

Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Hickory City Schools (181) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

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

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

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

* Mission and/or Vision Statement(s)

Mission Statement

Our mission is to nurture and challenge gifted learners from kindergarten through twelfth grade by providing a differentiated, welcoming, and rigorous educational experience that promotes intellectual exploration, creative problem-solving, and emotional growth. We are committed to empowering students to achieve their highest potential and make meaningful contributions to a dynamic, multifaceted world.

Vision Statement

We envision a vibrant educational environment where gifted students are valued, supported, and inspired to become thoughtful leaders, original thinkers, and lifelong learners. Through equitable access to enriched learning experiences, we strive to develop the unique talents of all gifted students and prepare them to excel across a wide range of landscapes.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* \$ 224,894.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 0.00

Standard 1: Student Identification

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

*** Practice A**

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

Rationale: Based on stakeholder feedback as well as recommendations from NC Department of Public Instruction's Division of Advanced Learning, it is evident that Hickory City Schools needs clearly defined identification, referral and identification procedures which are communicated to personnel, parents/families, and the community at-large.

- All 4th-grade students will be screened with the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) as our universal screener in the fall. AIG Leadership Team will review all CogAT scores.
- Students who achieve a composite or subtest score of 90% or higher on the CogAT will proceed to the next stage in the screening process for potential AIG identification. Parents or guardians will be notified and asked for permission to conduct further testing if necessary to determine AIG eligibility.
- Students with an EOG score of a Level 5 and overall yearly "A" average will also move through the screening process.
- If a student transfers into the district during the 4th grade or later and hasn't been given an aptitude test, that student can be given the CogAT or a nationally normed aptitude test.
- Other opportunities for screening are available upon request in grades K-3 and 5-12. Administrators, teachers, AIG Leads, and parents can request for further screening. AIG Leads monitor quantitative and qualitative data throughout the school year in addition to new enrollments to determine if further screening needs to occur.

On-Going Screening/ Referral

- Students who do not initially meet the criteria but are close will be placed on a "watch and wait" list for further consideration.
- Teachers may request screening for students by completing a referral form if they observe characteristics of giftedness (AIG) in a student.
- Teachers will receive training at the beginning of each school year on the process for screening and identifying AIG students.
- Families may request for further screening by contacting the AIG Lead at their child's school.

Communication of Screening Procedures:

- Identification criteria will be posted on the district website for easy access.
- Placement information will be translated into the community's native language to ensure accessibility.

- Information about gifted student eligibility and the range of AIG services will be distributed at the elementary and middle school levels to help the community understand the process and available support.

*** 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.

Rationale: The district uses multiple criteria for identification of an AIG student. In order to accurately identify intellectually and academically gifted students, Hickory City Schools will utilize multiple pathways for identification including a review of national, state, and local norms.

AIG Identification: Grades K-3

- Administrators and teachers may request testing for AIG identification after the AIG Leadership Team has reviewed student data.
- Universal screeners can include K-2 Assessments, mClass, Check Ins, BOG, local diagnostic assessments, etc. Scores must be at least 2 grade levels above when applicable or at least 95th percentile when applicable.
- Universal screeners will be used to determine if additional testing is needed for identification. If students meet the above criteria, then they will move forward through the identification process.
- Parents can contact their child's principal and / or teacher to begin dialogue about possible identification.
- Hickory City Schools will also review individual psychological testing from licensed psychological practitioners. This additional testing is the financial responsibility of the family. Students transferring from within another North Carolina district with AIG identification will be granted placement while students transferring from another state will have their data reviewed in order to determine if further testing is needed to meet the identification criteria for Hickory City Schools.

AIG Identification: Grades 4 - 5

- In the fall of each year, the district will administer a universal screening instrument, Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), to all 4th graders which will be used in the identification process.
- Hickory City Schools will also consider individual psychological testing from licensed psychological practitioners as part of the screening process. Please note, this additional testing is the financial responsibility of the family.
- Students transferring from another North Carolina district with existing AIG identification will be granted placement. Students transferring from out-of-state will need to be assessed using current criteria.
- Students who do not meet the criteria but are close will be placed on a "watch and wait" list for further consideration.
- Throughout the year, AIG Leads will review state and local data to determine individual needs for student services of both identified and non-identified students.
- Students not meeting the AIG placement criteria will still benefit from flexible grouping within the regular classroom based on their individual abilities.

