

Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

**Haywood County Schools (440) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0**

\* LEA Superintendent's Name:

Dr. Trevor Putnam

\* LEA AIG Contact Name:

Cook, Teresa - [tcook@haywood.k12.nc.us](mailto:tcook@haywood.k12.nc.us) ▼

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)

The Haywood County Board of Education is committed to the HCS vision: **Success for today**, through the cooperative involvement of students, parents, educators, and the total community; **Preparation for tomorrow** through academic achievement for all students and the development of thinking and reasoning skills; and **Learning for a lifetime** which assures well-informed, productive citizens for the future. Our mission for the AIG program is to identify and nurture the unique strengths and potential of all gifted learners through equitable, comprehensive, and responsive practices. We are committed to fostering academic, intellectual, social, and emotional growth by delivering differentiated instruction, intentional programming, and strong partnerships with families and the community. We envision a learning environment where every gifted student is recognized, supported, and empowered to achieve their fullest potential. Through inclusive identification practices, rigorous curriculum, and a commitment to excellence and equity, we aim to cultivate lifelong learners, innovative thinkers, and compassionate leaders prepared to thrive in an ever-changing global society.

**FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)**

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* \$ 393,564.00	* \$ 7,480.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 48,746.67

Standard 1: Student Identification

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**Standard 1: Student Identification**

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

**\* Practice A**

Develops both screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels. Provides opportunities, including universal screening, for every student to show their strengths and talents.

The district's process for screening and referral leading to identification of academically gifted students is a comprehensive approach that combines data-driven analysis and collaboration among a variety of personnel with relationships with students. Initially, data from standardized assessments, classroom performance, and teacher observations are used to identify students who may demonstrate advanced cognitive abilities. However, the process goes beyond just numbers—educators and staff rely on their insights and relationships with students to recognize traits such as creativity, curiosity, and problem-solving skills that might not always be captured by formal assessments. This dual approach ensures a holistic view of each student's capabilities, fostering a more equitable and accurate identification process. Ultimately, the goal is to create an inclusive system where all potential gifted learners are recognized and provided with the appropriate support to thrive.

**Screening**

The screening process builds a comprehensive learner profile based on data collected from state summative assessments, district benchmark assessments, classroom formative data and observations and/or IQ/Aptitude testing. The collaboration of AIG specialists, classroom teachers, Exceptional Children's teachers, Multilingual Learner specialists, psychologists, counselors, school administrators and accountability personnel is imperative in ensuring equity for all students is maintained in the process. Qualitative and quantitative data collected may include:

Grades K-2

- MClass data monitored at the BOY, MOY and EOY Benchmarks
- K-2 Math Assessments
- Grade 2 Case 21 Benchmark Reading and Mathematics Assessments
- Academic Performance/Progress Reports
- ACCESS Assessment (Multilingual Learners)
- Aptitude Tests

Grade 2 Universal Screener

- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)

Grades 3-8

▪ NC Checkin 2.0 Reading and Mathematics Assessments Grades 3-8

- Beginning of Grade 3 Reading Assessment
- Grade 3 MClass data monitored at the BOY, MOY, and EOY Benchmarks
- EVAAS Diagnostic Data for individual student growth in grades 4-8 mathematics and grades 3-8 reading
- EVAAS Projection Data
- TE21 Benchmark Reading and Mathematics Assessments
- End of Grade Reading and Mathematics Assessments
- Aptitude Tests

Grades 9-12

- PreACT, ACT, WorkKeys
- PSAT, SAT
- End of Course Assessments for NC Math 1, NC Math 3, English 2, Biology both fall and spring semesters
- Advanced Placement Exams
- Aptitude Tests
- EVAAS Projection Data

Universal Screener

The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is administered to every grade 2 student in the district during the spring semester. Abilities or aptitude testing is a valuable tool for assessing a student's potential for learning by evaluating their cognitive strengths and learning tendencies. These tests provide insights into how well a student can grasp new concepts, solve problems creatively, and apply their skills in various contexts. CogAT offers detailed information on students' Verbal, Quantitative, and Figural (Nonverbal) reasoning.

**Referral**

Referral forms, which include characteristics of gifted students outlined in the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act, are available for teachers, parents, and self-nominating students. These forms, available on the HCS AIG website, provide a clear set of criteria that align with the key traits often seen in gifted learners, such as exceptional problem-solving skills, creativity, intellectual curiosity, and the ability to quickly grasp complex concepts. By offering these forms to teachers, parents, and students, the referral process encourages a collaborative approach in recognizing giftedness and ensures that all students who show these characteristics are given the opportunity to be considered for the Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program. This inclusive process helps ensure that potential gifted students, including those who might not be immediately identified through traditional assessments, are appropriately recognized and supported in their academic growth.

### **\* 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.

Haywood County Schools currently identifies students in the areas of Academic Reading (AR), Academic Math (AM), Academically Gifted (AG), Intellectually Gifted (IG), and Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI/AIG). Students must meet the established criteria in at least 2 of the following areas: Aptitude Testing, Achievement Testing and/or State-normed Grade Level Assessments.

### **Aptitude Testing**

#### **CogAT**

By measuring reasoning, critical thinking, and adaptability, aptitude tests offer a deeper understanding of a student's readiness to thrive in diverse learning environments. They highlight areas where a student may excel, suggesting strategies for personalized learning, while also identifying opportunities for growth, ensuring that each student's unique capabilities are nurtured for future success. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) provides an Ability Profile, a valuable tool that shows a student's performance level and patterns across the three CogAT batteries. By using the CogAT ability profile to inform instructional decisions, educators can create a more personalized learning experience. In previous plan cycles, a universal screener was administered in grade 3. As a result of parent/teacher feedback, universal screening will take place in Grade 2 for the 2025-2028 plan cycle. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) will be administered as a universal screener in the spring of Grade 2 for all students with the exception of students meeting the criteria for the Extended Content Standards. The CogAT may also be utilized for further testing at other grade levels if necessary. The CogAT measures a student's reasoning and problem-solving skills in the areas of verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal thinking.

#### **NNAT3**

The Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT) will be administered as necessary for identifying students in grades K-12. The test focuses on nonverbal reasoning skills, providing a fair and unbiased assessment of a student's cognitive abilities. Because the test does not rely on English language skills or require verbal communication, it is particularly well-suited for students from diverse backgrounds.

#### **Other Aptitude Tests**

The Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT), Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) and other aptitude tests are also acceptable for use in identification with the approval of the AIG team and director.

### **Achievement Testing**

Achievement testing is administered in the areas of reading and/or mathematics. The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT IV) is utilized as the primary achievement test instrument. Other achievement tests may be used if deemed necessary by the AIG team and director.

#### **Grade Level Assessments**

Grade level assessments used for identification include the following:

- End of Grade
- End of Course
- Beginning of Grade 3 Reading

\*Aptitude and achievement scores will be used for student identification and placement purposes for a period of three years. Students may be administered an aptitude or achievement assessment no more than once every other year.

### **Grades K-12 Identification**

**Testing Windows**

Student testing for AIG identification may occur throughout the year if the need arises. Most testing will occur during two windows, January and May-June/August. January testing may occur after monitoring the BOG3, MOY MClass scores for grades 1-2, and EOC scores for high school students. Upon completion during spring semester of the universal screener (grade 2), Math Assessments (grades K-2), MClass EOY (grades K-2), EOGs (grades 3-8), and EOCs (grades 8-12), further testing will be conducted for students with qualifying scores in May-June/August.

**Identification Criteria**

Students must meet the established criteria in at least 2 of the 3 following areas: Aptitude Testing, Achievement Testing and/or State-normed Grade Level Assessments.

**Academic Reading (AR)**

- Aptitude
  - 92nd percentile or greater in Verbal subscore composite (VN or VQ) or 92nd percentile in full-scale composite (VQN)
- Achievement
  - 92nd percentile or greater in the area of reading
- Grade Level Assessment
  - 95th percentile or greater on BOG/EOG Reading or EOC English II assessment

**Academic Math (AM)**

- Aptitude
  - 92nd percentile or greater in Quantitative subscore composite (QN or VQ) or 92nd percentile in full-scale composite (VQN)
  - 92nd percentile or greater NNAT3
- Achievement
  - 92nd percentile or greater in the area of mathematics
- Grade Level Assessment
  - 95th percentile or greater on EOG Mathematics or EOC NC Math 1 or NC Math 3 assessment

**Academically Gifted Reading and Math (AG)**

- Meets the identification criteria for BOTH Academic Reading and Academic Math

Intellectually Gifted (IG)

- 96th percentile overall composite (VQN) score in aptitude test but does not meet criteria in achievement or grade level assessments

**OR**

- 96th percentile NNAT3 but does not meet criteria in achievement or grade level assessments

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI/AIG)


- Meets the identification criteria for Academically Gifted Reading and Math AND scores 96th percentile or greater on aptitude full-scale composite (VQN)

**OR**

- 98th percentile or greater on aptitude full-scale composite (VQN) (Automatically qualifies in all areas without additional testing)

**Transfer Students**

Haywood County Schools will honor the AIG identification for any student transferring in from a school/district within the state with an approved NC AIG plan. The AIG team (teacher, principal, assistant principal, lead teacher, AIG specialist, AIG director) will analyze test scores, performance data and teacher observations to determine appropriate services in HCS. The AIG specialist will meet with the parent/guardian and the DEP will be updated to reflect current services. Records will be reviewed for students transferring from a private/charter school within the state without an approved NC AIG plan or transferring from outside the state of North Carolina. These students will be required to meet HCS AIG identification criteria for placement. Additional testing will be conducted, if necessary.

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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.

HCS implements a collaborative approach to screening, referral and identification procedures to ensure the exceptional abilities of under-represented populations are recognized and supported. A comparison of 2024-25 AIG headcount data with the total student population for Haywood County Schools indicates higher discrepancies among the student groups; Hispanic, Multilingual Learners and Students with Disabilities.

**Screening**

The district conducts mass screening in grade 2 as an inclusive measure for all students. School Psychologists, EC teachers and classroom teachers partner to build awareness of twice-exceptional (2e) students—those who demonstrate both advanced intellectual abilities and learning differences. By monitoring IQ and aptitude testing results, educators can identify the unique strengths and talents of 2e students. Collaboration with the Multilingual Learner Department ensures that WIDA ACCESS scores are evaluated annually to identify students making substantial growth in English language acquisition.

**Referral**

The goal of the referral process is to ensure that no student is overlooked, particularly those who may not have been highlighted in the initial screening process. All educational departments in the district—including Exceptional Children (EC), Multilingual Learners (ML), Curriculum, Accountability, Career and Technical Education (CTE), as well as administrators and coaches—meet regularly and collaborate continuously to ensure open communication and awareness across all areas. This ongoing collaboration allows for a thorough and coordinated approach that is extended to the school level. All referral forms include unique traits students from under-represented populations might exhibit. Parent referral forms are offered in Spanish and can be translated to additional languages as necessary.

**Identification**

Alternate options may be used for identification. The Non-Verbal subtest of the CogAT and the NNAT3 require no spoken or written language. These assessments may be used for identifying students of diverse ethnic or academic backgrounds.

This integrated effort guarantees that all students, regardless of language, ethnic background, socioeconomic status or learning differences are considered fairly and provided with the necessary support and opportunities to reach their full academic potential.

**Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG**

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
<b>Female</b>	---	---	---	---	---	---	10.83%
<b>Male</b>	---	---	5.25%	---	9.92%	---	12.62%
<b>Total</b>	---	---	<5%	---	7.69%	---	11.77%

**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.

The district maintains a strong commitment to ensuring equity, consistency, and fidelity in the implementation of the screening, referral, and identification processes for the AIG program. To achieve this, the district has established a monitoring system that is supported by resources, internal audits, and ongoing professional development.

