice exceptional students and culturally diverse students receive equal opportunities for talent development.

* **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.

Columbus County Schools understands the urgency to work toward equity and excellence and is committed to intentional and sustained actions to reframe mindsets and policies in relation to advanced learning opportunities. Columbus County Schools will provide focused professional development in a variety of settings and modes, such as, leadership team meetings, PLCs, MTSS Team Meetings, School Improvement Team Meetings, and AIG Advisory Board meetings. Involving the total school community and all stakeholders will help to remove systematic barriers, improve student services, share ownership and move closer to equity and excellence in gifted education.

Columbus County Schools AIG program will partner with the data and accountability department to collect and use meaningful data related to the performance of all subgroups. This data will be disaggregated and analyzed to look at patterns and trends over time. Findings will be shared with stakeholders to inform mindsets, policies and practices. By collecting meaningful data, we will assess program success and inform program improvement. Policies and practices will be modified as a result of data trends. This will allow us to broaden access to learning opportunities for all students.

Columbus County Schools has developed intentional practices to promote equity and excellence by broadening access to advanced learning opportunities through talent development efforts in grade K-12. Columbus County Schools cultivate potential in students with intentional efforts that bring out and develop a student's strengths and talents.

Intentional practices in Grades K-2 include:

- Provide early intervention and develop opportunities to maximize potential during whole school daily intervention/enrichment groups. Groups are determined by academic performance, student interest and MTSS tier. All students are afforded the opportunity to participate in enrichment activities that stimulate critical thinking and foster gifted potential.
- K-2 teachers are educated by the AIG Specialist on how to become a talent scout in the primary classroom.
- To ensure equity for ALL learners, AIG Specialists push-in all district Kindergarten classes for Talent Development critical thinking mini-lessons. This ensures multilingual learners, economically disadvantaged learners, potential twice exceptional students and culturally diverse students receive equal opportunities for talent development.
- AIG Specialists will provide critical thinking mini lessons to all 2nd grade students in the spring of their second grade year prior to the administration of the CogAT universal screener. This intentional effort will promote equity and excellence by exposing students to material that they otherwise may have never been exposed to. This will allow all students an equal opportunity of success on the universal screener.
- Classroom and Instructional Support teachers provide a variety of curriculum programs and differentiate teaching methods based on student learning needs and interests. Some of these resources may include Reading Horizons, Ready Reading (iReady), iReady Classroom Mathematics, etc.

Intentional practices in Grades 3-5 include:

- Provide early intervention and develop opportunities to maximize potential during whole school daily intervention/enrichment groups. Groups are determined by academic performance, student interest and MTSS tier. All students are afforded the opportunity to participate in enrichment activities that stimulate critical thinking and foster gifted potential.
- Classroom and Instructional Support teachers are educated by the AIG Specialist on how to become a talent scout in the elementary classroom.
- Classroom teachers provide a variety of curriculum programs and differentiate teaching methods based on student learning needs and interests. Some of these resources may include Reading Horizons, Magnetic Reading (iReady), iReady Classroom Mathematics, etc.

Intentional practices in Grades 6-8 include:

- Students will develop strengths, interests and gifted potential through a variety of opportunities, such as music education, visual arts, band, theater, journalism, computer programming, etc.
- Classroom and Instructional Support teachers are educated by the AIG Specialist on how to become a talent scout in the middle school classroom.
- Students will develop strengths, interests and gifted potential through a variety of extracurricular activities such as, FFA, Battle of the Books, Science Olympiad, Young Writers Group, etc.
- Classroom teachers provide a variety of curriculum programs and differentiate teaching methods based on student learning needs and interests. Some of these resources may include StudySync, iReady Classroom Mathematics, iScience, SAVVAS Social Studies, etc.

Intentional practices in Grades 9-12 include:

- Students will develop strengths, interests and gifted potential through a variety of opportunities, such as music education, visual arts, band, theater, journalism, computer programming, etc.
- Students will develop strengths, interests and gifted potential through a variety of extracurricular activities such as, FFA, Battle of the Books, Science Olympiad, Young Writers Group, etc.
- Classroom teachers provide a variety of courses (AP, Honors, CTE, etc.) and differentiated teaching methods based on student learning needs and interests. A variety of curriculum programs are also used such as StudySync, Envision Integrated Mathematics, SAVVAS Social Studies, My Math Lab, Edpuzzle, Quizalize, Labster, etc.

By fostering talent development, Columbus County Schools will ensure that all students will have opportunities to grow and experience learning environments that are not dependent on their background or economic means. Columbus County Schools understands that early intervention and development opportunities allow students to maximize their academic potential. Columbus County Schools also understands that frontloading is a proactive approach used to prepare students for advanced coursework. Teachers strive to introduce challenging concepts early which allow students to build the necessary skills and confidence to succeed in more rigorous academic settings.

* **Practice J**

Enhances and further develops the talents and interests of AIG students through extra-curricular programming during and outside of the school day.

The Columbus County Schools AIG web page updates extra-curricular program opportunities for AIG students on a regular basis. As mailings for opportunities and events are received at individual schools, they are shared with other specialists and then with AIG students. In addition, contests, seminars, online events,

etc. are made available to students. Each school has opportunities such as Battle of the Books, Robotics, etc. Teens Westward bound, Governor's School, and local school/community organizations are utilized to promote extra-curricular opportunities for all students. AIG students participate in enrichment which allows them to investigate their interests during the school day. Service learning projects are used to enhance and further develop student's talents and interests while building partnerships with the community. Students are provided the opportunity to showcase talents and interests through school and community events such as Celebrate the Arts, Science Fair, AIG Showcase, Parent Literacy and Math nights, local school board meetings, etc.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Columbus County Schools will continue to provide clear and comprehensive descriptions of the AIG program to all stakeholders. Columbus County Schools AIG Department will collaborate with the LEA Leadership Team to ensure academic, intellectual and social-emotional needs are addressed within each grade level, classroom environment, and setting.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Differentiated lesson plans
*	Professional development agendas and sign-in sheets
*	Signed Differentiated Education Plan/Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (DEP/IDEP)

Documents

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

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.