AIG Identification: Grades 6-8

- Student data will be reviewed annually for placement using previous aptitude scores and current achievement data.
- Hickory City Schools will also review individual psychological testing from licensed psychological practitioners. This additional testing is the financial responsibility of the family.
- Students transferring from within another North Carolina district with AIG identification will be granted placement while students transferring from another state will need to be assessed using current criteria expectations.
- Students who do not meet the criteria but are close will be placed on a “watch and wait” list.
- Throughout the year, AIG Leads will use state and local data to determine individual needs for student services of both identified and non-identified students.
- Students not meeting the AIG placement criteria will still receive flexible grouping within the regular classroom based on individual abilities.

AIG Identification: Grades 9 - 12

- Administrators and teachers may request testing for AIG identification; AIG Leadership Team will review student data.
- Parents can contact their child’s principal and / or teacher to begin dialogue about possible identification.
- Student data will be reviewed annually for placement using previous aptitude scores and current achievement data.
- Hickory City Schools will also review individual psychological testing from licensed psychological practitioners. This additional testing is the financial responsibility of the family.
- Students transferring from within another North Carolina district with AIG identification will be granted placement while students transferring from another state will need to be assessed using current criteria expectations.
- Students who do not meet the criteria but are close will be placed on a “watch and wait” list.
- Throughout the year, AIG Leads will use state and local data to determine individual needs for student services of both identified and non-identified students.

Early Kindergarten Admission Criteria:

- To be considered for early entry to Kindergarten, the following criteria must be met:
- Aptitude Test Scores of 98th percentile
- Achievement Test Scores of 98th percentile
- AIG district team, principal, and K-5 AIG Specialist interview

- Two letters of recommendation from a child care worker, teacher, pediatrician, or another professional with direct knowledge of the child documenting the child's physical and social maturity.
- If these criteria are met, an interview will be requested with the child and parent. The district team, principal, and AIG Specials team decision is final.
- Testing must be completed by a licensed psychologist and is the financial responsibility of the parent.

K-2 Talent Development Criteria (enrichment):

- mClass results (or current reading assessment utilized by the district) must be at the 98th percentile
- State and local K-2 assessment results must be above grade level

K-2 Grade Acceleration Criteria:

- 98th percentile on Standardized Achievement Test
- 98th percentile on mClass benchmark
- Teacher Recommendation
- AIG Specialist / Lead Observation and Recommendation
- Principal Recommendation
- Parent/Guardian Support

3rd Grade Talent Development Criteria:

- mClass results are 2 grade levels above
- Local diagnostic assessments Reading and / or Math results must be above grade level
- Level 5 on BOG
- Other Guiding Data: state and local assessments, teacher recommendations

3-5 Grade Acceleration Criteria:

- Must meet the following:

1. 98th percentile or above on Reading and Math EOG OR 2 grade levels above on local diagnostic assessments for Reading and Math
2. 98th percentile or above on a nationally normed aptitude test
3. 98th percentile on BOG
4. AIG Specialist / Lead Observation and Recommendation
5. Principal recommendation
6. Parent support

Content Acceleration for Middle Grades Subjects

Will include a review of:

- Current and previous EOG scores (96th percentile or higher)
- EVAAS prediction data
- Classroom performance
- Local testing data (can include use of local norms)
- Assessment of next grade level standards
- Principal review

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Grade Span	Academically Gifted - Reading only	Academically Gifted - Reading	Academically Gifted - Math only	Academically Gifted - Reading & Math	Intellectually Gifted	Academically and Intellectually Gifted