The foundation of this system is the development and distribution of standardized guidelines that clearly outline each step of the AIG identification process, from initial screening to final placement. These guidelines include documents and forms such as the Referral Form, Eligibility Form, Parent Notification Letters, Identification Flowchart, AIG Handbook and FAQ. The district ensures that all schools and parents have access to these materials through the AIG Google Classroom and AIG website.

To ensure these guidelines are implemented consistently, the AIG specialists review AIG records annually. This includes examining documentation related to referrals, screening results, eligibility decisions, parent communications, and placement decisions. AIG specialists maintain and update the AIG records of

students, including those who are referred, and/or screened, but not identified. Records are updated during each testing window, as necessary, and audited annually to ensure procedural fidelity. This information is stored in both the student AIG folder and electronically. AIG identification information is entered and updated in the NC Student Information System. All records/folders transfer to the new school as students transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school.

To ensure that school personnel are well-equipped to carry out the AIG identification process with consistency and integrity, the district provides ongoing professional development. Training sessions are offered at the beginning of each school year and as needed throughout the year. These sessions cover topics such as understanding gifted characteristics in diverse learners, using multiple criteria for identification, recognizing implicit bias, interpreting test data, completing required documentation, and effectively engaging families in the referral and identification process.

**\* Practice E**

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

Effective communication is essential to ensuring that our district's Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) screening, referral, and identification processes are clear, transparent, and accessible to teachers, families and the community. Based on valuable feedback from our recent parent survey, we are working to improve our communication efforts and provide greater clarity around these important processes.

- Flow charts illustrating the processes and procedures are provided to teachers and parents at the beginning of each school year and are available to the community on the website.
- A video, outlining and clarifying the processes will be easily accessible on the website or readily available to send to parents through email, text or Remind.
- An informative Frequently Asked Questions document will be available on the website.
- AIG Specialists send notices home and conference with parents/guardians/students to review screening, referral, and identification information
- Teachers are provided information about these processes during annual presentations in the schools. Gifted traits, including those in under-represented populations, are presented. Specialists collaborate regularly with classroom teachers, other specialists, and principals to help maintain open communication and understanding of services and individual student needs.
- Screening, referral, and identification procedures are reviewed annually with district personnel and updates and statistics are provided by the AIG director during monthly principal meetings and Curriculum and Instruction meetings.
- All information is outlined in the Haywood County Schools AIG Handbook made available during meetings and accessible on the website for teachers, parents and stakeholders.

All informative documents will be available in English and Spanish. ML teachers and AIG specialists will collaborate to communicate the process to parents in other languages as necessary.

**\* 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.



The AIG program for Haywood County Schools maintains individual documentation for each referred student. Evidence gathered is documented throughout the screening, referral and identification process.

1. A folder is created for each student referred through parent/teacher referral forms and/or elevated assessment scores. The data is analyzed by the AIG specialist and the parent is contacted to discuss the evaluation. The referral and/or assessment data is placed in the folder.
2. If additional data is required, parents/guardians receive a consent for testing and an AIG Handbook explaining the program and due process procedures.
3. Scores from all additional testing are documented on the Eligibility form.
4. If students do not meet the eligibility criteria, the non-identification determination is noted on the Eligibility form. This form, along with all other evidence, is maintained in the student record/folder for future reference and monitoring of the student's academic needs. The eligibility report and determination results are shared with the parent/guardian.
5. The AIG specialist collaborates with the classroom teacher to determine the unique learning needs for identified students and create the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). Parents/Guardians are invited in for a conference to discuss the Eligibility report and area(s) of identification and to provide feedback on the DEP.
6. All data in student records/folders and in the NC Student Information System (NCSIS) is updated as necessary with initial and additional identification areas. In the future, eligible qualitative and quantitative data may be entered into NCSIS.
7. All student records/folders will be transferred with cumulative folders within the district. Identified AIG students' records (Eligibility Form, Needs Determination Form, current DEP) will be transferred with cumulative records to schools outside the district.
8. Student records are maintained for 2 years beyond graduation.

**\* 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.

In order to effectively meet the unique learning needs of K–12 students identified as Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG), the district develops and implements a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) that outlines the differentiated curriculum and instruction services to be provided. This plan serves as a living document, reviewed and revised annually, to ensure alignment with the student's evolving needs, strengths, and educational goals.

The DEP is developed through a collaborative process involving a team that typically includes AIG specialists, classroom teachers, parents or guardians, students, and school counselors and administrators when needed. This collaborative approach ensures that the plan reflects a comprehensive understanding of the student's profile and supports their academic and social-emotional development.

The development of the DEP is informed by a variety of data sources to ensure an appropriate match between the student's needs and the services provided. These data sources include cognitive assessments and the aptitude student profile narrative, standardized achievement data from district benchmarks or End-of-Grade/End-of-Course assessments, teacher observations and recommendations, classroom performance, student work samples or portfolios, interest inventories, and student interviews. This ensures that the services outlined in the DEP are both targeted and responsive to the individual learner.

**Elementary and Middle School**

Each DEP includes the student's identified areas of giftedness and the specific differentiated services that will be provided. These services might include resource class, an AIG course, curriculum compacting, subject or grade acceleration, cluster grouping, consultation, and access to advanced coursework. The

plan also outlines content modification, special programming, instructional strategies and enrichment activities that align with the student's learning style and interests.

**High School**

The four-year plan outlines specific services and options such as enrollment in Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), Career and College Promise (CCP), CTE or dual enrollment courses. It may also include independent study opportunities, internships, project-based learning, or academic competitions. The plan is updated annually as the student grows and their interests and long term goals evolve.

The DEP or 4-year plan is reviewed at least once per year, typically during the beginning of year AIG meetings/conferences. During this review, the AIG specialists and parents/guardians discuss the student's progress, determine the continued appropriateness of services, and make any necessary adjustments. Parents and guardians are encouraged to actively participate in the discussion and decision-making process. They are provided with a copy of the updated plan.

As students transition from one school level to another, the plan helps maintain continuity and supports consistent academic challenge. This includes transition support such as orientation events, meetings between AIG staff at different school levels, and early planning for advanced coursework or academic pathways in high school.

**\* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Monitor ML and EC referrals for equitable practices.
- Better and more frequent communication with schools, teachers, parents.

**Planned Sources of Evidence**

\* AIG Website

\* AIG Referral Form

\* AIG Eligibility Form

\* Identification Criteria Flow Chart - At a Glance

\* AIG Parent Handbook

\* Meeting and presentation agendas and minutes

\* Shared AIG Drive

\* AIG Folders (identified and non-identified)

**Documents**

Document Template

Document/Link

N/A

AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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**Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community**

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

**\* Practice A**

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

The district utilizes a comprehensive approach to services that recognizes the full spectrum of gifted learners' needs—academic, intellectual, social, and emotional. A range of services is provided to address each of these areas. This approach ensures that the program is multifaceted, personalized, and designed to foster the optimal development of gifted students.

Identified students in all grade spans have an individualized Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) that outlines the academic and intellectual support they need according to their strengths and identified area(s). These plans may include strategies for acceleration, enrichment, or specialized instruction to address their specific strengths and interests. Classroom teachers, AIG specialists, EL and EC teachers (as necessary) and counselors receive student DEPs and collaborate to tailor services for each student. A Haywood County Schools Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Guidebook serves as a resource for all faculty, including MTSS teams and Professional Learning Communities. The guide is a tool for ensuring our learning environments promote equitable access to success for all students. The resource outlines differentiation strategies for implementation within content/skills, the learning process, and the learning product and ways to cultivate culturally and linguistically responsive instruction.

**K-5 (AG, IG, AIG)**

Cluster grouping by AIG identification as well as advanced mathematics legislation criteria is utilized in each school. In addition, school Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) teams and grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) continually monitor students and adjust the learning environment within the classroom as necessary. AIG specialists may provide consultative services, such as professional development, coaching, co-teaching opportunities and resources for teachers regarding acceleration, differentiation, extension and enrichment of the curriculum standards in the classroom. Specialists also provide direct services to students each week. Activities, projects and learning experiences encourage student inquiry, problem solving, creativity, critical thinking skills and cultural/global awareness. Because of this holistic approach to thinking and learning and the opportunity for broadening potential, students are served in all areas, regardless of specific identification area.



**6-8 (AG, IG, AIG)**

Cluster grouping by AIG identification as well as advanced mathematics legislation criteria is utilized in each school. In addition, school Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) teams and grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) continually monitor students and adjust the learning environment within the classroom as necessary. AIG specialists may provide consultative services, such as professional development, coaching, co-teaching opportunities and resources for teachers regarding acceleration, differentiation, extension and enrichment of the curriculum standards in the classroom. Each middle school also offers an elective AIG/STEM course taught by an AIG specialist. The course delves deeper into curriculum standards for multiple subjects, therefore students are served in all areas, regardless of identification. Lessons are designed to meet the strengths, needs and special interests of individual students through careful planning and opportunities for student-directed topics and activities. AIG specialists incorporate STEM, durable skills, leadership development, cultural/global awareness and career exploration through problem and project based learning experiences.

### 9-12 (AG, IG, AIG)

The district has made significant strides in ensuring a continuum of AIG services at the high school level, providing students with an array of opportunities designed to foster academic and intellectual growth. School Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) teams and department Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) continually monitor students and adjust the learning environment within the classroom as necessary. A new AIG position designated to the high school level has been introduced to support colleagues in acceleration, differentiation, extension and enrichment in the classroom and to support gifted students in navigating their high school education. This role helps students identify appropriate courses and provides guidance on academic planning. It is crucial in assisting students with selecting courses that align with their strengths, abilities, interests, and future academic goals, ensuring they are appropriately challenged and supported. Honors courses in both core and elective subjects provide more rigorous coursework and online courses open additional access to a broader range of subjects, particularly those aligned with specific interests or potential career plans. The district has strengthened the Advanced Placement (AP) program through the creation of the AP Academy. By combining some AP courses for our high schools, the district has been able to offer additional AP courses that weren't offered in prior years. These new offerings help extend learning opportunities for students who are ready for more challenging material. Implementation of the AP Capstone Diploma program has also proved successful. This diploma offers students a competitive edge when applying to colleges, as it demonstrates a high level of academic commitment and intellectual curiosity. A dual enrollment program through collaboration between the district and Hayward Community College allows students to take college-level courses while still in high school. Students may earn college credit through both the AP and Career and College Promise programs.

By implementing a comprehensive, collaborative, and flexible approach to AIG services, the district can ensure that the academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners are met across all grade levels and learning environments. This model not only provides the right academic challenges but also supports the holistic development of these students, preparing them for success both academically and personally.

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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.

In recent years, the district has faced significant challenges that have impacted the mental health and well-being of all students. The pandemic disrupted traditional learning environments and introduced significant worries, isolation, and mental health challenges. The district experienced two major floods within a span of four years, impacting students' homes and communities and leaving some students feeling overwhelmed, unsafe, or displaced. The closing of a major employer in the district has contributed to economic instability, resulting in stress, anxiety, and uncertainty for many students. The district has implemented a comprehensive approach to addressing the social and emotional needs of all students and recognizes that gifted learners often face unique challenges that require tailored support.

The following services span across all grade levels (K-12) and learning environments, aiming to provide a supportive and nurturing environment that fosters both academic success and emotional resilience.