The LEA requires regular classroom teachers and AIG Specialists to maintain lesson plans which include standards from the NCSCOS. AIG Specialists follow the NC AIG Standards when modifying/differentiating lessons to ensure appropriate personalized instruction. Columbus County Schools has implemented Gifted Curriculum Standards and has shared them with AIG Specialists and classroom teachers to ensure “AIG All Day, Every Day!” Principals review regular classroom teachers' and AIG Specialists' lesson plans to ensure that they are comprehensive and meet the needs of all learners. The district provides training in differentiation for all students. Teachers use enrichment, acceleration, compacting, and tiered lesson plans correlated to the NCSCOS for AIG students and students with advanced learning needs. i-Ready offers personalized instruction and support for accelerated curriculum, allowing students to facilitate their own learning. The program differentiates for students as they work through the NCSCOS and provides teachers with additional resources based on revised Bloom’s taxonomy for problem-based learning. According to SB 500, advanced learning opportunities in math are offered to all students scoring a level 5 on their EOG/EOC. In addition to the AIG classes, enrichment opportunities are provided daily during the scheduled intervention/enrichment time for students.

The district offers professional development to all teachers using North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s (NCDPI) Booster Shots and other research-based material. Columbus County Schools certified teachers have all participated in blended learning rotations professional development. Within this PD teachers were trained on the use of one to one technology for personalized and differentiated learning for all students. AIG Specialists attend professional development throughout the year and share with teachers during PD and PLCs. Professional development opportunities may include North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented (NCAGT), National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), NCDPI AIG Coordinator’s Institutes and Monthly Meetups, Sandhills AIG Regional meetings, Riversight Insights webinars, etc.

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

Lesson plans that reflect diverse instructional practices across the spectrum of sensory learning are maintained. These plans are created based on the abilities and interests of the students in order to address various learning needs. Entry, advanced and extension level learning tasks are utilized based on student need. Tiered learning, planning lessons and/or units at different tiers are used to differentiate for students. Creating deep and complex activities for high ability students is an objective. The activities chosen for talent development groups and AIG enrichment classes will be selected in order to ensure that a wide range of learning styles are addressed, i.e. auditory, hands-on, visual, etc. Teachers are encouraged to employ strategies such as:

- Compact the curriculum by offering the most difficult first way for high ability students
- Pre-test before teaching the material thus eliminating busy work
- Present material and have a choice board, depending on how a student does they move on to another level working through Bloom’s taxonomy

- Tailoring to student interest based on student interest surveys and learning profiles
- Allowing gifted students to take the lead
- Thought provoking exercises, analogies, metacognition
- Investigate for the whys
- Having students present to class and teach classes (when appropriate) in order to further presentation skills
- Guest speakers
- PBL- Project AND Problem Based Learning
- Challenging STEAM activities (including Tinker and Eureka Crates by Kiwi Co.)
- Social Emotional Lessons
- Perfectionism lessons
- Enable gifted students to work together to challenge each other

K-2 regular classroom instruction is differentiated based on Amplify Literacy Assessment, Istation Math and i-Ready data and individual student needs. 3-8 regular classroom instruction is differentiated based on formative, benchmark, classroom assessments and individual student needs. Based upon need 6-12 students may be offered Credit for Demonstrated Mastery. 6-8 will be offered available high school classes. Through academic advisement students in grades 9-12 are offered AP, Honors, College and Career Promise. According to SB 500, students in grades 3-12 will be offered advanced learning opportunities in math depending on EOG/EOC scores. Teachers help students to understand that failure is an important part of learning. Students must learn to work with everyone, therefore, providing learning opportunities through heterogeneous grouping, Think-Pair-Shares, Clock buddies, etc. is imperative.

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

Columbus County Schools uses a variety of rigorous materials that are research-based and enhance curriculum, instruction and the social emotional needs of AIG students. AIG Specialists and regular classroom teachers employ challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum by implementing research-based practices and strategies. Accelerative research-based curriculums that infuse higher order thinking processes, conceptual reasoning that explores problems and current issues, critical and creative thinking skills, and inquiry/discovery opportunities are used by AIG Specialists. A rigorous thought-provoking curriculum that utilizes Problem Based Learning and Project Based Learning is being used. Columbus County Schools believes inquiry is vital to encourage critical thinking and investigation. Analogies, antagonyms, cognates, idioms, etymology & Greek and Latin Roots, Math games, in-depth book studies, science projects, etc. are just a few items woven into our curriculum to encourage diversity of ideas and creativity of thought. The following are programs and curriculums used by the LEA to enhance ALL student learning.

LEA Core Programs and Curriculum

- Reading Horizons & Ready Reading (K-2)
- iReady Mathematics (K-8)

- Magnetic Reading (3-5)
- Study Sync (6-12)
- SAVVAS Social Studies (grades 6-12)
- SAVVAS Math (High School Math 1, 2, 3)
- My MathLab (Math 4)
- SAVVAS Biology (9-12)
- SAVVAS World & American History (9-12)
- McGraw Hill - Science (6-8)

Supplemental Programs and Curriculum

- Reading Horizons Elevate (3rd-4th)
- i-Ready Reading (grades 6-8)
- i-Ready Math (grades 6-8)
- Plasma Games (Science 6-8)
- Edpuzzle (High School 9-12)
- iXL Math and ELA (9-12)
- iReady Math Teacher Toolbox and Diagnostic (9-12)
- Breakout EDU
- Jacob's Ladder
- William and Mary units
- Michael Clay Thompson Language Arts Curriculum
- PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support)

Many of these programs and curriculum offer personalized instruction and support for accelerated curriculum, allowing students to facilitate their own learning. New research-based materials appropriate for gifted learners are gathered from professional development conferences, online research, and catalogs continually. Students are also Provided counseling services as needed to address the unique emotional challenges faced by gifted students. AIG students are also clustered with peers for mutual learning and support.

* **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.

When developing lessons, consideration is given to the "real-world" issues and advanced technologies of the world today. Teachers are encouraged to embed adaptability, creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, curiosity, communication, empathy and collaboration in learning experiences. Student work reflects the use of project-based learning. PLC discussions emphasize teaching that promotes flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability. AIG Specialists create an environment that promotes leadership and responsibility. Rocket design, robotics, and modern computer programming are examples of curriculum units. Creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills are consistently integrated into lessons. Problem-based learning projects are used to connect students to real-world problems while incorporating technology and activating prior knowledge, extending their learning at an advanced level. AIG lessons are built to target skill sets that are not targeted during content area instruction in the regular classroom.