K-2	* K-3: 98th percentile on a nationally normed test in reading 98th percentile on local reading assessment Teacher survey	* K-3: 98th percentile on a nationally normed test in mathematics 98th percentile on local mathematics assessment Teacher survey	* K-3: 98th percentile on nationally normed test in reading and mathematics 98th percentile on local reading and mathematics assessment Teacher survey	* K-3: 98th percentile on TONI (Test of Nonverbal Intelligence) 98th percentile on KTEA (Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement) Teacher survey	* K-3: 98th percentile on nationally normed test in reading and mathematics 98th percentile on local reading and mathematics assessment Teacher survey
3-5	* 4-5: Students must meet both of the following criteria: A composite score at the 90th percentile or higher, or a verbal subtest score at the 90th percentile or higher, on any nationally normed aptitude test. A score of 5 on the EOG in reading. Additionally, students must meet one of the following criteria: A yearly average of A in Reading/English Language Arts class. Meeting gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist.	* 4-5: Students must meet both of the following criteria: A composite score at the 90th percentile or higher, or a quantitative/non-verbal subtest score at the 90th percentile or higher, on any nationally normed aptitude test. A score of 5 on the EOG in math. Additionally, students must meet one of the following criteria: A yearly average of A in Math class. Meeting gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist.	* 4-5: Students must meet both of the following criteria: A composite score at the 90th percentile or higher on any nationally normed aptitude test. A score of 5 on the EOG in both reading and math. Additionally, students must meet one of the following criteria: A yearly average of A in both Reading/English Language Arts and Math classes. Meeting gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist.	* 4-5: Full scale composite score of 96th percentile or above on a nationally normed aptitude test	* 4 - 5: Full scale composite score of 96th percentile or above on a nationally normed aptitude test AND EOG scores of a level 5 in reading and math.

6-8	<p>* Students must meet at least 2 of the 3 following criteria: A composite score or verbal subtest score at the 90th percentile or higher on any nationally normed aptitude test. A score at least 2 grade levels above on the Beginning of Year (BOY) Reading assessment. A Level 5 on the EOGs in reading. Additionally, students must meet one of the following criteria: A yearly average of A in Reading/English Language Arts class. Meets gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist.</p>	<p>* Students must meet at least 2 of the 3 following criteria: A composite score or a quantitative/non-verbal subtest score at the 90th percentile or higher on any nationally normed aptitude test. A score at least 2 grade levels above on the Beginning of Year (BOY) local diagnostic assessments Math assessment. A Level 5 on the EOGs in math. Additionally, students must meet one of the following criteria: A yearly average of A in Math class. Meeting gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist.</p>	<p>* Students must meet at least 2 of the 3 following criteria: A composite score at the 90th percentile or higher on any nationally normed aptitude test. A score at least 2 grade levels above on the Beginning of Year (BOY) local diagnostic assessments Reading and Math assessments. A Level 5 the EOGs in both reading and math. Additionally, students must meet one of the following criteria: A yearly average of A in both Reading/English Language Arts and Math classes. Meeting gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist.</p>	<p>* Full scale composite score of 96th percentile or above on a nationally normed aptitude test AND EOG scores of a level 5 in reading and math AND A composite score of 96th percentile accepted for PSAT, SAT, PreACT or ACT</p>
9-12	<p>* Must meet both of the following criteria: A composite Reading subtest score of 96th percentile accepted for PSAT, SAT, PreACT or ACT? Level 5 on EOC (English I) AND Must meet one of the following criteria: Yearly average of A in English class Meets gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist</p>	<p>* Must meet both of the following criteria: A composite Math subtest score of 96th percentile accepted for PSAT, SAT, PreACT or ACT? Level 5 on EOC (Math 1 or Math 3) AND Must meet one of the following criteria: Yearly average of A in Math class Meets gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist</p>	<p>* Must meet both of the following criteria: A composite score of 96th percentile accepted for PSAT, SAT, PreACT or ACT? Level 5 on EOC (English II AND Math 1 or Math 3) AND Must meet one of the following criteria: Yearly average of A in English class and Math class Meets gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist</p>	<p>* Full scale composite score of 96th percentile or above on a nationally normed aptitude test AND EOG / EOC scores of a level 5 in reading and math AND A composite score of 96th percentile accepted for PSAT, SAT, PreACT or ACT</p>

*** 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.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools will use culturally fair and nationally, state, and locally normed assessments to ensure students from all backgrounds are appropriately screened for the gifted program.