- At least one teacher, counselor or administrator in each school has now completed Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) training. The district's goal is for the training of 100% of faculty/staff through the train-the-trainer model. The training focuses on relationships and connection and provides research and interventions for addressing the complex needs of children who have experienced trauma.
- Curriculum and Instruction Team book study - The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt
- Grant funded Counselor's Assistant at each school

▪ Each school has a system for tracking non-academic tiered supports and monitoring data

- Attendance
- Discipline Referrals
- Mental Health Referrals
- Use of Linewize for monitoring internet usage for concerning behavior
- Say Something anonymous reporting system
- Neptune Navigate - internet safety course

Teachers, AIG specialists, school counselors, and other support staff work together to provide a well-rounded support system. This collaboration allows for a coordinated approach that addresses the emotional and social well-being of AIG students.

K-5

Guidance counselors and teachers collaborate to provide classroom lessons that promote social/emotional health using a variety of resources, including the Second Step and Social Thinking curricula. Lessons on topics such as resilience, kindness, emotional regulation, and coping strategies equip students with essential skills for managing stress, building empathy, and fostering healthy relationships. Counselors may also provide individual and group counseling sessions tailored to the unique needs of learners, offering a safe space for students to discuss personal challenges and concerns. Counselor assistants conduct frequent "check-ins," establishing positive relationships and connections with students. School MTSS teams and grade-level PLCs monitor the non-academic tiered supports needed for each student and communicate and collaborate with AIG specialists regarding gifted students. Specialists continually incorporate social/emotional topics such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and working together into AIG units to create an environment where students feel safe, supported, and valued.

6-8

Guidance counselors and student leadership teams collaborate to implement Monday Matters. This partnership pushes out social/emotional educational content to students and teachers that emphasizes relationship and coping skills as well as durable skills such as resilience, grit and determination. Counseling assistants work closely with students individually or in groups, connecting these essential skills to everyday school behaviors, like applying a learner's mindset to attendance or using adaptability to navigate difficult problems and situations. School MTSS teams and grade-level PLCs monitor the non-academic tiered supports needed for each student and communicate and collaborate with AIG specialists regarding gifted students. AIG specialists weave social/emotional well-being topics and durable skills into the AIG/STEM course classroom discussions and activities.

9-12

High school counselors offer individual student support, allowing students to express their feelings, work through challenges, and develop coping strategies. They may also lead group sessions focused on specific issues like grief, anxiety, or bullying. Counselors and counselor assistants conduct "check-ins" with struggling students and communicate with parents, teachers, and administrators. A team at each school, including outside mental health professionals create a plan for students in crisis. The AIG specialist dedicated to the high school level conducts wellness check-ins specifically for AIG students. The specialist discusses mindfulness practices for managing stress, staying calm, improving focus, and emotional regulation. The role not only ensures that gifted students are challenged but assists students in dealing with their unique social/emotional needs and with maintaining a balanced workload.

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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.

**District Priorities**

The Haywood County Board of Education is committed to the HCS vision: Success for today, through the cooperative involvement of students, parents, educators, and the total community; Preparation for tomorrow through academic achievement for all students and the development of thinking and reasoning skills; and Learning for a lifetime which assures well-informed, productive citizens for the future.

The AIG Director attends monthly School Board meetings and is a member of the district Curriculum and Instruction Team (C&I). All departments, including curriculum supervisors, Accountability, EC, ML, CTE, HR, Arts and PE, and the HCS Foundation are represented on the C&I team, ensuring the consideration of all students in district initiatives. The C&I team works closely with the superintendent and assistant superintendent in the development of the District Improvement Plan. Therefore, the AIG program is aligned with the district's overall educational priorities and policies. Strategic, thoughtful and intentional practices for AIG students are considered in Haywood County Schools District Improvement Plan 2024-2026 objectives.

**District Improvement Plan Objective**

**Increase authentic student engagement across all grade levels in the school system by implementing research-based resources and practices in ELA, math and science instruction, supported by professional development and coaching, with a focus on meaningful and engaging technology integration.**

- The district is piloting CKLA resources across K-8, incorporating research-based resources and activities to enhance student literacy and engagement. All C&I members became familiar with these resources for at least one grade level for discussion and evaluation with the team. Opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning and "high ceiling" lesson constructs were noted for increasing differentiation and shared with school personnel.
- A team composed of district administrators and school personnel is working to create exemplar research-based best practices and evidences for subject area honors courses to strengthen learning opportunities and increase equitability in the classroom experience.
- The AIG director is presenting a continuing series on Rigor in the Classroom (Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships) during principal and lead teacher meetings for each grade span.

**District Improvement Plan Objective**

**Ensure that 100% of staff members in Haywood County are trained in Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). This initiative aims to mitigate behavioral issues, improve academic performance, increase overall attendance rates and emphasize the integral role of building strong relationships while fostering a supportive learning environment.**

- One staff member at all schools is trained in TBRI and all staff, including the AIG director and specialists, will be trained on the model.
- The new AIG specialist position in the high schools was created, in part, to foster relationships with high school students and serve as a support for the unique challenges of gifted students
- The AIG director has included Relationships as part of a Rigor series for administrators. A focus on teacher expectations and efficacy, building a culture of collaboration in the classroom, and forming intentional and differentiated relationships with students includes sections of Andrew Sharos' All 4s and 5s and Michael and Nita Creekmore's Every Connection Matters.

**District Improvement Plan Objective**

**Establish and promote clear career pathways in partnership with Haywood Community College leveraging resources like XELLO for career management, to enhance student exploration and preparation for future careers.**

- The middle school career development coordinator meets with every AIG student in grades 6-8, individually, to explore interest survey data and career planning software results and begin a plan for college/career.

- An administrator in HCS was part of the Portrait of a Graduate Design Team and provides professional development to the district. This framework prepares students not only for academic success but for the challenges of the modern workforce and society. AIG specialists incorporate the framework's durable skills in lessons and activities with students and include them in beginning of the year presentations to teachers/schools.

HCS has a framework in place for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. Some members of the C&I Team, including the AIG director, also serve as the district MTSS team. A team at each school consists of administrators, lead teachers, counselors and grade level teachers. Time for the work is provided through PLC meetings and includes analysis of attendance, testing, formative assessment and observation data. Ongoing, dedicated professional development for MTSS practices provides training and resources to personnel at the district level and in all schools to ensure proper support of student academic, behavior, and social/emotional needs. Effective communication and collaboration throughout the process will ensure that every student, including those identified as gifted, receives the best support across all tiers of instruction and intervention. Further strengthening our teams will build capacity for the successful and sustained implementation of the MTSS model and total school/district improvement.

**Resources**

State allocated funding is utilized to support services and programming outlined in the AIG plan. The Haywood County Schools Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting educational opportunities for students and staff. The Foundation assists with the acquisition of additional grants, funding and donations that help support advanced programming such as STEM Camp, Summer Camps/Internships and Governor's School.

**\* Practice D**

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

Each student in Haywood County Schools is evaluated individually for scheduling purposes, taking into account assessment data, learner profiles, EVAAS growth data, and student interests. Growth measures provide insight into teacher strengths, allowing for the strategic placement of students with educators whose expertise aligns with their needs, ensuring optimal success in the educational environment. Teachers use flexible grouping techniques and students are grouped based on their current needs or strengths, and provide targeted instruction to ensure that each student is challenged appropriately.

**K-5**

AIG students are clustered in classrooms based upon area of identification. This allows for collaboration and interaction with peers with similar gifts and strengths. Formative assessment and observation data provide ongoing feedback to guide instruction. This data informs MTSS teams and PLCs in flexible grouping throughout the year both within the classroom and across grade levels. Teachers adjust grouping and instruction to meet the varying needs of students, ensuring that each student has the support they need to meet the standards, whether through additional resources, enrichment, or alternative learning strategies. This mastery-based approach allows for flexibility, ensuring that students have a deep understanding of each standard before advancing.

**6-8**

At the middle school level, AIG students are grouped in teams based on their area of identification. These students, along with other students with advanced learning needs, progress through core classes together and are provided the opportunity to self-select elective courses that align with their personal interests and strengths. Each school offers an optional AIG/STEM course, available to both AIG students and those identified for talent development monitoring. MTSS/PLCs utilize data-driven, flexible grouping within these teams, allowing teachers to tailor instruction to meet the specific academic needs of each student. Co-teaching across teams may also be utilized for further flexible grouping.

**9-12**

Scheduling teams use AIG identification area, assessment data and EVAAS projection measures to cluster students in core courses in the high school setting. Benchmark and formative assessment data are utilized to inform flexible grouping within classrooms, while co-teaching strategies leverage the unique expertise and strengths of educators. Both students and parents are actively involved in the course selection process, providing opportunities for flexibility and increased rigor aligned with individual student academic goals and preferences. The high school AIG specialist meets with both parents and students to discuss scheduling options.



**\* 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.

Communication within the district is imperative to ensure teachers, school administrators, and support staff are adequately informed regarding the AIG program, plan and services, as well as any legislation and/or regulation changes related to gifted education. A recent district survey of personnel indicated opportunities for improvement in this area. In response, the district is committed to enhancing existing support systems and introducing additional professional development initiatives and communication strategies to ensure the successful implementation of the AIG plan.

- Monthly communication with school administrators regarding AIG plan, legislation or regulation updates during grade span meetings
- Revise AIG website to make important documents, policies, and procedures easily accessible. Update content regularly to create a more timely, comprehensive resource for personnel, parents and stakeholders.
- Revise/update AIG Handbook posted on the website for personnel and stakeholders. Post handbook on AIG Google Classroom.
- Create a Quick Guide with easy to read graphics and charts outlining the AIG plan. Post the Quick Guide on the website and distribute during beginning of year presentation
- Maintain AIG Google Classroom available to all HCS employees, featuring a comprehensive collection of enrichment activities and resources aligned with the Standard Course of Study. Include AIG Plan Quick Guide.
- Revise/update AIG specialists' common presentation for beginning of year staff meetings. Include referral and identification procedures, program updates, and differentiated services information and resources
- Create newsletter for ongoing communication with personnel, parents and stakeholders. Post on website and send out electronically every two months.
- Provide additional professional development opportunities throughout the year and during the district-wide PD day, with both in-district AIG specialists and outside presenters to further support delivery of differentiated services and instruction.

**\* Practice F**

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

A well-organized transition process helps students adapt to the new environment, meet academic expectations, and feel supported throughout the change. Transitions in the district involve a collaborative effort among administrators, support personnel, classroom teachers, and AIG specialists. Ongoing communication with Exceptional Children (EC) and Multilingual (ML) educators is essential to address the specific needs of twice-exceptional and ML/AIG students. The district has prioritized this collaboration and continuously strives to enhance the transition process, ensuring it is as successful and seamless as possible.

**Grade Transitions**

AIG specialists review Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) annually with teachers to ensure that services are appropriately designed and delivered to meet students' needs and there is a continuation of services between grade levels. As students are initially identified during the school year or receive an additional area of identification, DEPs are created/ revised and shared with classroom teachers.

### **School Transitions**

Effective measures for transitioning students to the next school are essential to ensure a smooth and effective shift. In addition to new school visits, transition meetings are held each spring for rising 6th grade AIG students and parents. Middle school AIG specialists share information regarding scheduling, courses, and services. Elementary and middle school AIG Specialists review individual student academic information and transfer student AIG records. Middle school specialists collaborate with core and elective teachers to communicate the specific needs of AIG students identified in the DEPs, ensuring seamless continuity of services and support across all subject areas.