The gifted education curriculum standards outlined here are designed to help gifted students develop advanced academic, personal, and interpersonal skills. These standards are used within the district in the following ways:

- Real-World Integration: Lessons are designed with a focus on real-world issues, and teachers integrate advanced technologies and authentic challenges into the learning process. This approach fosters adaptability, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration—skills emphasized in the standards.
- Advanced Communication and Research Skills: Students are encouraged to develop strong communication skills, whether through written, spoken, or technological means. They learn to share their learning with diverse audiences, create well-organized presentations, and engage in critical discussions. Teachers promote research methods and independent study techniques to deepen students' knowledge, while also emphasizing the ability to anticipate misunderstandings and biases when communicating (AC.R.3, AC.R.5).
- Creative Thinking and Problem Solving: Gifted students are taught to approach problems with creativity, designing innovative solutions and taking risks in the process. These skills are developed through brainstorming sessions, the creation of original ideas, and experimenting with diverse problem-solving strategies. Teachers ensure that students tolerate ambiguity (CT.CPS.5) and learn to apply these strategies to complex, real-world scenarios (CT.CPS.4).
- Higher Order Critical Thinking Skills: The curriculum challenges students to think critically by encouraging them to evaluate data, ask insightful questions, and make connections between their learning and real-world problems (HOCT.1, HOCT.4). Through this process, students develop the ability to make comparisons, form logical conclusions, and consider multiple perspectives (HOCT.6, HOCT.7).
- Personal Development and Interpersonal Relationships: Gifted students' personal growth is emphasized, focusing on goal setting, self-reflection, and the development of social skills. Lessons aim to foster resilience, open-mindedness, and respect for diverse opinions (PD.IR.1, PD.IR.3). Students also learn to predict and understand the consequences of their decisions, promoting a high level of self-awareness and accountability (PD.IR.4).
- Application of Knowledge: A core component of the curriculum is applying knowledge across various disciplines, helping students generate new ideas and synthesize information from multiple sources (AK.5). Teachers encourage students to transfer knowledge between topics, make generalizations, and connect their learning to broader concepts (AK.2, AK.3). This approach promotes advanced problem-solving and critical thinking, allowing students to make meaningful contributions to academic discussions and projects.

In summary, the gifted education curriculum within the district supports students by emphasizing the development of real-world applicable skills, creative problem-solving, critical thinking, and effective communication. Teachers are encouraged to embed these standards into their lessons through project-based learning, interdisciplinary studies, and hands-on activities.

Gifted Education Curriculum Standards

Advanced Communication and Research Skills – Gifted students will develop advanced communication skills in order to enhance their abilities to communicate and work with others and to share their learning effectively. Gifted students will develop advanced research methods and independent study skills, which allow for in-depth academic study.

AC.R.1 – The student uses written, spoken, and technological media to convey new learning or challenge existing ideas.

AC.R.2 – The student produces written and/or oral work that is complex, purposeful, and organized and includes relevant supporting examples from a variety of sources and communicates expertise to a variety of audiences.

AC.R.3 - The student anticipates and addresses potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations in communication with others.

AC.R.4 -The student participates in discussions to argue persuasively or reinforce others' good points.

AC.R.5- The student supports and defends his/her own opinions while respecting the opinions of others.

AC.R.6 – The student can clearly articulate their own thinking to a variety of audiences.

AC.R.7 - The student selects appropriate research tools and methodologies to conduct research.

AC.R.8 - The student develops and uses systematic procedures for recording and organizing information.

Creative Thinking and Creative Problem Solving Skills - Gifted students will develop and practice creative thinking and creative problem-solving skills with a variety of complex topics within an area of study in order to generate original ideas and products.

CT.CPS.1 - The student formulates original questions and ideas about a specific topic.

CT.CPS.2 - The student designs, applies, evaluates, and adapts a variety of innovative strategies when problem solving

CT.CPS.3 - The student incorporates brainstorming and other idea-generating techniques to solve problems or generate new ideas.

CT.CPS.4 - The student develops original ideas, presentations or products.

CT.CPS.5 - The student tolerates ambiguity and assumes risk as a necessary part of problem solving.

Higher Order Critical Thinking Skills - Gifted Students will develop and practice higher order and critical thinking skills in order to extend their knowledge at an advanced level.

HOCT.1 -The student evaluates and uses data to make connections between learning and real-world problems and/or solutions.

HOCT.2 - The student conducts comparisons and evaluates decisions using criteria.

HOCT.3 - The student asks insightful and relevant questions.

HOCT.4 - The student responds to questions with supporting information that reflects in-depth knowledge of a topic.

HOCT.5 - The student uses and creates analogies, metaphors, and/or models to explain or illustrate complex concepts and relationship

HOCT.6 - The student separates one's own point of view from that of others and examines an issue from more than one point of view.

HOCT.7 - The student evaluates conclusions based upon relevance, depth, breadth, logic, and fairness.

Personal Development and Interpersonal Relationships - Gifted Students will undergo personal growth and development in order to achieve their highest potential. Gifted Students will develop appropriate interpersonal relationships in order to collaborate effectively with a variety of audiences.

PD.IR.1 - The student accepts that their opinions, ideas and theories will change as they gain new knowledge.

PD.IR.2 - The student will set both short-term and long-term goals, personal and academic, and regularly reflect upon their progress.

PD.IR.3 -The student will strive to achieve high standards, especially in areas of strength and/or personal interest.

PD.IR.4 - The student predicts and understands consequences of decisions and responds appropriately. PD.IR.5 -The student allows for and accepts differences of opinion.

PD.IR.6 - The student identifies stereotypes, biases, and prejudices in one's own reasoning and that of others.

PD.IR.7 - The student responds to contributions of others, considering all available information. audiences of all ages.

PD.IR.8 - The student will display persistence when faced with challenges.

Application of Knowledge - Gifted students will acquire and apply knowledge in order to advance their understanding.

AK.1 - The student uses concepts within and across disciplines to develop valid hypotheses, thesis statements, or alternative interpretations of data.

AK.2 - The student will transfer knowledge from one topic of study to another.

AK.3 - The student will make generalizations about events, people, things and ideas.

AK.4 - The student will make connections between basic information and broader concepts.

AK.5 - The student will synthesize information from a variety of sources and apply the knowledge to generate new and unique ideas.

* **Practice E**

Uses ongoing assessment, both formative and summative, to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction.