- AIG Leads can use the TONI-Test of Nonverbal Intelligence and the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS-2) as a non-traditional method for screening students in the district.
- AIG Leadership Team will analyze testing data to identify students who meet criteria in Hickory City Schools.
- When reviewing subgroup data, the team will identify the top 5% of the subgroup to target acceleration strategies and nurturing. At the secondary level, this practice is used for scheduling students in advanced classes. In the elementary classroom, talent development can include classroom teachers meeting with the AIG Leads, core differentiation in the classroom, or push-in support to the classroom teacher.
- Teachers will use the referral process (including data from mClass, State Check-Ins, local diagnostic assessment data, etc) for recommending students to be screened for potential AIG identification.
- AIG Leadership Team will monitor and analyze a variety of data to ensure populations of students that are from a variety of subgroups are assessed for potential AIG placement and advanced learning opportunities to foster strengths through appropriate services.
- AIG Leads will partner with the Exceptional Children's Department and English as Second Language teachers at each school to best recognize and serve students for AIG placement and advanced learning opportunities.

Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
Female	---	---	5.57%	---	---	---	16.23%
Male	---	---	<5%	---	6.48%	---	13.61%
Total	5.13%	<5%	<5%	---	<5%	---	14.89%

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

*** Practice D**

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

Rationale: In order to ensure all students are treated fairly, the referral and identification process will be consistent across the district.

- The AIG Lead assigned to the school should be responsible for completing identification placement through the use of the AIG identification criteria.
- Students will be given a universal screener (CogAT) in 4th grade. AIG Leads and AIG Leadership Team will review the results and refer students for further testing if needed for identification or advanced learning opportunities.
- AIG Coordinator will work with the Testing Coordinator to ensure all testing protocols are being followed for the administration of the universal screener.

- AIG Leads will be involved in the planning, training, screening, and referring process in order to ensure consistency and oversight of the identification process.
- AIG Coordinator will review all referrals as a security measure for consistent implementation.
- Teachers can submit AIG referral for screening directly to the AIG Lead assigned to their current school for processing.
- AIG Leads will be in communication with the data manager as new students are enrolled to ensure appropriate placement in classes and identification.
- AIG Leads will provide information for all certified staff members for consistency in referrals across the district.
- AIG Leads will offer Professional Development addressing the screening and identification process at the beginning of each school year.
- AIG Leads will continually gather and review multiple data sources for class placement and advanced learning opportunities.

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

Rationale: Hickory City Schools recognize the need for transparency with the screening, referral and identification processes for the AIG Program for all stakeholders.

- All AIG screening, referral and identification processes will be posted on the district website through a link directly to the HCS Advanced Learning and Gifted Education (ALGE) site, as well as maintain a copy of the AIG Plan at each school.
- Translations of documents in various languages will be made available as needed.
- Distribution of placement information is provided to stakeholders as needed. All information is available digitally on district websites.
- A standard presentation is utilized annually to provide information about screening, identification, and service options to teachers and stakeholders.
- The AIG Coordinator will create a quarterly AIG newsletter that will be provided for families of AIG students and made available for all families on the HCS Advanced Learning and Gifted Education (ALGE) website. AIG Leads may create and publish additional newsletters for families about specific information related to their school.
- Digital AIG resources are made available for parents and stakeholders on the district ALGE website.
- AIG Leads will continue a collaborative dialogue with various stakeholder groups such as EL teachers, EC teachers, and classroom teachers to discuss various student needs for the AIG program.
- AIG Leads will have ongoing opportunities for screening, referrals, and identification practices within the MTSS framework.
- AIG Leads will discuss information regarding the AIG program with students when providing them with their annual DEP.

*** 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.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools recognize the need to maintain documentation that will ensure validity of services and placement across the district for the gifted program.

- Hickory City Schools will use the AIG Placement Sheet that is consistent across the LEA and clearly communicates a student's AIG identification procedures and the outcomes for students. This information will be located in the student's DEP folder and Infinite Campus.
- The AIG Placement Sheet contains information used for identification including aptitude test results and achievement test results.
- The student's DEP folder will follow the student at all grade level transitions. The DEP folders are stored in a secure location within the building. Service options will be identified in Infinite Campus.
- AIG Leads will provide all identified gifted students with a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP), or Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) that explains how the identification matches the service options for an individual AIG student. This will also be shared with the classroom teacher(s) and a copy will be provided for families.
- AIG Leads will meet with classroom teachers yearly to discuss and review identified student's DEP's.
- High school counselors will meet with identified students regarding performance and course selection on an annual basis.