Students transitioning to high school receive comprehensive support through a collaborative effort. Each spring, administrators, counselors, career development coordinators, teachers, and the high school AIG specialist visit middle schools to engage with 8th-grade students and provide information on scheduling options. High schools host multiple orientation events for both students and parents, where representatives from various departments present on advanced course offerings, including Career and Technical Education (CTE), Advanced Placement (AP), Honors courses, and Career and College Promise opportunities. Additionally, a video presentation outlining these advanced courses is distributed to transitioning students and parents and is available on the AIG website. The high school AIG specialist offers virtual office hours and group and individual conferences to provide personalized support in developing a 4-year academic plan.

### **District Transitions**

The cumulative records for AIG students transferring from outside the district will be examined by the Needs Determination Team at the assigned school. Every effort will be made toward the continuation of comparable delivery of services indicated in the student DEP.

### **\* Practice G**

Develops policies and procedures for a variety of acceleration opportunities, including compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, dual enrollment, subject and/or grade acceleration.

The district is committed to providing a wide range of opportunities and instructional practices that support differentiation and acceleration to meet the diverse needs of students. In addition to AIG services and classroom differentiation, students may participate in compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, dual enrollment and subject/grade acceleration. Additional information regarding all accelerated opportunities can be found in both the AIG Handbook and the Haywood County School's Parent's Guide to Student Achievement.

### **Compacted Content**

Compacting content enables teachers to deliver a more comprehensive curriculum within a condensed time frame, while allowing students to engage with advanced material at an accelerated pace. The NC Advanced Courses in Mathematics legislation (SB500/Session Law 2019-120/ NCGS § 115C-81.36) requirements specify that when advanced learning opportunities are offered in mathematics in grades three through five, any student scoring at the highest level on the end-of-grade test shall, for the next school year, be provided advanced learning opportunities in mathematics approved for that student's grade level. In addition, when advanced courses are offered in mathematics in grades six and higher, any student scoring at the highest level on the end-of-grade or end-of-course test for the mathematics course in which the student was most recently enrolled shall be enrolled in the advanced course for the next mathematics course in which the student is enrolled. Students in grades 3-8 scoring a level 5 on the End of Grade Mathematics assessment will experience a compacted and accelerated curriculum within the classroom. High school English I and NC Math 1 courses are available for advanced grade 8 students. The grade 8 ELA and mathematics curriculum is compacted within the high school courses.

### **Credit by Demonstrated Mastery**

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is a process that allows students to earn credit for a high school course by demonstrating a thorough understanding of the content, without the requirement of course enrollment or seat time. This provides students with the opportunity to personalize and accelerate their learning by enabling more effective use of seat time for learning new content and enrolling in more rigorous courses. The CDM option is reviewed with students and parents during high school transition meetings. The student/family CDM application as well as deadline information is located on the AIG website. The application may be turned into the high school counseling department. A meeting is then scheduled with the student, parents, counselor and admin team to schedule testing, assign a mentor for Phase 2 of the process, and determine a timeline.

### Dual Enrollment

Students in grades 9-12 may enroll in Haywood Community College courses through North Carolina's Career and College Promise program and earn both high school and college credits. Dual enrollment information is reviewed during high school transition meetings, student/parent registration meetings, 4-year planning meetings, and HCC Career and College Promise meetings. A Steps to the Dual Enrollment Process document is located on the website for each high school. Students in grades 9 and 10 must be identified as academically gifted in both reading and mathematics and be recommended by the principal, AIG director and college liaison to be considered for dual enrollment.

### Subject/Grade Acceleration

A student will be considered for subject acceleration when the Needs Determination Team concludes that AIG services and classroom differentiation practices do not adequately address the advanced needs of the learner. A student may attend the classroom in the next grade level for a specific subject, allowing the student to spend the remainder of the day with age-level peers.

Highly gifted students may require more diversified curriculum options. Upon parental request, a Needs Determination Team, consisting of parents, teachers, principal, AIG director and specialist, and school counselor and psychologist will consider whether grade acceleration is academically, developmentally and socially appropriate for a student. Local and state policies for early entrance to Kindergarten and grade acceleration will be followed.

- **Early Entrance to Kindergarten** - Haywood County Schools Board Policy 4100 Section B *The child reached the age of four on or before April 16; the child is presented for enrollment no later than the end of the first month of the school year; and the principal of the school finds, based on information submitted by the child's parent or guardian, that the child is gifted and has the maturity to justify admission to school. The board regards admission of a four-year-old child to be an extraordinary measure that should not be used merely because the child is developmentally advanced. In making such a determination, the principal shall follow guidelines established by the State Board of Education and in 16 NCAC 06E .0105. § 115C 364*
- **Grade Acceleration** - Haywood County Schools Board Policy 3420 section K *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 challenge a student sufficiently, 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 skipping a grade level is appropriate.*

### \* Practice H

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

The district is implementing intentional strategies to cultivate and develop the potential of young students.

- Beginning with the 2024-25 school year, the universal screener administration was moved from grade 3 to grade 2. This data will assist in identifying students with exceptional abilities at an earlier age, enabling earlier intervention and talent development. Earlier mass screening will also assist in identifying students in underrepresented populations such as lower socioeconomic backgrounds, students with disabilities, or English language learners with signs of giftedness for earlier nurturing and development of strengths. In addition, formative assessments and K-2 state assessments will be monitored to identify strengths for enrichment.
- AIG specialists review the newly created referral form with K-3 teachers, noting specific gifted traits that sometimes go unnoticed in young children due to the varied nature of academic, intellectual and social/emotional development. AIG specialists and teachers collaborate to develop differentiated learning opportunities for K-3 students within the classroom and through flexible grouping and/or subject acceleration when necessary.
- The schedule for AIG specialists has been purposefully and specifically adapted, allowing more time for K-3 talent development opportunities in each school. This adjustment provides specialists with the necessary time to observe and work directly with young learners, identify talents, and target support and nurturing opportunities both within the classroom and through small group and individual activities.

**\* 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.

Through collaboration across departments, the district ensures that all students—regardless of background—have access to talent development efforts. Ongoing professional development from the Exceptional Children (EC), Multilingual Learner (ML) and AIG departments prepare teachers for recognizing and eliminating biases in identifying and supporting students for advanced learning opportunities. This training has helped to ensure that all students are given equal opportunities to demonstrate their potential. Student group data is continuously analyzed to identify areas needing intervention for equitable access to challenging experiences. Multiple screening opportunities, alternative assessments and collaborative methods of identification ensure the strengths and talents of students of underrepresented populations are recognized and nurtured. Flexible grouping and compacted content is utilized to further push and develop student talents. Differentiated learning experiences including flexible assignments and problem/inquiry based learning encourage divergent thinking. A variety of extracurricular clubs and activities are available for all students to participate in based on their personal gifts and interests, broadening access to advanced learning opportunities outside of the classroom. In addition, at the high school level, advanced courses are available. HCS continues to increase AP course availability and both student participation in and college credits earned through AP courses. Subgroup data guides equitable student recruitment efforts. Moving forward, an AP teacher will be included on the scheduling team at each high school to identify students with interest, motivation and capacity to be successful in AP coursework who might otherwise be overlooked.

**\* Practice J**

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

Enhancing and further developing the talents and interests of AIG students through extra-curricular programming during and outside of the school day is a key strategy for ensuring that students are continuously challenged, engaged, and provided with opportunities to explore their potential. The district implements a variety of activities that offer both enrichment and leadership development, allowing AIG students to deepen their interests and develop new skills. The wide range of options are unique to each school and are communicated to students/parents through the school websites, Remind messages and flyers.

AIG STEM Camp occurs each summer for rising fourth through sixth grade students. The Haywood County Schools Foundation partners with corporate sponsors to fund the camp. Additional summer opportunities for AIG students of all ages are presented during AIG meetings, listed on the AIG website and included in the AIG newsletter.

The high school AIG specialist assisted students in creating the unique Grow, Reach, Overcome, Work (GROW) club. Students in the club tutor students in the nearby elementary school. The club has been highly successful.

Additional extracurricular clubs and opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- Battle of the Books
- Bible Club
- Drone Club
- Robotics Club
- Spelling Bee
- Anime Club

- National Art Society
- National Honor Society
- Drama Club
- FFA
- Foreign language club
- HOSA
- Student Council
- Student Advisory Committee
- Student Technology Advisory Council
- Chess Club
- STEM Club
- Governor's School
- Lego Club
- Communication Club
- Recycling Club
- Newspaper Club
- Peer Mediation
- Page Turners
- Service Leadership Club

**\* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Increase talent development and frontloading efforts.
- Create a protocol to increase AIG specialists' involvement in the MTSS process, shifting from a consultative role to more active participation.

**Planned Sources of Evidence**

* HCS AIG Plan	
* HCS Parent's Guide to Student Achievement	
* Lesson Plans, Curriculum Units, Pacing Guides, Schedules	
* Professional Learning descriptions and attendance logs	
* Meeting agendas/minutes	
* AIG Website and Newsletter	
* MTSS Data	
* Differentiated Education Plans	
* Documentation of enrichment activities (emails, flyers, REMIND)	
* AIG Handbook	

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

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

**Haywood County Schools (440) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0**

**Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction**

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

**\* Practice A**

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

The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model is based on the belief that every student can learn and succeed when given high-quality instruction, research-backed teaching methods, and access to a standards-aligned curriculum. A well-rounded system of tiered interventions—both accelerated and remedial—is crucial for meeting the diverse academic and behavioral needs of all students. High quality differentiated core programming is essential in our district and MTSS teams work to determine needs and address the advanced ability levels of students.

**Rigor in the Classroom Series**

A key initiative led by the AIG director is the ongoing professional learning series titled Rigor in the Classroom: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships, which is delivered during district principal and lead teacher meetings across grade spans. This series builds leadership capacity around differentiation by equipping school administrators and instructional leaders with the tools to recognize and support rigorous instruction that promotes higher-level thinking and engagement. Following these sessions, administrative teams are responsible for sharing the strategies with school-level PLCs, ensuring the dissemination and application of best practices in every school.

Utilization of the Knowledge Taxonomy and Application Model is emphasized to deepen the acquisition and application of content knowledge. Specific standards are analyzed across grade spans to determine their core intent and learning experiences are designed to align with the cognitive demands of the standard while providing opportunities for higher-order thinking. Instructional strategies for elevating questioning techniques and classroom discussions, tiered assignments, and advanced content exploration are strategically planned to reflect these goals.

In addition, current research in neuroscience is integrated to inform instructional strategies that stimulate curiosity, foster creativity, and encourage interdisciplinary learning. Educators explore the science behind how students learn and engage with content. These strategies are embedded into classroom instruction through phenomena-based learning, project- and inquiry-based activities, independent research, and exploration of specialized topics. These approaches allow students to connect standards to real-world issues and interdisciplinary themes, making learning more meaningful and personalized.

Specific critical thinking strategies are also implemented to help students move beyond surface-level understanding of content. Teachers apply tools such as the Depth and Complexity Framework, Socratic Seminar, Paideia, debates, and Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats to elevate discourse and encourage divergent thinking. These methods are embedded into existing lesson plans and units of study, allowing for seamless integration of higher-level thinking within the standard curriculum.

Acceleration is an important aspect of curriculum adaptation for AIG learners. The district encourages the use of curriculum compacting, a process in which students demonstrate mastery of grade-level standards and then engage in deeper or broader learning aligned with their interests. This strategy allows advanced learners to move through curriculum at an accelerated pace while still engaging in meaningful, rigorous learning experiences. Teachers are supported in identifying opportunities for content acceleration and in developing individualized enrichment pathways that support both depth and pace.

AIG specialists also provide resources and professional development regarding differentiating curriculum and instruction for teachers within each school. Vertically aligned units encompassing all areas of the curriculum are utilized during pull-outs and AIG/STEM courses and offer more complex, challenging

opportunities.