Columbus County Schools will use data in a meaningful way to analyze and share, to improve programming and services and support student achievement and growth. Assessment criteria are continuously monitored and adjustments are made to appropriately differentiate instruction. Student portfolios, reading and math benchmark assessments (NC Check ins), Amplify Literacy data, Istation math data, i-Ready data, Schoolnet tests and classroom assignments, AIG projects and classwork, EOG/EOCs etc., are monitored and levels are adjusted as needed by classroom teachers, AIG specialists and support staff. MTSS protocols are also used to analyze academic, attendance, behavior and social emotional progress. Throughout the school year, data is disaggregated and used to inform flexible grouping practices. Flexible grouping and blended learning rotations may be based on a variety of factors such as talent development, readiness, interest surveys, and learner profiles. Curriculum is modified based on both formative and summative assessments. Parents work with schools to ensure proper alignment for students.

Assessments are used to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction through:

- Data Collection: Use formative assessments regularly to gather data on student understanding and progress.
- Data Analysis: Review assessment data to identify patterns, strengths, and areas where students struggle.

- Grouping Students: Based on assessment data, group students with similar learning needs. This allows for targeted instruction and activities.
- Adapting Materials: Provide varied resources and materials that cater to different learning styles and abilities. For instance, visual aids for visual learners or interactive activities for kinesthetic learners.
- Flexible Grouping: Change groups as needed based on ongoing assessment results.
- Varied Instructional Methods: Use a mix of direct instruction, collaborative learning, and independent practice to meet diverse learning needs.
- Customized Tasks: Offer choice in assignments, such as different project topics or formats, to engage students and allow them to demonstrate understanding in multiple ways.
- Feedback: Provide timely and specific feedback to guide student learning and improvement.
- Instructional Adjustments: Based on ongoing assessments, continually adjust instruction to address emerging needs and ensure all students are progressing.

*** Practice F**

Collaborates with a variety of personnel, based on student needs, to implement differentiated curriculum and instruction.

Columbus County Schools understands it is essential to collaborate effectively with various personnel to implement a differentiated curriculum that meets the diverse needs of students. Differentiated instruction involves tailoring teaching environments and practices to create different paths for students to learn the same material. It is crucial for addressing varied student needs and ensuring equitable learning opportunities.

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The AIG Department collaborates with key personnel such as Special Education teachers. Special Education teachers provide insights on accommodations and modifications for students with special needs. AIG and Special Education work together to adapt lesson plans that address DEP and IEP goals, ensuring inclusivity in learning activities. Collaboration also occurs with administrative leadership and instructional coaches offering professional development and instructional strategies. This allows engagement in regular planning sessions to incorporate evidence-based practices in both math and ELA lessons. ELL Specialists also support language acquisition and modify lessons for multilingual advanced learners. School counselors and AIG Specialists work collaboratively to address social-emotional needs that impact learning. Develop holistic plans that incorporate social-emotional learning alongside academic goals promote success. Parents/guardians provide insights into student backgrounds and potential learning challenges. The AIG Department maintains open communication channels to understand student needs better and tailor instruction accordingly.

By collaborating with a variety of personnel within the district, Columbus County Schools effectively implements a differentiated curriculum that meets the diverse needs of students. This approach not only supports individual learning needs but also fosters a more inclusive and engaging learning environment. Establishing common goals, having open communication and using data to drive decision making ensures the needs of all students are being met.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Columbus County Schools continues to recognize the need for professional development for all stakeholders on differentiation to strengthen student learning. The AIG Coordinator will continue to work with the Professional Development Coordinator to facilitate ongoing professional development opportunities that help

realize equity and excellence in gifted education and to promote differentiated curriculum and instruction. Columbus County Schools will also work towards a Local AIG Endorsement. This will begin with sixth grade ELA and math teachers Summer 2025.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Professional development agendas and sign-in sheets
*	Lesson plans
*	Differentiation strategies and resources

Documents

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

Columbus County Schools (240) 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.

Columbus County Schools employs an AIG Coordinator that is AIG licensed. Licensed AIG Specialists meet with an advisory panel (a variety of stakeholders) to guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program and plan. The following describes the roles and responsibilities of the AIG Coordinator:

- Provide leadership in the required evaluation and revision process of the Local Plan for Gifted.
- Provide district level oversight of the implementation of the Local Plan for Gifted Education.
- Assist with preparation and management of state and local budgets allocated for AIG
- Coordinate professional development for AIG teachers throughout the district.
- Ensure compliance with state and local processes.
- Maintain accurate records including student identification and parental permission for participation and testing.
- Coordinate the selection, training and delivery of appropriate curriculum for differentiation in the AIG program in grades K-12.
- Evaluate testing instruments and coordinate K-12 AIG testing program, including training, inventory and security for testing materials.
- Coordinate special opportunities involving gifted education students (Annual AIG Showcase, Annual AIG Field Trips, etc.)
- Research programmatic issues for continuous improvement, best practices in gifted education in both program design and service delivery.
- Monitor performance growth of AIG students as evidenced in End of Grade, End of Course and AP testing.
- Provide clear communication to AIG teachers, parents, LEA administrators and community members regarding local, state and national issues and research regarding gifted education via multiple formats such as: monthly AIG teacher meetings, AIG website, AIG Facebook page, email and other appropriate technology based communication methods.
- Provide support and information for teachers seeking AIG licensure.
- Attend professional conferences and regional/state meetings in order to gather and disseminate up-to-date information about issues, methods, trends and policies as they relate to gifted education.

* **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.

AIG-licensed specialists serve identified students according to their Differentiated Education Plan and develop talent for those who demonstrate gifted potential. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with all AIG paperwork. They also design and implement tasks which address the whole child. AIG Specialists support the implementation of the local AIG plan and program through communication with all stakeholders and program monitoring. They utilize professional development from national, state, and local experts in the gifted field. AIG specialists attend the NC Association for Gifted and Talented and The Great Teacher Alliance conferences annually. Each time they hone their craft. Research-based teaching materials and strategies including problem/project-based learning, STEM projects, i-Ready , challenging literacy units, math problems, games, analogies, etc, are used in pull out or push in classes, depending upon need. All of these resources encourage and challenge AIG students by providing the complexity and abstract thought they require. Differentiated lesson plans are the result of collaboration with teachers and administration. Data is used to provide direction and isolate areas in which our students need to grow. Information about the unique needs of advanced learners is shared in various ways including Professional Learning Communities. School personnel collaborate with counselors to meet the social-emotional needs of students. The AIG Director communicates regularly with the AIG Coordinator and Specialists to ensure creative and challenging tasks are being provided.