*** 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.

Rationale: In an effort to hold all parties accountable for the learning needs of gifted students, the DEP or IDEP is a means of communication and documentation of the individual's learning needs.

- Every academically gifted student identified will have a DEP that documents the student's learning environment and content modifications. There will be an annual review of the DEP with parents and teachers, as well as throughout the school year as needed.
- Parents/Guardians, teachers, and AIG Leads will update, sign, and maintain copies of the DEP annually.
- AIG Leads will provide updates to parents concerning student academic progress and social / emotional needs.
- AIG Leads will work with EL and EC specialists to discuss the support and needs of students that receive overlapping services (i.e. twice exceptional, etc).
- AIG Leads can share lesson plans with administrators to ensure appropriate service delivery based on students' DEP's.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Hickory City Schools strives to ensure there is a certified AIG Lead in every building to support identification and ways to strengthen the rigor of the academic standards. AIG Leads will provide professional development for all certified staff about screening, referral, and identification,

Planned Sources of Evidence

* Elementary Differentiated Education Plan	
* Middle School Differentiated Education Plan	
* HCS AIG Placement Form	

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	 Elementary DEP  Middle School DEP  HCS AIG Placement Form

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.

Rationale: Article 9B states "Academically or intellectually gifted students require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program." Gifted learners require instruction that meets their needs in all classes throughout the entire school day.

AIG Leads and administrators will work to shift the mindset from offering a gifted program to offering programming for gifted learners to provide a full continuum of services.

Hickory City Schools will use a system for data analysis to determine the best method of service delivery that will meet the needs of AIG students throughout the district.

AIG Leads will use lesson plans, PLCs, DEPs, and data to ensure all aspects of student development (academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs) are addressed within each grade level, classroom environment, and setting.

Hickory City Schools' AIG Leads will:

- Provide all teachers, specialists, and school counselors with access to information on student DEPs.
- Provide services and offerings for students that focus on the development of interests and special talents of students.
- Provide services for students that encourage the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and other 21st century skills.

**The following activities can be found throughout the district but are not indicative to each school. **

Elementary:

- Students are exposed to above-grade-level math activities in concepts beyond the regular classroom. Students may participate in Perennial Math competitions, Math Olympiad, and math quiz bowls during pull-out sessions, math talks, math seminars and online math websites to continually expand their mathematical thinking.
- Students' academic and intellectual needs are met through above-grade level text, vocabulary activities/competitions/programs, within pullout classes as well as the regular classroom.
- Students are involved with Product Based Learning (PBL) opportunities in the regular classroom as well as during time with the AIG Lead.

- Students are exposed to a variety of classic, age-appropriate literature to study in-depth and create differentiated products.
- Gifted students use Google Classroom to communicate with classmates and AIG Leads. This format provides a way for assignments, comments, and reminders to be shared among students and teachers.
- Elementary students have the opportunity to participate in Battle of the Books, Science Olympiad, Robotics, Art Club, Spelling Bees, Chorus, Boys and Girls Club, Running Club, Dance Teams, Safety Patrol, Student Council, Fire and Safety Competition, GEMS (Girls Engaged in Math and Science), Catawba Counts, and Junior Beta Club.

Middle:

- HCS offers advanced classes (designed to be more rigorous and in-depth than regular classroom) in ELA and Math as one means of adapting the NCSCOS. Advanced ELA and Math teachers work with the AIG Lead to offer challenging material and a compacted curriculum in order to increase the rigor of the course.
- HCS offers an advanced Math class in 8th grade, as well as Math 1 and Math 2 as an option for acceleration.
- In the advanced classes as well as the regular classroom, the NCSCOS can be enriched through the use of differentiation strategies, seminars, problem-based learning, tic-tac-toe boards, menus, Math Talks, learning contracts, curriculum compacting, simulations, tiered assignments, Problem Based Learning, word stems, Breakout EDU activities, and high levels of questioning. Students also participate in makerspace activities, STEM projects, and coding.
- Middle school offers enrichment activities during Advisory such as BreakoutEDU activities, book clubs, seminars, competition groups, Genius Hour, and STEM projects.
- Content acceleration and the use of online programs for acceleration will also be offered for select gifted students.
- Students also have the opportunity to participate in Mathcounts, Battle of the Books, Robotics club, Athletics, Art Competitions, Band and Orchestra Competitions, Chorus Competitions, Math Competitions, Writing Competitions, and Junior Beta Club.