High school curriculum is further differentiated through advanced level courses including Honors, Advanced Placement, and Career and College Promise. A team of district administrators and school staff is currently collaborating to develop exemplar, research-based best practices and evidences for subject-specific honors courses, with the goal of enhancing learning opportunities and promoting greater equity in honors coursework. Additional high school course acceleration is available through Credit by Demonstrated Mastery.

Through leadership training, school-based implementation support, strategic curriculum planning, and targeted professional development, the district ensures that the NC SCOS is not only aligned with state standards but is also responsive to the diverse learning needs of all students, including those with advanced abilities.

**\* Practice B**

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

The district strategically uses students' identified abilities, readiness, and interests to develop instructional plans that match the specific needs of students with targeted instructional strategies. Ongoing data from formal and informal assessments, achievement and abilities testing, classroom observations and growth model analyses inform the differentiation strategies and instructional modifications included in students' Differentiated Education Plans. Elementary and middle school students with exceptional abilities in a specific subject may be matched to curriculum compacting, accelerated subject/grade, and cluster grouping. CogAT scores provide a multifaceted view of student ability and are transitioned with all students so that schools at all levels(K-12) have access to the Student Ability Profile and Narrative. The ability profile provides valuable information about the type of learner, the typical areas of strength, the learning style, potential areas of challenge, and strategies to support the learner. All students' readiness levels vary, meaning they may be ready to engage in content that is well beyond grade-level expectations, or they may need support to deepen their understanding of complex topics. Understanding students' readiness ensures that instruction meets them at the right level of challenge. Benchmark data is utilized during MTSS team meetings to determine if students need additional support on specific standards or to identify content they have already mastered. Flexible grouping, accelerated pacing, and tiered assignments may be used for students ready for a challenging pace or a deeper, more complex dive into the content. Specific interests fuel students' intellectual curiosity and tapping into these interests increases motivation, engagement, and the depth of learning. Interest inventories are utilized at the elementary level and enable teachers and specialists to design instruction customized to students' interests. Inquiry-based learning focuses on student-driven exploration and independent investigations, allowing students to pursue topics that interest them deeply. Problem-based learning involves giving students real-world problems to solve, often tapping into high-interest topics. These activities require interdisciplinary thinking and encourage critical thinking, creativity, and application of knowledge. In addition, middle and high schools utilize XELLO for building student profiles which encompass individual interests, learning styles, skill-sets, and career compatibility. High school students can create a career profile and long term plan. Guidance counselors and career development coordinators use the information to guide course pathways, match students to internship and work-study opportunities, and assist students in exploring career options.

**\* Practice C**

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

Haywood County Schools works diligently to explore, study, and implement evidence-based resources and practices that address a range of academic, intellectual and social/emotional needs in an equitable and holistic manner. The district subscribes to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's (ASCD) Professional Learning Collection. All school administrators and department supervisors continuously participate in book studies to facilitate the exploration of new ideas and best practices to stimulate ongoing growth and improvement. These practices are then shared with teachers, instructional coaches and specialists during PLCs and staff meetings and support the work of meeting the diverse needs of all learners. Recent books in the subscription include but are not limited to: Cultivating a Classroom of Calm: How to Promote Student Engagement and Self-Regulation by Meredith McNeerney, Powerful Student Care: Honoring Each Learner as Distinctive and Irreplaceable by Grant Chandler and Kathleen Budge, The New Classroom Instruction That Works by Bryan Goodwin and Kristin Rouleau, and Teach for Authentic Engagement by Lauren Porosoff. In addition, the books The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness by Jonathan Haidt and The Knowledge Gap by Natalie Wexler have provided educators with valuable insights and fostered intellectual dialogue within our schools.



The district has adopted CKLA (Core Knowledge Language Arts), a K-8 literacy curriculum developed by Amplify in partnership with the Core Knowledge Foundation that emphasizes both foundational skills and content knowledge. The curriculum is grounded in the "Science of Reading" and emphasizes the importance of wide-ranging background knowledge and explicit, systematic instruction in foundational skills. The rich, carefully sequenced content incorporates interdisciplinary topics and facilitates "high-ceiling" opportunities for enriching and extending student learning.

Investigations promotes inquiry-based learning and hands-on experiences for K-5 students in mathematics. Tasks allow for multiple entry points and varied solutions, promoting divergent thinking and extension. Open Up Resources for grades 6-10 mathematics is a problem-based curriculum that supports engagement, depth and rigor with student-focused activities and real-world problems. The curriculum provides support for academically advanced students through an Accelerated Edition as well as support for Students with Disabilities and ML students. The district participates in continued professional development the NC Science House provides, both in-person and virtual, for sustained Science and Engineering Practices support. We also leverage applied technology to empower students to build, experiment and create in innovative ways. Through allocated funding and grant writing initiatives, the AIG curriculum is enhanced with new resources. Recent additions include 3D printers, advanced coding/robotics technology, an AI Robotic Companion, innovative building and engineering kits, and LEGO Education Kits. STEAM lessons aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards as well as the NC Mathematics, Science and Technology Standards are utilized to support problem-based and project-based learning.

The district has collaborated with the 30th Judicial Alliance for TBRI training which is an intervention based on years of attachment, sensory processing, and neuroscience research, with a focus on building strong relationships and connections. The goal of the initiative is to create an extremely supportive environment that meets the unique social and emotional needs of all students in the district. Training topics include:

1. Trauma & The Brain: The Impact of Trauma at School
2. Empowering Our Students: Meeting Physical Needs
3. Connecting in the Classroom: Creating Relationships that Matter
4. Correcting Behavior: Rethinking Classroom Management

**\* 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.

In today's world, it is essential for students' learning experiences to encompass not only rigorous academic content but also the lasting skills and mindsets necessary for success in their chosen post-secondary path. The NC Portrait of a Graduate framework identifies seven durable skills students need in order to navigate the future successfully: adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility. District and school leaders have participated in professional development around the framework and this will be ongoing as a portion of the District Improvement Plan focuses on the enhancement of student career exploration, the development and promotion of clear career pathways and the strengthening of student preparation for future careers. The district is striving to prepare students of Haywood County Schools for successful transitions into higher education and careers aligned with local workforce needs and opportunities through:

- Collaborating with the community college and local businesses to design comprehensive career pathways, including course sequences, internship opportunities and shadowing experiences.
- Creating visual marketing tools such as posters and digital displays to promote career pathways in prominent locations throughout schools.
- Utilizing school websites and social media platforms to reach and inform students and parents
- Conducting workshops and providing ongoing support to teachers on utilizing XELLO effectively for career management and student guidance.

▪ Real-world experiences

- Collaboration among county commissioners, the school district, the local Farm Bureau and the Dogwood Trust to construct a teaching farm for the study of agriculture and exploration of related career fields
- Collaboration with local businesses utilizing robotics for packaging and packing products for students to see it in action.
- Partnering with local corporations to bring scientists in to work with students in classrooms and AIG Camp, providing examples of STEM at work in the community
- Encouraging research, collaboration and communication skills through the Capstone Diploma Research and Seminar courses, preparing students for college coursework.
- Embedding critical thinking skills within honor's course exemplars and AP Classroom lessons
- Competitions - Battle of the Books, Spelling Bees, Debate Teams, Band, Art, Robotics, Drone
- Leadership opportunities such as Student Advisory Board, Clubs, Project Unify

**\* Practice E**

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

The district is committed to a data-driven approach, where continuous formative and summative assessments play a critical role in informing instruction and tailoring the curriculum to meet diverse student needs. A comprehensive learner profile is continuously adjusted as new data becomes available. Schools create "data walls" and MTSS, PLC admin teams have ongoing discussions regarding student data, adapting scheduling, grouping, and instruction as necessary.

Growth data from SAS/EVAAS is utilized to match students with teachers who show evidence of excelling with certain student groups. Positive and negative patterns of growth across student groups are analyzed for a better understanding of how to meet students' needs. Viewing growth patterns over years enables schools to target changes in scheduling, grouping and professional development focus. Student projection reports for specific assessments are also utilized for targeted intervention or enrichment/extension.

Diagnostic testing is used to identify a student's existing knowledge and readiness to learn new material, and assists both in determining any gaps in content and areas of strength, helping educators plan and adjust instructional approaches. STAR Reading and Math assessments and Amplify MClass progress monitoring are used for these purposes.

Formative assessments such as pre/post tests, classroom quizzes and assignments, observations, NC Checkins 2.0, Schoolnet benchmarks, etc. provide ongoing feedback. NC Checkins 2.0 for grades 3-8 are the through-year interim assessment component of the North Carolina Personalized Assessment Tool (NCPAT) system. These provide detailed guidance on student performance on specific content standards and provide a reliable estimate to inform a student's EOG assessment experience. The NC Check-ins 2.0 for high school provide actionable feedback on a student's current performance on a set of content standards. Schoolnet is also used to check student progress with particular curriculum standards. The district utilizes TE21 to provide additional formative assessments. End of Grade, End of Course, CTE, Final Exams, final presentations/portfolios, etc. provide summative data on the mastery of content standards.

Utilizing data from a variety of assessments creates a dynamic and responsive approach to curriculum and instruction. Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback that allows for adjustments in real time, ensuring that teaching methods and materials are aligned with student needs to create personalized learning. Teachers adjust pacing, increase rigor, provide advanced content or more challenging tasks for students needing further enrichment opportunities. Summative

assessments help identify broader trends, gaps or mastery of content, and opportunities for scheduling and curriculum adjustments, ensuring that instruction is continually evolving to meet the diverse needs of all students. Together, these assessments ensure that every student receives the support and challenges they need to succeed.

**\* Practice F**

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

Administrators, curriculum supervisors, and the Curriculum and Instruction Team play a key role in aligning differentiated instruction with district standards and goals. They ensure that resources are available for teachers, provide professional development opportunities, and facilitate the implementation of best practices in differentiated instruction across the district. Collaboration of all personnel in making certain advanced content is planned and delivered by staff outside of the AIG department. Schools provide weekly PLC time for teachers within the same grade or subject area to meet and discuss student progress, share effective teaching strategies, and adjust their instructional approaches. Through this collaboration, teachers ensure that differentiation is consistently applied across the curriculum. In addition, there are quarterly district-wide grade level meetings for teachers in grades K-5 and district-wide subject/department meetings for teachers of 6-12 subjects. Teachers utilize this collaborative time to create pacing guides including compacted curriculum for advanced students, share best practices and innovative lessons, and write questions for common assessments.

Some teachers at all levels (K-12) collaborate in co-teaching models, where two teachers work together in the same classrooms, allowing them to differentiate instruction more effectively. This also allows for collaborative planning for increased rigor in lessons and activities. Curriculum coaches continuously work with teachers through co-teaching, modeling lessons, and virtual and in-person coaching. They provide additional guidance during grade/subject PLCs.

The AIG director leads a continuous series on "Rigor in the Classroom" (focusing on Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships) during meetings with principals and lead teachers across each grade span. The administrative teams collaborate with school-level PLCs to share strategies for differentiating curriculum and instruction.

AIG specialists are available to participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), collaborate with teachers on a grade-level or individual basis, and provide support through modeling, co-teaching, or consultation.

A team of district administrators and school staff is working collaboratively to develop exemplar, research-driven best practices and evidences for subject-specific honors courses, with the goal of increasing rigor and expectations in honors coursework. AP teachers utilize the AP Community for interactive discussions with other AP teachers of a subject and for sharing new ideas, resources and lessons/activities.