* **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.

Columbus County Schools actively seeks to align professional development opportunities with state and/or national teaching standards, so the needs of advanced learners are addressed in an ongoing and comprehensive manner. LEA currently maintains a system that supports administrative classroom walk-through observations and peer observations to determine professional development needs. Online classes are also provided through the Home Base PD System, NC Educators, NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT), Sandhills Regional Education Consortium and various other DPI sanctioned websites that support instruction on high yield strategies. The district has required Differentiation using Blended Learning Rotations professional development to be held for all faculty. Teachers are required to attend and log their CEUs. Additionally, AIG Specialists assist in ongoing professional development through the use of PLCs. Student Services has required that counselors develop and submit an approved plan to monitor the social/emotional needs of all students. They work with the AIG specialists to address specific concerns. School administrators participate in and monitor these requirements. CCS also provides opportunities for AIG Specialists to attend state and/or national gifted conferences and provides professional development for classroom teachers, school counselors, and administrators involved in AIG programming and services. Local professional development is facilitated by AIG Specialists utilizing NCDPI's Advanced Learning Division website and Booster Shots. Over the next three years the LEA will focus on intentional professional development to address the learning deficient of advanced learners due to the global pandemic which began in March 2020. This PD will include strategies to motivate students and enhance social and emotional learning needs. The AIG Department is currently developing a Local AIG Endorsement for core ELA and Math teachers. AIG Specialists participated in the Great Teacher Alliance professional development provided by Brian Housand and Andi McNair during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school year. By 2028 all administrators and certified teachers will participate in the NCDPI AIG Instructional Booster Shots. The AIG Coordinator also attends the summer Administration Retreat with a focus on providing district leadership, principals and assistant principals with AIG updates, policies and procedures. AIG strategies encourage AIG ALL DAY EVERY DAY!

* **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.

All principals and teachers involved in the AIG process understand the characteristics of academically gifted students and are able to meet their needs. Regular classroom teachers are encouraged to earn the AIG add-on license. Teachers assigned AIG students are required to attend all professional development provided by AIG Specialists and district differentiation PD with a focus on academically identified students. AIG Specialists are currently available to regular

classroom teachers to provide resources/assistance in differentiated instruction. AIG students are served by a combination of clustering, pull out and advisement by AIG certified teachers.

* **Practice E**
Develops strategies for the recruitment and retention of AIG-licensed professionals, including those of diverse backgrounds.

Columbus County Schools will use the following strategies for the recruitment and retention of diverse AIG licensed professionals:

- Provide a positive climate and culture.
- Provide strong district and school leadership support.
- Provide financial support for teachers who successfully complete AIG add-on license through the Praxis Exam.
- Provide local professional development to prepare teachers and other support staff to earn AIG licensure through the Praxis exam.
- Provide instructional coaching focusing on advanced learners.
- Provide mentor support with AIG certified teachers.
- Provide aspiring leadership opportunities.
- Partner with surrounding LEAs and Sandhills Regional Education Consortium to provide professional development to prepare teachers and other support staff to earn AIG add-on license through the Praxis Exam.
- Partner with Institution of Higher Education (UNC-Pembroke, UNC-Wilmington, Fayetteville State University, East Carolina University) for teachers and support staff to earn an AIG add-on license.

* **Practice F**
Provides focused professional learning opportunities to realize equity and excellence in gifted education including changing mindsets, policies, and practices.

Columbus County Schools has made equity and diversity a large focus in the LEA 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. The following are district goals to promote equity and excellence for all students.

- By 2025-2026, 100% of CCS leadership and staff will participate in annual training and discussions on cultural diversity and how to implement strategies to overcome inequities.

Strategies include:

- Monthly training/discussions at Principal and Assistant Principal meetings.
- Provide training choices to district faculty and staff members on topics relevant to advancing cultural diversity within CCS structures.
- Provide opportunities for students to learn the importance of cultural sensitivity.

All schools in Columbus County Schools will create a yearly goal in their school improvement plan that addresses the inclusive cultural needs utilizing a diverse group of school personnel and community stakeholders, with an 80% success rate, by the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

Strategies include:

- Each location will conduct a needs assessment to address inclusive cultural needs within each school improvement plan.
- Community outreach to find parent and community members that represent the schools demography to serve on the school improvement team.
- Share with each schools' community how inclusivity is being prioritized within each campus culture.

Columbus County Schools will focus on professional learning opportunities to realize equity and excellence in gifted education by:

- Conduct a survey to determine the needs of the district personnel in regards to equity and excellence in gifted education.
- Sharing the NCDPI Call to Action with all stakeholders.
- Utilize NCDPI Guidebook to design professional development to help stakeholders understand equity and excellence in gifted education.
- Provide professional development to certified staff on the importance of talent development to promote equity for all 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.

Columbus County Schools is knowledgeable about professional development opportunities and works to ensure that an appropriate selection of these opportunities is aligned with local AIG program goals and other district initiatives. Select teachers and all AIG Specialists attend local, regional, and state AIG PD. CCS expects all teachers who attend PD to share with the district. Common issues for AIG students are considered when designing new PD for teachers. Teacher feedback, test scores, and stakeholder input is utilized when seeking, developing and providing AIG PD.

Columbus County Schools

- Partners with the district's Professional Development Coordinator to plan PD focused on AIG students. All leadership and certified staff will participate in the NCDPI AIG Booster Shot Series focused on Social and Emotional needs during the 2022-2023 school year.
- The AIG Director/AIG Coordinator serves on other district committees when strategic vision, mission and priorities are being set to ensure AIG needs are being heard and considered.
- Provides information about professional development opportunities related to gifted learners.
- Conducts professional development on research-based practices and strategies related to gifted learners.
- Aligns professional development opportunities with the local AIG program goals and district initiatives. Through collaboration among the community, school administration, and teachers, we can empower the students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become outstanding citizens and leaders in tomorrow's global society.
- Connects the needs of gifted learners with the district strategic plan.