High School:

- The NCSCOS in high school is enriched through course options and offerings such as honors classes and Advanced Placement Courses, as well as dual enrollment at Catawba Valley Community College and Lenoir-Rhyne University. Options also include Career and College Promise and LR Scholars.
- Honors teachers differentiate the curriculum while adhering to the NC Standard Course of Study. AP teachers provide instruction in college level courses.
- High school students also have the option to attend Hickory Career Arts Magnet School in HCS.
- Teachers of honors courses create Honors Course Templates that address the ways in which they will differentiate within their class using acceleration, enrichment, extension and depth and complexity.
- Students will have voice and choice to select the honors courses they are interested in. Honors course options include classes in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, CTE, and Arts.

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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.

Rationale: AIG services will be designed to address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners throughout K-12 in HCS. HCS will provide a means of supporting both the academic and social / emotional needs of all gifted students.

- AIG Leads will provide access to the DEPs of gifted learners for reference when designing supports for social and emotional needs.
- The DEP can have a social / emotional goal that parents / students / teachers can develop to provide annual support.
- AIG Leads will provide parents with suggestions regarding how to deal with the challenges of raising a gifted child.
- Counselors and various staff members will collaborate with AIG leads and classroom teachers to develop strategies for addressing social / emotional needs.
- The Elementary AIG Lead provides newly identified 4th graders with a copy of The Survival Guide for Gifted Kids by Judy Galbraith. This book addresses:

-Tips on making friends and improving communication with teachers and family members

-Advice on issues such as bullying, perfectionism, depression, and anxiety

-Discussions of technology: blogs, social networks, instant messaging, video games, and podcasts

-Information related to research on gifted education programs brain development, IQ, creativity, giftedness and More ways to boost brain power in and out of school

-Anecdotes and quotes from experts and gifted celebrities

-Quizzes and the full gifted kids' survey

-Over 100 quotes from gifted kids on a variety of topics

-Resource lists of books, websites, video games, and national competitions

-Gifted Children's Bill of Rights from the National Association for Gifted Children

- District programming such as Second Step is used in grades K-8 to provide lessons that address social / emotional learning that supports the learning environment.
- Global Leaders and Durable Skills lessons are used to address Portrait of a Graduate characteristics including adaptability, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility.
- Durable Skills lessons aligned with Portrait of a Graduate are used in grades 9-12 during Homeroom or Enrichment Time in lesson scenarios specific to that grade level and beyond high school.

- Counselors can meet with individuals or groups of students to address social emotional topics such as perfectionism and underachievement.
- Counselors communicate with AIG Leads to devise strategies that support the holistic needs of gifted learners.
- AIG Leads will work with MTSS committees to help with targeted support.
- HCS Advanced Learning and Gifted Education website will offer links to SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) as well as other websites that offer support for twice-exceptionality, gifted underachievers, and emotional intelligence strategies.
- Elementary AIG Lead will meet with the middle school AIG Leads prior to the beginning of each school year to discuss social and emotional needs of rising 6th graders as well as any specific information needed for their DEP.
- The middle school AIG Leads will meet with the 5th grade students in the Spring to answer questions and ease any anxieties when transitioning to middle school.

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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.

- Rationale:** The AIG program and services are connected with the district's priorities. HCS allocates available resources to support the implementation of the AIG program and services. The needs of AIG learners are addressed in district policy and practice.
- AIG Leads can collaborate with various instructional departments to ensure that instructional practices align with district priorities.
 - AIG Leads ensure that all board and district policies are followed in regards to the AIG plan.
 - AIG Coordinator will work with AIG Leads to align all service options and opportunities with the district strategic plan.
 - During PLC's, AIG Leads will collaborate with classroom teachers, administration, and leadership teams to discuss curriculum, policies, and needs of gifted learners.
 - The Elementary AIG Lead will provide student services and assist classroom teachers with differentiation in the regular classroom. Consideration is given to the modification of content, process, products, and learning environment as they relate to differentiated gifted instruction. Specific instructional strategies that will be utilized include: differentiated lessons or units, individual study/contracts, curriculum compacting, learning center activities, seminars, simulations, research and multimedia projects, tiered assignments, and choice boards.
 - Each middle school has a certified AIG Lead to facilitate a rigorous curriculum through advanced classes and professional development for the teacher. This person will support the middle school teachers by working collaboratively with them through providing resources, team teaching, and/or facilitating model lessons. The AIG Lead will work collaboratively to design curricular units that are aligned with, but also extend and enrich, the NCSCOS.
 - Each high school has a certified AIG Lead that can provide support for teachers in differentiation and social emotional strategies.
 - All AIG Leads will work with the Exceptional Children's department and English Learner's department to meet the needs of students with overlapping services (ex. twice exceptional, etc).