Collaboration among personnel is essential in effectively implementing differentiated curriculum and instruction across the district. Through this coordinated effort, personnel across various roles ensure that differentiated instruction is consistently implemented, supporting all students in reaching their full potential.

**\* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Provide additional resources and professional development on differentiation to support classroom teachers.
- Begin book club for AIG specialists and share new knowledge/practices within PLCs/schools

**Planned Sources of Evidence**

\* Lesson Plans, Curriculum Units, Pacing Guides

* PLC/MTSS data and meeting agendas	
* DEP	
* District Improvement Plan	
* Honors/AP Course Descriptions	
* NC Portrait of a Graduate Framework	
* AIG Google Classroom	
* Parent meeting agendas	

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

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

**Haywood County Schools (440) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0**

**Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development**

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

**\* Practice A**

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

The AIG Director in Haywood County Schools is required to have the minimum certification or additional expertise:

- North Carolina teaching license
- Minimum of five years classroom teaching experience
- Master's degree in Education
- NC licensure in gifted education or significant work experience in gifted education field

The AIG Director responsibilities:

- Guide, develop, evaluate, revise and implement the local AIG plan
- Ensure accountability of the AIG program and compliance with state and local regulations and policies
- Employ licensed AIG specialists
- Maintain equitable and comprehensive referral, screening, and identification process
- Oversee process for Differentiated Education Plans and monitor provided services
- Maintain student identification documentation and data
- Collect and analyze data on identified and potential gifted students to assess academic progress and growth, and guide instructional and program planning
- Facilitate accurate headcount and share data with stakeholders
- Facilitate district AIG specialist PLC meetings
- Communicate with schools, parents and stakeholders regarding AIG policies and procedures
- Participate in regional and state AIG meetings

- Plan and facilitate professional development to support the AIG program and coordinate opportunities for conference attendance
- Participate in professional development regarding gifted teaching and learning to support continued improvement of the program
- Manage AIG state and local budget
- Oversee purchase of AIG resources and materials
- Governor's School Coordinator
- District AP contact
- Collaborate with district administrators and departments
- Advocate for gifted students and the program during district-wide administration and curriculum meetings
- Active role on district leadership teams (MTSS, Curriculum and Instruction, Administrator Group Alike)
- Support the funding, coordination and administration of enrichment opportunities for AIG students

To ensure greater effectiveness of the local AIG program and plan, the newly appointed AIG Director will seek AIG licensure during the 2025-26 school year. The district currently employs two licensed AIG lead teachers to assist with coordination of the program.

**\* Practice B**

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

The district actively engages AIG-licensed specialists in a comprehensive range of responsibilities that support the academic, intellectual, and social-emotional development of K-12 AIG students, while ensuring effective implementation of the local AIG program and plan. All specialists in the district hold a license in gifted education and serve as instructional leaders, data analysts, advocates, and collaborators who elevate services for both identified gifted learners and students demonstrating high potential.

**Elementary**

Two full-time specialists serve the eight elementary schools. Each specialist serves K-5 AIG students in 4 schools, serving one school per day. Direct instructional services are provided through pull-out classes for each grade level. Lessons are aligned to the curriculum standards and designed to incorporate advanced learning based on students' identification areas, interests, and learning profiles. Elementary specialists also work with classroom teachers to identify and support students who demonstrate gifted potential by facilitating enrichment opportunities and early exposure to advanced content for talent development.

**Middle**

Three AIG specialists each serve one of the district's three middle schools. Specialists provide students with direct services through a semester course. The course is interdisciplinary in nature, goes deeper and broader than the grade-level curriculum and incorporates enhanced academic rigor.

**High**

As part of a recent district initiative to strengthen the support for AIG students in grades 9-12, a licensed AIG specialist serves the two traditional high schools. The specialist provides academic counseling, 4-year plan guidance, scholarship/award application assistance, social/emotional checkins and supports students in navigating college/university admissions requirements. The specialist currently teaches the AP Research course. In addition, high school students are served directly through advanced courses. (Honors, AP, CCP)

AIG specialist responsibilities:

- Facilitate the referral, screening and identification process outlined in the AIG plan
- Administer and score appropriate aptitude/achievement assessments for identification
- Utilize a variety of data sources to inform decisions about student growth, service delivery, and program effectiveness
- Collaborate with the Needs Determination Team and classroom teachers to develop and implement the Differentiated Education Plans, conduct annual reviews
- Communicate with schools, teachers, parents and stakeholders regarding AIG policies and procedures and the unique academic, intellectual and social/emotional needs of gifted students
- Design and deliver differentiated instruction and enrichment programming that provides rigorous academic content aligned with students' readiness and interests
- Incorporate social-emotional principles, critical thinking, leadership skills and Portrait of a Graduate mindsets into lessons and activities, preparing students for the future
- Collaborate with other AIG specialists through district-wide meetings, curriculum design planning, sharing of resources, book studies, etc. for continuous growth and improvement of the district AIG program
- Consult with classroom teachers to embed advanced learning strategies and higher-order thinking skills into core instruction, ensuring AIG students are challenged within the regular classroom environment
- Attend professional development opportunities related to the academic and social emotional needs of gifted learners
- Provide professional development and resources to school personnel around topics supporting the AIG program
- Collaborate with school-level department personnel (EC, ML, MTSS, PLCs) to support the diverse academic needs of gifted learners
- Facilitate transitions from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school

**\* 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.

The district establishes specific and appropriate professional development through a strategic, collaborative, and data-informed approach. This ensures that classroom teachers, instructional specialists, student services personnel, and school administrators are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to effectively support all learners. Data analysis, teacher/administrator survey information, needs assessments and district improvement plan alignment drive the district's professional development focus. All school personnel will participate in TBRI training to foster a social and emotional supported learning community. Recent survey information and district growth data both indicate a need for further support in differentiating learning experiences in the regular classroom.

AIG specialists play a key role in planning and delivering professional development, ensuring that content is relevant, evidence-based, and tailored to the district needs. Specialists will provide an annual presentation to classroom teachers, student services personnel, and administrators. The presentation

<p>includes: the AIG referral and identification process, recognizing gifted traits in students from diverse backgrounds, talent development and nurturing, differentiation strategies, and the role of gifted education within the Multi-tiered System of Support.</p> <p>Multiple sessions regarding differentiation, problem and inquiry-based learning, and increasing rigor in the classroom will be offered during the annual district-wide professional development day. The AIG Director and specialists will facilitate the acquisition of presenters and deliver portions of the professional development on this day as well as during opportunities throughout the school year.</p> <p>The AIG Director will provide school administrators with continuous AIG program updates and data reviews. The Director will also lead school administrators in ongoing professional development on rigor, differentiation, and higher-order thinking across grade spans. Sessions focus on adapting questioning and classroom discussions, applying the Knowledge Taxonomy, and integrating strategies like project-based learning, Socratic Seminars, and curriculum compacting. Emphasis is placed on fostering curiosity, creativity, and interdisciplinary learning to support advanced learners and create a school-wide culture of high expectations.</p> <p>AIG instructional specialists are required to maintain AIG certification for the NC teaching license through professional development opportunities. (In-district PD, WRESA offerings, state conferences, online courses and modules)</p>
<p><b>* Practice D</b></p> <p>Provides general education services by personnel who have earned an AIG add-on license or have met the LEA requirements for that position.</p> <p>Haywood County Schools ensures teachers are “highly qualified,” fully licensed by the state, holding at least a bachelor’s degree from a four-year institution, and an academic major or the equivalent in the content area. All AIG specialists are certified and hold a NC AIG license. Administrators utilize cluster grouping for K-8 AIG students in the regular classroom setting. Ideally, gifted clusters are taught by teachers with AIG certification, extensive experience teaching AIG students, and/or a history of high growth with gifted students. The AIG specialists work collaboratively with teachers to meet the academic needs of gifted students within the classroom. The district AIG department encourages all classroom teachers, regardless of clustering, to obtain the WRESA Regional AIG Credentials Certificate by paying the registration fee for all who attend the 2-day summer workshop. The training provides key tools for planning and using differentiation strategies and working within PLCs to enhance teaching and learning. The LEA requires teachers teaching an AP course for the first time to attend the AP Summer Institute for a week-long immersion in the specific course. Many AP teachers choose to attend the institute multiple times and acquire further training through additional workshops and conferences through College Board.</p>
<p><b>* Practice E</b></p> <p>Develops strategies for the recruitment and retention of AIG-licensed professionals, including those of diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>HCS strives to hire and retain the most qualified and effective personnel for all positions and recognizes the importance of recruiting AIG-licensed teachers that reflect the diversity of the student population. Recruitment strategies include targeted outreach through partnerships with nearby universities, educator preparation programs, and professional organizations. Our schools host student teachers and mentor interns to cultivate highly trained teachers. Our teacher cadet courses and pilot initiative with the Teaching Fellows scholarship program is an effort to create a pipeline of potential teachers to return to the district for employment. These students are encouraged to obtain specialized certifications, such as AIG licensure. The district encourages currently employed teachers to consider obtaining add-on licensure by taking the Praxis exam in Gifted Education and can provide financial assistance with exam fees when funds are available.</p>
<p><b>* Practice F</b></p> <p>Provides focused professional learning opportunities to realize equity and excellence in gifted education including changing mindsets, policies, and practices.</p> <p>Our district is committed to nurturing the potential of every learner by creating a learning environment where ALL students have access to enriched learning opportunities and high expectations. This mission is anchored in the belief that talent is diverse, dynamic, and can be developed through intentional practice and support. The National Association for Gifted Children (nagc.org) states:</p> <p><i>Student with gifts and talents:</i></p>



- *Come from all racial, ethnic, and cultural populations, as well as all economic strata.*
- *Require sufficient access to appropriate learning opportunities to realize their potential.*
- *Can have learning and processing disorders that require specialized intervention and accommodation.*
- *Need support and guidance to develop socially and emotionally as well as in their areas of talent.*
- *Giftedness exists in every demographic group and personality type.*

These principles will guide the professional learning promoting equity and excellence included in the AIG director's presentations to administrators and curriculum personnel and AIG specialists' school-level presentations. Topics will address reframing mindsets, inclusive and equitable policy and processes, and targeted practices:

- Recognizing gifted traits, specifically those traits often overlooked in high-ability low-income, twice exceptional, and culturally and linguistically diverse students (Incorporate the HOPE Scale and key tables in Empowering Underrepresented Gifted Students)
- Identifying classroom barriers/obstacles students may experience to unleashing their potential and intentional strategies for developing and cultivating that potential
- Utilization of universal screening and the alternative assessments now available in the district for identifying gifts and strengths
- Collaborative effort among teachers, specialists, EC, ML, counselors, psychologists for simultaneous, holistic support
- Strategies for embedding talent development practices into all classrooms
- Expanding access to rigorous curriculum through scaffolding (high ceiling, low floor)
- Supporting emerging talent as early as possible through nurturing and frontloading strategies

**\* 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.

The district aligns professional development opportunities with local AIG program goals, broader district initiatives, and best practices in gifted education by using a data-informed and needs-driven approach. A comprehensive analysis of summative assessments, attendance, growth measures, and disaggregated student group data shapes the District Improvement Plan, which drives targeted professional learning priorities. Staff input, plan objectives, and identified areas for growth guide the design of PD offerings, ensuring they are purposeful, responsive, and aligned with both systemic goals and classroom needs.

The district Curriculum and Instruction team, consists of the superintendents, all curriculum and department supervisors, (including AIG director) and appropriate stakeholders. The team develops and implements the District Improvement Plan and derives the focus for yearly staff development. The AIG director participates in acquiring presenters/sessions for the system-wide professional development day, ensuring offerings that support the goals of the program. Session topics include differentiation, social/emotional well-being, interdisciplinary teaching and learning and STEM topics such as robotics, coding and instructional technology.