- Connects the needs of gifted learners with School Improvement Plan goals at each school in the district and align professional development needs accordingly.
- Promote opportunities for professional development outside of the district to support best practices and state/national standards.
- Allow time for coaching, implementation and reflection based on professional development experiences to support participant understanding.
- Provides opportunities during the instructional day for AIG Specialists and general education teachers to collaborate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to ensure that best practices related to gifted learners are being implemented.
- Involve the AIG Director, AIG Coordinator and AIG Specialists directly with school and district MTSS teams for explaining AIG program goals, aligning them with school and district MTSS goals, and planning and delivering professional learning in order to integrate the perspective of gifted education throughout.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Columbus County Schools will continue to provide AIG professional development to administrators, school staff and regular classroom teachers. All leadership and certified teachers will be required to participate in the AIG Booster Shots professional development hosted on the district website. Columbus County Schools will continue to encourage teachers to seek AIG licensure and recruit highly qualified teachers.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Professional development prior approval forms
*	Professional development agendas and sign-in sheets
*	Presentations and handouts from staff development workshops and meetings
*	Copy of teaching licence with AIG add-on

Documents

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

Standard 5: Partnerships

The LEA ensures ongoing and meaningful participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the local AIG program to develop strong partnerships.

* **Practice A**
Develops intentional, two-way partnerships with parents/guardians to support the following needs of AIG students:

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional.

Annual DEP conferences are held to discuss the whole child. The school counselor collaborates with stakeholders to support the personalized social-emotional needs of AIG students. AIG teachers, classroom teachers, and support personnel collaborate to ensure rigorous academic curriculum is in place. Parent/student surveys are sent home annually to help strengthen partnerships and provide services to the best of the district's abilities. Annual AIG Showcase allows for two-way partnerships with parents and AIG Specialists. Survey results are used to engage parents in two-way communication concerning the district AIG program.

Parents and community members are involved in various aspects of the CCS AIG program. Parents/families and community members serve on the AIG Advisory Council. Community members donate time to share their interests and to teach students. Classes are based on interest. High School AIG students work together and have various academic and community partnerships including, but not limited to, National Honor Society, FFA, Hospice House, Operation Christmas Child, Teen Court, Families First Women's Shelter and various internship programs. Career fairs are held at the elementary, middle, and high schools. College days are held at the high school. AIG students are targeted and encouraged to keep in contact with local businesses and institutes of higher learning. Local civic groups encourage students to participate in writing and speaking competitions (AR Ammons, DAR). By fostering these relationships, our students learn to network and practice 21st-century speaking and listening skills.

* **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.

The Columbus County Schools AIG Program currently partners with Columbus County Schools and various other IHE institutions such as UNC- Pembroke, UNC-Wilmington, NC Governor's School, Southeastern Community College, and other state agencies. Programs such as Battle of the Books, Farmer’s Market contests, Daughters of the American Revolution contests, AR Ammons Poetry, National Honor Society, Beta Club, etc. allow students to participate in community activities with stakeholders and local organizations. These collaborative partnerships benefit gifted learners academically, socially, emotionally and allow real-life experiences/opportunities. High school students are afforded the opportunity to participate in the College and Career Promise with Southeastern Community College to earn an Associate’s Degree. The CCS AIG Program works cooperatively with local organizations, businesses and governmental agencies to extend educational opportunities beyond the classroom with guest speakers such as police officers, civic leaders, and other professionals. Brunswick Electric Membership Cooperative and Atlantic Telephone Membership Cooperative provide educational grants to the AIG program for the purchase of gifted resources and materials. Community involvement creates a two-way partnership. CCS AIG Specialists are members of the NC Association for the Gifted and Talented and participate in the annual gifted conference.

* **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 Council is composed of AIG specialists, community members, AIG parents and families, regular classroom teachers, ELL teachers, principals, assistant principals, district directors, and school counselors. CCS is deliberate in maintaining a diverse population which includes, females, males, black, Hispanic, Native American, white and Asian representatives which reflect our diverse community population. The AIG Advisory Council communicates to share issues, plan activities, make decisions and assist in the development, implementation, monitoring and revision of the local AIG program and plan. In person/virtual meetings, email, and google docs are utilized to communicate effectively and efficiently. The advisory group assists in the development and revision of the local AIG plan while implementation and monitoring are the responsibility of the AIG Director, AIG Coordinator, AIG specialists, and other instructional/support staff.

* **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.

All information concerning the local AIG program and other policies and procedures related to gifted education and advanced learning is shared on the local AIG website. Copies of the local AIG plan and brochure are available at each school and on the district AIG website. An informational presentation is held at staff meetings when requested. AIG Specialists meet with the AIG Advisory Council throughout the school year to discuss current relevant issues in gifted education. Students and parents are provided with a complete program outline when placed and when any policy changes take place. The district's call system and Facebook page is utilized for messaging parents and students about any new or upcoming events. The AIG Coordinator attends and provides an overview of the AIG program to school advisory boards when requested. The AIG Director and AIG Coordinator attend parent nights, monthly district meetings, AIG meetings, and AIG Advisory Council meetings to assure information is disseminated as needed.

Information relating to the AIG Program and its services is provided in a translated format to the community and parents as necessary. Materials relating to outside enrichment opportunities are translated and distributed as they become available. Classroom teachers, AIG Specialists, administrators, the AIG Coordinator and AIG Director disseminate information to students and parents. They also utilize the district website and AIG brochure to inform stakeholders of opportunities. ESL/ML teachers translate forms and information for our Hispanic population. Various apps have been utilized to translate AIG information and materials into Mandarin and other languages as populations dictate. ESL/ML Specialists are invited to attend meetings with students and families to provide translation services and a thorough understanding of the total screening, identification, and placement process

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Columbus County Schools will continue to seek out new partnerships to enhance advanced learning opportunities within the community. Columbus County Schools will continue a two way partnership with all stakeholders. AIG updates will be provided through a variety of communication platforms.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Stakeholder feedback and responses
*	District AIG website
*	Articulation Agreement with IHEs

Documents

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

Columbus County Schools (240) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 6: Program Accountability

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.

* **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.