*** Practice D**

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

Rationale: Susan Winebrenner's research shows that AIG students work best with their intellectual peers. Because of this, it is important that specialists, teachers, and administrators use flexible grouping practices to ensure the individual's needs are met.

- Gifted elementary students are recommended to be grouped in homerooms based on their identification. AIG identification also drives the grouping for acceleration, pull out and inclusion classes.
- AIG Leads will use data to provide flexible grouping and instruction based on grade levels, pre and post assessments, local diagnostic assessment data, Check In data, other state and local assessment data, informal observations, and teacher collaboration.
- AIG Leads will monitor a variety of existing local and statewide assessment data to determine the effectiveness of current grouping practices.
- AIG Leads will provide professional development for administrators, teachers, and counselors to understand the following:
 - Importance of data analysis
 - How various multi-age and multi-grade grouping practices allow for more growth intellectually and socially of gifted students
- Share instructional strategies that are effective with groups of advanced learners
- AIG Leads will provide monthly strategies for ways to differentiate within the regular classroom and activities that can be used for flexible grouping.
- Consider the growth of AIG students not just the proficiency during collaborative planning conversations with teachers, instructional support staff (including AIG Leads) and administrators.
- AIG Leads will work with the MTSS team to provide support in Tier 1 with enrichment, extensions, and acceleration. AIG Leads can also provide input and support if gifted students begin to move in and out of tiers.

*** 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.

Rationale: AIG Leads will determine which components of the local AIG plan are pertinent for each internal stakeholder group for the success of overall AIG implementation. AIG Leads outline how pertinent information will be shared with each stakeholder group. AIG Leads will support staff to better understand the delivery of differentiated services and instruction, the local AIG program and plan, and other legislation and regulations related to gifted education.

- Partnerships are established when the teachers, administrators, and support staff are knowledgeable about all the components of the AIG program. The partnership can better support AIG students and their parents.
- Hickory City Schools will integrate program standards, legislation and regulations around gifted programs into locally offered PD, administrative meetings, and site team meetings.
- A copy of the AIG plan can be found in each school, on the Hickory City Schools Website, and at the administration building.

- AIG Leads will share the local AIG plan along with practices and services of the AIG program to all personnel through a shared presentation that will be consistent to all schools.
- AIG Leads will participate in PLC's to share information regarding the AIG plan as well as instructional strategies. They will also discuss instructional services and programs for gifted learners during grade level, team, and on-site staff meetings. AIG Leads will offer differentiated activities for classroom teachers to use with AIG students.
- AIG Leads will meet with regular education teachers about students on the "watch and wait" list to discuss academic and social/emotional growth.
- AIG Leads will develop and use common professional development materials when sharing about AIG programs and services within the school district.
- The AIG Coordinator and AIG Leads will communicate with families using the HCS ALGE website and SchoolStatus. Communication will include academic and social emotional strategies that can be used at home. Other extracurricular opportunities available for gifted students will also be advertised.
- The elementary and middle school AIG Leads will post strategies on the ALGE website, speak at PLC's, grade level, and content meetings.
- The High School AIG program will communicate information through SchoolStatus or by individual honors or AP teachers as well as counselors.

*** Practice F**

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

Rationale: Cooperation and communication among stakeholders at key transition points are critical for effective and consistent delivery of AIG services.