A district-wide focus on strengthening core instruction through cognitively challenging and rigorous tasks that promote deeper thinking and creativity, combined with recent teacher and administrator survey data highlighting a need for classroom differentiation strategies, has led to the development of targeted professional learning. The AIG director leads an ongoing series on Rigor in the Classroom (Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships) during principal and lead

teacher meetings for each grade span. Administrative teams then share these strategies with school-level PLCs, supporting the implementation of differentiated curriculum and instruction at every level.

- The Knowledge Taxonomy and Application Model is applied to activities to improve and extend the acquisition and application of knowledge and the assimilation and adaptation of thinking.
- Specific standards for each grade span are analyzed to determine the intention of the standard and strategic ways to adapt classroom discussions, questioning and learning opportunities to incorporate higher levels of thinking.
- The neuroscience behind curiosity, creativity and interdisciplinary learning is explored and strategies for implementation through subject area standards are examined. Examples include but are not limited to teaching through phenomena, project/inquiry-based learning activities across disciplines, independent research or exploration of specialized topics.
- Specific Depth and Complexity strategies are applied to existing lesson plans to elicit critical thinking skills and move beyond the basic understanding of content. These may include Socratic Seminar, Paideia, debates, the Depth and Complexity Framework, The Six Thinking Hats, etc.
- Acceleration strategies are investigated to allow advanced learners to move through the curriculum at a faster pace. This can include compacting the standards to allow for additional time for students to deepen knowledge in a related area of interest.

A revised curriculum and assessment has identified science as a renewed focus area. The new Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs) are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) framework, and adapted to meet the needs of North Carolina students. These practices are designed to engage students in the processes that scientists and engineers use to investigate the natural world and solve problems, emphasizing critical thinking skills through hands-on learning. This naturally aligns with the district goals. Additionally, many educators, along with the AIG director, are participating in a collaborative initiative led by Western Carolina University that brings together elementary science and STEM teachers across Western North Carolina. This regional partnership, Building a Community of Scientists, fosters ongoing dialogue, shared innovative practices, and hands-on activities focused on strengthening K-6 STEM education throughout the region. A few of the topics include, Tourism Through STEM, Creating Local Field Guides, Engaging Students in a STEAM Fair, and Integrating Science and Literacy.

AIG specialists specifically address best practices in gifted education during beginning of the year presentations and have time built into their schedules for meeting with PLCs or collaborating with teachers to further build capacity for AIG within the learning community. The district's alignment and strategic focus of initiatives promotes consistent implementation of evidence-based practices, and provides ongoing opportunities for educators to refine their instructional approaches. Through this intentional planning, professional development will support both the continuous growth of educators and the equitable development of talent in all students.

**\* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Provide more AIG-centric PD offered within the district and schools
- Improved communication regarding opportunities in the region and through higher education institutions for AIG related professional development and credential/licensure avenues
- Secure funding for AIG specialists to attend state or national conference

**Planned Sources of Evidence**

\* PD Course Descriptions

* PD agendas and sign-ins		
* Curriculum & Instruction meeting agendas		
* Group Alike meeting agendas		
* List of staff with AIG credentials and licensure		

**Documents**

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

Standard 5: Partnerships

**Haywood County Schools (440) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0**

**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.

A two-way partnership with parents/guardians is essential in effectively meeting the academic, intellectual and social/emotional needs of AIG students. The district values the perspectives of all parents/guardians and the broad knowledge and unique expertise they can offer to support the program. Parent feedback is gathered through surveys with topics such as communication, the identification process, service delivery, available extension and enrichment opportunities, extracurricular/club activities and program effectiveness. Parents share suggestions on ways the district can enhance gifted programming and identify meaningful opportunities for parent involvement and support. These insights offer valuable ideas for program improvement and provide information about parent talents, careers, and areas of expertise that can support volunteer or guest speaker opportunities in AIG programs, STEM camps, school events, competitions, career days/fairs, and field trips. The AIG Newsletter was developed in response to recent parent input and is distributed to families via REMIND and email. Each edition features highlights of current AIG activities, including photos of students and their work; curated resources and links to enrichment projects, experiments, and activities to support learning at home; information on extracurricular events within the school and broader community; and links to articles focused on the academic, social, and emotional development of gifted learners.

Parents have the opportunity to ask questions and provide information and feedback during parent/teacher conferences. During the annual review of the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP), parents and specialists collaborate to identify the student's strengths, interests, and areas for growth, as well as to determine appropriate differentiation strategies to support enrichment, extension, and/or acceleration. Parents are always encouraged to contact teachers, specialists, the AIG director or any school personnel with questions or concerns. Ongoing, open communication and strong partnerships between families and educators are essential to building a responsive and effective AIG program that supports the whole child.

**\* 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 district actively collaborates with a range of community stakeholders—including institutions of higher education, local businesses, and industry partners—to enrich and expand opportunities for AIG students. The district maintains a strong partnership with Haywood Community College through North Carolina's Career and College Promise program. Students in grades 9-12 may enroll in college courses and earn both high school and college credit. Haywood Early College, the district's Cooperative Innovative High School, is located on the community college campus and provides students the opportunity to graduate with both a high school diploma and an associate degree. In addition, partnerships with the local community college and area hospitals and businesses have led to the development of comprehensive career pathways, internship opportunities, and job shadowing experiences that connect classroom learning to real-world applications. Local businesses offer students first-hand exposure to the practical applications of robotics and automation in real-world industrial settings, while corporate partnerships bring scientists into classrooms and AIG Camp to showcase STEM careers in action. A collaborative effort among local corporations

such as Pratt and Whitney and Duke and the Haywood County Schools Foundation aid in sponsoring the AIG STEM Camp. The foundation also works with the Hammett Charitable Fund, which assists in supporting students attending Governor's School and Summer Scholars Programs. These strategic collaborations not only enhance academic learning but also inspire students to explore diverse professional pathways within our community. HCS is a member of the Western Region Education Service Alliance (WRESA), a collaborative dedicated to delivering high-quality professional development for educators in the region. The non-profit organization offers teachers and staff in-person and virtual workshops, online modules of learning, peer support groups, the sharing of best practices, and hosts nationally and internationally recognized speakers. Its programming addresses timely and relevant topics, with many offerings focused on advancing gifted education. Through these initiatives, WRESA plays a vital role in strengthening and enriching educational practices throughout the region.

**\* Practice C**

Establishes 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 district utilizes an AIG advisory group to support the development, implementation, monitoring, and ongoing revision of the local AIG program and plan. This group is composed of the AIG director, specialists, lead teachers, administrators, curriculum and department supervisors (Elementary, Middle, High, EC, ELL, CTE, Arts Education) and parent and other stakeholder representatives. This diverse representation ensures that multiple perspectives are considered, promoting equity and inclusivity in program decision-making. Teams within the group meet regularly and review program effectiveness, analyze data, discuss services and resources and strategies for improvement. This collaboration plays a critical role in ensuring the program remains responsive to diverse student needs and aligned with best practices in gifted education. During plan revision years, the group reviews the standards for necessary modifications or policy changes.

A District Student Advisory Council, which includes AIG student representatives, meets regularly with district leadership to share perspectives and provide input. The advisory group has fostered a sense of ownership and agency among students, allowing them to contribute ideas, provide feedback on programming, and advocate for their learning needs. It has promoted leadership, collaboration and communication among students and district staff. As students share firsthand perspectives on their educational experiences within the district, their input has brought about academic initiatives and programming enhancements that ensure services remain relevant, engaging, and student-centered.

**\* 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.

Communication is key to the success of the AIG program. All resources and information is distributed through multiple mediums and in various places to ensure that communication is inclusive and reaches students, families and the community. Any state or local policies related to advanced learning and the local AIG Plan are posted to the district website on the AIG page and links are provided during parent meetings. The HCS AIG Parent Handbook concisely summarizes the referral and identification process and program services. The handbook is located on the AIG webpage, links to the document are provided during meetings, and printed copies are available in the schools. The AIG Newsletter is shared with families through REMIND and email and printed copies are available as necessary. Each issue features updates on AIG programming, showcases of student work, enrichment resources for home engagement, information on school and community events and advanced learning opportunities, and articles that support the academic, social, and emotional development of gifted students. In addition, all parent meetings include comprehensive information about the local AIG plan, available AIG program services, policies and

procedures related to advanced learning and gifted education, and guidance on how to access advanced learning opportunities. Parent meetings occur at the beginning of the year and in the spring regarding registrations and school transitions. To accommodate the diverse needs of families and stakeholders, meetings and office hours are offered in multiple formats—including in-person, virtual, group, and individual sessions—at various times throughout the day. Virtual meetings are typically recorded for parents who are unable to attend. All HCS websites are ADA-compliant to ensure accessibility for all users. Multilingual Learner (ML) teachers participate in meetings and conferences, as necessary, to provide translation and support for Spanish-speaking parents and guardians. Additionally, all documents and forms are translated into families' native languages as needed to ensure clear and inclusive communication.

**\* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Develop additional community partnerships to support funding opportunities for the AIG program
- Partner with community to create a career fair for AIG students or incorporate into STEM camp
- Increase awareness by partnering with marketing coordinator for Haywood County Schools Foundation to promote the AIG program and opportunities
- Implement a district-wide AIG gallery night in a central location to showcase work and projects completed by AIG students in grades K-8.

**Planned Sources of Evidence**

*	Documentation of Partnerships
*	Curriculum & Instruction/AIG Advisory agendas
*	Student Advisory Council agendas
*	STEM Camp, school events, competitions, career days/fairs, and field trip information
*	AIG Website, AIG Plan, AIG Newsletter
*	AIG parent meeting agendas
*	Parent and Stakeholder Surveys

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

Standard 6: Program Accountability

**Haywood County Schools (440) 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.

Article 9B, Academically or Intellectually Gifted Students (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.05-.08) requires local education agencies (LEA) to develop three-year AIG local plans to be approved by local school boards and subsequently sent to the State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for review and comment. The 2024 revised NC AIG Program Standards have been developed to serve as a statewide framework and guide the local AIG plans and programs. The Haywood County Schools local AIG plan is developed in accordance with state legislation. District improvement initiatives, assessment and growth data, needs assessments, stakeholder surveys, and advisory group focus determinations drive the Self-Assessment ratings for each standard and corresponding components of the plan. Areas for improvement are derived and advisory groups brainstorm strategies to revise the practices and teams work on specific components. A timeline is established to ensure adequate time for additional stakeholder feedback and further revision as necessary. A draft plan is developed and presented to advisory groups. The final draft of the plan is presented by the AIG director to the Haywood County Schools' Board of Education for approval. The final board approved local AIG plan is submitted to the Department of Public Instruction and the State board of Education.

**\* 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 district employs a structured and collaborative approach to monitor the implementation of the local AIG program and plan, ensuring alignment with current legislation and state policies and maintaining fidelity across all program components.

The AIG director leads the overall implementation and monitoring of the AIG plan. This includes providing monthly updates during Curriculum and Instruction meetings with district-level supervisors, as well as sharing progress and data with school administrators and instructional leaders during Administrator Group-Alike meetings. The AIG Director is responsible for overseeing adherence to state mandates, ensuring that all procedures—from identification and service delivery to documentation and reporting—are implemented consistently across the district.

AIG Specialists serve as site-level leaders and are instrumental in the daily execution of the AIG plan. Their responsibilities include coordinating student referrals and evaluations, maintaining accurate records, delivering direct services to students, co-teaching and collaborating with classroom teachers, and supporting instructional differentiation. They also ensure families are informed and involved throughout the process.