Columbus County Schools maintains an AIG plan that complies with state standards and policies as set forth by state legislation. This plan is continuously revised by the AIG Advisory Board and approved by the Columbus County Schools Board of Education and then submitted to SBE/DPI for review. The AIG Advisory Board, which includes all AIG Specialists, reviews new NCDPI standards for each plan revision year. The AIG Coordinator then uses NCDPI Local AIG Plan Review Feedback document to address any practices that were unclear in the previous plan. The NCDPI Unpacking Documents are used as a guide to further clarify and expound upon practices. Regional meetings are held at the district RESA and attended by the Lead AIG Specialist to support plan development and improvement. State informational meetings and conferences are attended in order to stay abreast of current policies and instructional strategies. Whiteville City Schools and Columbus County Schools collaborate to develop an AIG plan that is fluid within the county. Students transfer between our districts throughout the year. Having an AIG plan that is consistent allows seamless transition between districts for both students and AIG Specialists.

Columbus County Schools uses data consistently to monitor all facets of the district. The EOG historic audit is used to chart student performance and plan courses and teacher selection. Columbus County Schools also uses EVAAS data to monitor student growth and modify service delivery. Data is used to monitor underrepresented populations and revise the local plan accordingly. Survey data is used to improve the overall AIG program. EOG/EOC/EVAAS data has been used to develop the district plan and identify professional development needs such as differentiation. The AIG Specialists monitor the local plan annually for any changes in policies that need to be suggested to the AIG Coordinator for revisions as the population/program dictates.

* **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 Columbus County Schools AIG Program and plan are continuously monitored. Each AIG Specialist is responsible for ensuring proper implementation of the Local Plan at each school they serve. They are also available to monitor and assist the AIG program teachers, addressing best practices and curriculum development. This monitoring includes site visits, review of activity logs and monthly professional development to safeguard adherence to the Local Plan. Implementation of our AIG plan is made in accordance with current legislation and state policies. The state AIG consultant guides all school systems in plan development. The CCS AIG Specialists ensure that the AIG plan complies with current legislation and state policies. AIG Specialists currently research, compile, write, and review all elements of the local AIG plan with feedback from all stakeholders. AIG Specialists ensure ongoing monitoring of the AIG program and plan by regularly meeting with classroom teachers during PLCs, the Curriculum Director of the LEA, parents, and various stakeholders. Peer visits ensure CCS AIG program is focusing on the standards. The AIG Coordinator maintains and uses direct lines of communication with the state AIG consultant and the regional AIG coordinators. The AIG Coordinator also attends regional meetings to gain information on current programming and implementation initiatives and then shares the information from these meetings with the AIG Specialists, principals, district leadership and other stakeholders as needed. An informational Google Classroom has been created for district leadership, teachers, counselors, etc. All AIG policies and procedures are

housed here. Resources and ready made lessons are also here and ready for teachers to use. Concerns, suggestions, and complaints are reviewed on an independent basis. AIG program revisions are made in instances of inconsistency.

* **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.

The Columbus County Schools AIG Director and AIG Coordinator currently monitor the use of state funds allocated for the local AIG Program according to state policy. The Finance Director of the LEA prepares a budget that the AIG Director and AIG Coordinator use to fund salaries and purchase AIG materials to support initiatives outlined in the LEA's Strategic Plan.

* **Practice D**
Maintains and analyzes multiple sources of student achievement and growth data, as well as annual dropout data for AIG students. Data is disaggregated to recognize patterns and trends over time and inform mindsets, policies, and practices for equity and excellence.

The Columbus County Schools AIG Program will continue to maintain and analyze student performance, growth and drop-out rate through Schoolnet reports with all stakeholders to guide practices and improvements and to help determine if AIG student needs are being met; taking into consideration the holistic needs of gifted children. The program will continue to monitor those under-served populations and strive for equitable education of all students. Graduation rates and dropout data will continue to be monitored. Historically, identified students have not been a part of CCS drop out data. The growth of the AIG population is shared with the district at the beginning of each year. This growth is used to drive instruction, service delivery, placement and instructional strategies at each school. Beginning in third grade, student achievement (EOG, EOC, AP, Honors, CCP, ACT, SAT) is placed into a method for tracking performance and is continually monitored on a student by student basis as well as the program as a whole, until graduation.

* **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.

AIG Specialist will maintain individual student folders with referral and identification information. Identification, services and retention of students within the AIG program will be maintained in Powerschool using the Program Services and Identification Evidences Tab.

Maintains and analyzes multiple data sources focused on the referral, identification, services, and retention of students within the local AIG program by:

- Maintaining all student data sources using the district data trackers. All student data is placed in these trackers and shared with all personnel that teach students.
- All third grade students will participate in CogAT preparation enrichment sessions with AIG certified teachers. This will ensure equal access and opportunity for ALL students to be successful when screened for AIG placement.
- All third grade students in the district will participate in a universal screener. This online assessment is research based to eliminate biases based on a students' racial, ethnic, economic or other demographic factors.
- Monitoring the representation, statistics, and services of under-represented populations by the review of grades/participation/classwork during weekly data discussions in PLCs (with teachers, administrators, and AIG specialists).

- Ensuring AIG screening pools are completed and are used to aid in identification at each school
- Analyzing the AIG pool, screening, and AIG placement reports
- Collaborating with classroom teachers, EC teachers, EL teachers, school counselors, and other support personnel to determine potential candidates for AIG placement and services.
- Continually and consistently monitoring BOG/EOG/EOC, benchmarks, grades, and outstanding performance via testing data, PLCs, teacher, and district meetings to identify and support under-represented populations
- Analyzing trends of representation and achievement of underrepresented populations.
- AIG Specialists conference individually with all AIG students on a quarterly basis to ensure the retention of students in the AIG Program.

* **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.

Credentials for personnel serving AIG students are kept on file in the Human Resource Department. The Human Resource Department maintains current data on all personnel in the school district, including the credentials of personnel serving AIG students. Personnel are encouraged to take advantage of different PLCs and professional development in order to become versed in the needs of AIG students. Those interested in assisting with these populations are encouraged to pursue AIG licensure. Collaboration between Columbus County Schools Human Resources Department, administrators, and the AIG Coordinator ensures fidelity in maintaining and monitoring the credentials of teachers instructing AIG students.

* **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.

Columbus County Schools uses the following to elicit feedback from all stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program: AIG Advisory Council, Parent, Teacher, Student and Community Stakeholder feedback (available continuously on website), parent input (throughout year), Parent Nights (biannually), Parent/Teacher/Student conferences (3 times per year), Leadership meetings, Principals' meetings and annual DEP conferences. The AIG Department (AIG Director, AIG Coordinator and AIG Specialists) analyze and discuss feedback provided from all stakeholders to make changes and improvements to the AIG program. All stakeholders have a voice.