School Administrators support implementation by ensuring school-wide compliance with AIG procedures and by providing instructional leadership and scheduling support for service delivery. They also help facilitate communication among staff, families, and AIG personnel.

Classroom teachers collaborate with AIG specialists to differentiate instruction, implement enrichment strategies, and support students identified for advanced learning services.

The district collects ongoing input from a variety of stakeholders—including teachers, administrators, parents, and students—through meetings, conferences, and annual surveys. This feedback helps identify areas for improvement and informs adjustments to programming as needed.

A district-level AIG Advisory Group, composed of educators, AIG parents, community members, and other stakeholders, will meet to review implementation data, monitor progress toward goals, and make recommendations for revisions to ensure the program remains effective, equitable, and aligned with student needs.

To ensure that documented policies and practices in the local AIG plan are being fully and consistently implemented:

- Regular audits and reviews of student identification data, service delivery logs, and instructional plans are conducted by AIG specialists and district leadership.
- Site visits and classroom observations help verify that services are being delivered as described in the plan.
- Professional development is provided to build staff capacity and maintain program integrity.

**\* 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.

State policy requires that all state AIG allocations are used for AIG programming. The AIG director works with the district finance officer to develop the budget. The budget is monitored throughout the year to ensure proper allocation. The majority of the budget is utilized for salaries and related benefits, so AIG programming is supplemented through additional state and local funds, grants, and business partnerships. All allotments are used for salaries, to purchase materials and resources, and secure professional development. Spending is strictly aligned to the local AIG plan and in accordance with state policy.

**\* 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 district has implemented a comprehensive, multi-tiered data system to monitor AIG student achievement and growth and support reflective practice. This system integrates multiple data sources, including:

- State assessment results (EOGs/EOCs)
- Benchmark assessments (NC Checkins, MClass)
- Classroom-based formative and summative assessments
- Advanced coursework participation and performance (Honors, AP, CCP)
- CTE Pathway completion and earned Credentials
- EVAAS Growth Measures
- SAS/EVAAS Year over Year Growth Trajectory Analyses (Pandemic Impact Data)
- Drop-out, attendance, and behavior data

The current AIG director also serves as the district's Chief Accountability Officer, ensuring a cohesive approach to data monitoring and analysis. Student achievement, growth, and dropout data are disaggregated by subgroups and analyzed at the district level on an ongoing basis as data becomes available.



<p>Findings are shared with district personnel and school administrators during monthly leadership meetings to ensure transparency and collaborative decision-making.</p> <p>Longitudinal data is examined across multiple years to identify patterns and trends that inform district priorities, including the District Improvement Plan and the focus of professional development initiatives.</p> <p>At the school level, data is integrated into the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework and regularly reviewed during Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings. This data informs a variety of school-based decisions, including master scheduling, teacher-student placement, flexible grouping, and instructional planning. Teachers and AIG specialists work collaboratively to differentiate instruction, scaffold academic rigor, and adjust pacing to meet the evolving needs of AIG learners.</p> <p>Additionally, indicators such as chronic absenteeism, declining academic performance, disengagement, and course failures are closely monitored. Dropout data specific to AIG students is used to identify early warning signs and to implement timely intervention strategies, including targeted counseling and enhanced student supports.</p>
<p><b>* Practice E</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>The district has developed a data monitoring system designed to ensure equitable access to the AIG program. This system is structured to examine how students from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and exceptional backgrounds are referred, identified, served, and retained within gifted education services. All student referral and identification data is recorded in a spreadsheet housed on a secure platform. The data includes universal screening results, aptitude/achievement scores, qualitative indicators, and identification outcomes. The data is then disaggregated by subgroup and the demographics are monitored regularly to identify consistent gaps or areas for improvements in representation across student groups. AIG programming and advanced coursework participation is also monitored by student group. A yearly equity review is conducted based on fall and spring AIG headcount statistics to assess disproportionality in identification rates and service access, especially for underrepresented populations. Efforts are made to ensure families understand referral and identification processes through translated materials, meetings, and communication strategies.</p> <p>This system ensures that no student's race, ethnicity, language, income level, disability, or other demographic characteristic serves as a barrier to accessing gifted services, and that all students have equitable opportunities to thrive in the AIG program.</p>
<p><b>* Practice F</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Human Resources Department of Haywood County Schools maintains comprehensive and up-to-date records on the credentials of all district personnel, including those serving AIG students. Professional development related to gifted education, such as AIG licensure, Advanced Placement training, and relevant Continuing Education Units, is tracked and stored in a centralized electronic database. These records are regularly reviewed by both the Human Resources Department and the AIG director to ensure compliance with the local AIG plan and to support ongoing professional growth in gifted education.</p>

**\* 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.

Haywood County Schools recognizes that meaningful stakeholder engagement is essential to maintaining a responsive and effective AIG program. The district actively seeks input from students, families, educators, and community members to evaluate program effectiveness and guide continuous improvement efforts. Annual AIG stakeholder surveys are distributed to parents/guardians, teachers and administrators to gather input on identification processes, instructional services, communication, collaboration and overall satisfaction with the AIG program. Surveys links are sent out through email, Remind, and included in newsletters. Individual and small group interviews are conducted with AIG students to understand their experiences, academic challenges, interests, and perceptions of the program's impact. The Student Advisory Committee also provides relevant feedback on advanced services and options available to students. Informal feedback is gathered from AIG meetings and office hours, open houses, DEP meetings, district leadership meetings, PLCs and observations. Parents and teachers are encouraged to share feedback directly with the AIG director or AIG specialists throughout the year via email, phone, or other school events. This feedback loop allows the district to be proactive and responsive, ensuring that programming remains aligned with student needs and stakeholder expectations and promotes ongoing refinement of the AIG program.

**\* Practice H**

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

Haywood County Schools is committed to transparency, collaboration, and shared accountability in the implementation of its AIG program. As part of this commitment, the district employs a variety of methods to share evaluation data and key findings with all stakeholders, including school personnel, students, families, and community partners. Program data and evaluation findings are shared with principals, instructional coaches, and district leadership during monthly administrative meetings to inform planning and school-level implementation. Periodic newsletters and AIG-specific updates include highlights from program evaluations, improvements made, and opportunities for further engagement. Parents and stakeholders access newsletters electronically through email and Remind, on the district AIG webpage, and can receive printed copies as needed. Findings may also be presented and discussed at AIG Parent Nights and family engagement events, encouraging open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving. AIG students are informed of key program changes that result from their feedback by AIG specialists, fostering a sense of involvement and ownership. The AIG Advisory Committee receives annual updates on program evaluation data and actively contributes to ongoing planning and goal setting. Additionally, comprehensive reports on AIG program outcomes and progress are presented annually to the Board of Education and made publicly accessible through board meeting minutes. Haywood County Schools ensures that program evaluation data not only informs internal decision-making but also fosters shared ownership and ongoing collaboration across the community.

**\* 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.

To safeguard the rights of all Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) students and their parents/guardians, HCS follows a set of established written policies, procedures, and practices that address identification, placement, reassessment, transfers, and disagreement resolution.

Informed consent ensures that parents/guardians are fully aware of the process involved in identifying and placing students in AIG programs. Before any identification or placement in the AIG program, parents/guardians are notified in writing about the criteria and assessment procedures and are provided the AIG Parent Handbook which outlines the procedures. A Consent to Test form must be signed by the parent/guardian prior to evaluation and testing.

Parents or guardians are required to provide written consent prior to the district proceeding with the identification and placement of their child in the AIG program. If the Needs Determination Team concludes that a student meets the criteria for identification, parents or guardians will receive a Prior Notice form along with a copy of the student's testing profile. An invitation to an initial conference is also extended at this time. During the conference, parents are given the opportunity to offer input on the services and the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) that will be tailored to their child. Following the conference, parents or guardians are asked to provide their consent for placement by signing the parental consent statement, which acknowledges their receipt of the Parent Handbook and outlines the "Due Process" procedures. The consent form affirms the parents' agreement for their child to receive services within the Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Program as specified in the DEP. If parents choose to decline services, this decision is documented and signed on the form. All forms, along with relevant evaluation documentation, are retained in the student's nomination folder for future reference.

Gifted identification from any North Carolina public school unit with an approved state AIG plan will be recognized and maintained by Haywood County Schools. The Needs Determination Team will review assessment data to evaluate and determine the most appropriate services for the student. Based on the student's current needs, the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) will outline the specific services to be provided. For transfer students with identification from out-of-state schools or non-public schools that do not adhere to an approved North Carolina AIG plan, the student will be referred for evaluation in accordance with the Haywood County Schools AIG identification criteria.

Reassessment ensures that AIG services are continuously aligned with the evolving academic and intellectual needs of students. Classroom performance, along with state and district assessment data, is reviewed annually for students who have been referred but did not initially meet the identification criteria. These students are reassessed as needed. Identified students are also continuously monitored to evaluate whether additional areas of identification may be appropriate. Aptitude and achievement scores will be used for student identification and placement purposes for a period of three years. Students may be administered an aptitude or achievement assessment no more than once every other year.



To ensure transparency, fairness, and due process in matters related to AIG identification and services, the district has a multi-level procedure for resolving disagreements. This process provides parents and guardians with structured opportunities to address concerns through school, district, and state-level channels, ensuring that each concern is given thoughtful consideration and timely resolution.

**Level I - School Review** If parent/guardian has a concern or question about AIG identification and/or services, the parent/guardian should contact the classroom teacher and the AIG specialist at the school. If after conferring with the teacher and AIG specialist, the parent/guardian has a disagreement concerning screening, nomination, identification, or services, he/she shall request in writing a meeting with the AIG Leadership Committee (Needs Determination Team, principal, lead teacher). The meeting will occur within 10 days of receipt of the written request.

**Level II - Administrative Review** If the disagreement is not resolved at the school level, the parent/guardian may appeal in writing within 10 days of the school level decision to the Assistant Superintendent and the district AIG Director. The disagreement will be reviewed and a response will be issued to the parent/guardian in writing within 10 days of the appeal.

**Level III - School Board Review** If an agreement cannot be reached administratively, the parent/guardian may appeal to the Board of Education in writing within 10 days of receiving the response from the Administrative Review. The Board will offer a written decision to the parent/guardian within 30 days.

**Level IV - State Level Hearing** The parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. This must be done within 30 calendar days of the local School Board's decision. The scope of the review shall be limited to (1) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an Academically/Intellectually Gifted student; or (2) whether the local plan for Academically/Intellectually Gifted Services has been implemented appropriately in regard to the child. 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. Attorney fees are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

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**\* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Complete the task of merging all AIG testing data into one database
- Continue to monitor trend data for growth, proficiency, attendance, advanced coursework, dropout and behavior, etc.

**Planned Sources of Evidence**

* AIG budget documentation	
* All HCS Disaggregated Testing Data	
* HCS AIG Plan	
* District and AIG Website	
* Shared Secure District Admin Data Drive	
* Shared Secure AIG Data Drive	
* AIG Headcount Reports	

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


**Haywood County Schools (440) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0**

\* Approved by local Board of Education on:

06/09/2025 

AIG Related Documents

**Haywood County Schools (440) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0**

Required Documents	
Type	Document/Link
Local Board of Education Approval Signatures [Upload at least 1 document(s)]	<a href="#">Local Board of Education Approval Template</a>  <a href="#">HCS Local Board Approval</a>
Optional Documents	
Type	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

Glossary

Haywood County Schools (440) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Phrase	Definition