* **Practice H**
Shares local AIG program evaluation data with school and district personnel, students, parents/guardians, families, and other community stakeholders.

Upon receipt of the latest evaluation of the Columbus County Schools AIG Program from the NC Department of Public Instruction, AIG commendations, AIG student achievement data is shared to the public via board meetings, local media outlets, emails, and district meetings as well as at the school level. The AIG website and brochure is updated to include this information. The fact sheet that is shared at BOY PD meetings will be updated annually and distributed to stakeholders.

* **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.

All academically/intellectually gifted students, ages five through graduation, must be provided with a free appropriate public education. Free appropriate public education means that differentiated services will be provided for the academically/intellectually gifted student (1) at no expense to the parent, (2) according to the guidelines of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the Columbus County School System's Academically/Intellectually Gifted Program, and (3) according to the student's DEP (Differentiated Education Plan) or IDEP (Individual Education Plan).

To be included in Screening, Referral, and Evaluation, certain criteria must be met. The process is as follows:

SCREENING

•A general screening of aptitude of all third-grade students occurs annually.

•AIG School Review Team will meet and evaluate the data provided.

•Students performing 85% and above on the CogAT are placed in the student pool.

•BOG/EOG/EOC, benchmarks, historical data, and EVAAS data are used to identify additional students for the student pool.

EVALUATION

•If further testing is required; parents will be notified and must give written permission before any further evaluation has begun. (Ex: Full-Scale CogAT, Naglieri, and BOG/EOG/EOC - Testing and evaluation materials will be selected and administered with equity, so as not to be biased. Selected tests include those that measure educational achievement and aptitude. Underrepresented populations may require a nonverbal assessment.)

•Parents will be notified via Evaluation Results AIG form 3 if no placement is needed. The AIG School Review Team will determine those students meeting the aptitude/achievement criteria, and will continue the evaluation process which includes the following non-traditional pathways: Classroom performance, GRS, student interest survey.

•Parents will be notified of placement recommendations. If services are needed, an invitation to the conference will be sent home. If parents do not respond after three attempts, a copy of the DEP and Student Identification/Placement Recommendation/Acknowledgment will be sent to the home. Services will not be provided until required signed documentation and acknowledgment is received by the AIG Specialist.

•An annual review of services will be conducted. In addition to this general screening, stakeholders may refer a student by completing the AIG Referral Form.

REFERRAL

•When a stakeholder feels that a student is academically/intellectually gifted and may need differentiated educational services, he or she should complete an AIG Referral Form. The referral should be given to the AIG Specialist.

•After a child has been referred, in order to determine his/her need for differentiated services in the Academically/Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program, the AIG Specialist will discuss the referral with the classroom teacher. Grades, BOG/EOG/EOC, Classroom performance, and student motivation will be considered.

•The person making the referral will be notified if the AIG Team deems a need for evaluation. Student progress will be reviewed annually. A differentiated education plan (DEP) or an individual education plan (IDEP) must be written. Such a plan will reflect student strengths and include the options considered by the AIG School Review Team as appropriate to meet the student's educational needs. Recommendations of service delivery options for the current grade level will be reviewed at that time.

•If the parent/guardian disagrees with any decision(s) of the AIG School Review Team regarding referral, identification, or services, the following procedures will be followed:

RE-EVALUATION

Test results will be valid for two calendar years. After two calendar years, students may be reassessed if requested by the student, parent/guardian, teacher, or AIG Specialist. The referral process will be followed to determine the need for re-evaluation.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Columbus County Schools will accept AIG transfer students. Parents shall request entry into the CCS AIG program. The AIG School Review Team will evaluate student records and placement will be based on transfer records. All required paperwork must be completed and signed by a parent before the transfer student will begin receiving services.

RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

If parents do not agree with the school's decision concerning eligibility, they have the right to submit the results of an independent educational and intellectual evaluation. A qualified examiner, who is not employed by the educational agency responsible for the child's education, must give this evaluation. Measures of intellectual aptitude and achievement are only two of the criteria used in determining eligibility; therefore, independently conducted additional measures do not necessarily guarantee placement in the district's AIG Program although those results will be considered.

The school system does not pay for independent educational and intellectual evaluations.

1. The parent/guardian should submit a request in writing requesting a conference with the AIG School Review Team.

2. If the parent/guardian still disagrees with the committee's decision, the parent/guardian may appeal the decision by making a written request to the principal within 10 school days of the initial/placement notice. The principal will review the decision of the team and grant the parent/guardian a conference within 10 school days of the parental request. After the principal and parent/guardian have met, the principal will meet with the AIG School Review Team and will, together, make a final placement decision. She/he will provide the parent/guardian a written decision within 10 school days of the conference.

3. If the final placement decision fails to resolve the disagreement, the parent/guardian may appeal in writing to the AIG Director. The appeal must be made within 10 school days of the final placement decision. The AIG Director will review the appeal and then respond in writing to the principal and parent/guardian within 10 school days.

4. If the AIG Director's decision fails to resolve the disagreement, the parent/guardian may appeal to the superintendent. The appeal to the superintendent must be made within 10 school days of receiving the AIG Director's response. The superintendent will review the appeal and respond in writing within ten school days.

5. If the superintendent's decision fails to resolve the disagreement satisfactorily, the parent/guardian may appeal to the Columbus County Schools Board of Education. The appeal must be made in writing within 10 school days of receiving the superintendent's response. The board will confer with the AIG Director and offer a final written decision within 30 school days.

6. If the board's decision fails to resolve the disagreement, the parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The hearing will be limited to consideration of (1) whether the local school unit improperly failed to identify the student as

academically/intellectually gifted or (2) whether the local plan of services for the student has been implemented appropriately. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge will make a decision based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law. The decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on all parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. Attorney fees are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

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*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Columbus County Schools will collect feedback on a regular basis from all stakeholders. We will also improve the collection of meaningful data so that we align our program visions and goals to best meet the needs of gifted learners.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Local AIG Plan with School Board Approval
*	State testing reports
*	AIG Budget

Documents

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

Local Board of Education Approval

Columbus County Schools (240) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:
05/12/2025

AIG Related Documents

Columbus County Schools (240) 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	Approved CCS Local AIG Plan 2025-2026

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	

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Phrase	Definition