- AIG Leads will provide yearly notification of services to teachers and schools.
- The middle school AIG Leads will meet with elementary AIG Leads to review program and student goals and services for the next grade level.
- AIG Leads meet with grade level classroom teachers to discuss identified students as they transition from one grade level to the next grade level. Academic and social / emotional dialogue takes place.
- HCS will provide transition visits from feeder schools to the middle school and high school level where changes in services are discussed (ex. Pull out services change to inclusion services, enrichment, extension, acceleration, etc.)
- AIG Leads will meet with classroom teachers throughout the school year to discuss service programming.
- At transition points, AIG Leads will develop a system of sharing student data regarding student eligibility, screening and identification, transitions and special concerns between schools to ensure effective continuation of services.
- AIG Leads will conduct transition meetings between grade spans to develop student DEPs. School counselors, administrators, AIG Leads, and regular education teachers can provide input for goals and services.
- Middle school AIG Leads will work with other staff members to create a transition document / presentation to help parents and students as they work to develop rising 9th grade course schedules.

- AIG Leads and teachers will track student data. Data walls will be posted and identified students will be marked on the wall. These data walls will track Common Formative Assessment data, EOG scores, Check-In data, and classroom grades. A separate data log will be kept to track longitudinal data that consists of EVAAS predictor scores, historical EOG scores, and grades.

- Elementary AIG Lead will share a data spreadsheet with the middle school AIG Leads with quantitative and qualitative data when transitioning to middle school.

- Middle School AIG Lead will share a data spreadsheet with High School AIG Lead with quantitative and qualitative data when transitioning to the high school.

- Meetings will continuously take place between AIG Leads and classroom teachers to discuss each identified student's 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.

Rationale: Not all AIG students have the same needs. Because all of the students are different, Hickory City Schools will implement an array of opportunities to meet the needs of the gifted student individually.

For students that show mastery of their current level, acceleration is an available option. Students can be accelerated through a single subject or through an entire grade level. The following guidelines have been created around which students are eligible for this opportunity:

Early Kindergarten Admission Criteria:

- To be considered for early entry to Kindergarten, the following criteria must be met:
- Aptitude Test Scores AND Achievement Test Scores of 98th percentile
- Principal, Teacher, and K-5 AIG Specialist / Lead interview
- Student work showing outstanding ability in a subject.
- Two letters of recommendation documenting the child's physical and social maturity. A child care worker, teacher, pediatrician or another professional with direct knowledge of the child.
- If these criteria are met, school administrators will request an interview with the child and parent, using additional school data. The principal decision is final.
- Testing must be completed by a licensed psychologist and is the financial responsibility of the parent.

K-2 Talent Development Criteria (pullout services or enrichment):

- mClass results must be at the 98th percentile
- State and local K-2 assessment results must be above grade level

K-2 Grade Acceleration Criteria:

- 98th percentile on Standardized Achievement Test

- 98th percentile on mClass Benchmark

- Teacher Recommendation

- K-5 AIG Specialist / Lead Observation and Recommendation

- Principal Recommendation

- Parent/Guardian Support

3rd Grade Talent Development Criteria:

- mClass results must be at the highest tier
- Local diagnostic Reading and / or Math results must be above grade level
- Level 5 on BOG
- Other Guiding Data: state and local assessments, teacher recommendations.

3-5 Grade Acceleration Criteria:

- Must meet the following:
 1. 98th percentile or above on Reading and Math EOG OR 2 grade levels above on local diagnostic assessments for Reading and Math
 2. 98th percentile or above on a nationally normed aptitude test
 3. 98th percentile on BOG
 4. K-5 AIG Specialist/Lead Observation and Recommendation
 5. Principal recommendation
 6. Parent support

Content Acceleration for Middle Grades Subjects

- Will include a review of:
 - Current and previous EOG scores (96th percentile or higher)
 - EVAAS prediction data
 - Classroom performance
 - Local testing data (can include use of local norms)

- Assessment of next grade level standards

- Principal review

- High school students are able to participate in Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) if they qualify. Counselors and the AIG Lead will meet with the student and family in order to determine if CDM is appropriate.

- High school students can also participate in dual enrollment through NCVPS, Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir Rhyme University, and AP courses in order to receive high school and college credit. Counselors will meet with students and families to discuss any of these available options.

- High school students can choose to participate in the AP Capstone program. AP Academy and Capstone information can be discussed with counselors and AIG Leads.

- Middle school students who are accelerating to Math 1 as a 7th grader will take Math 2 as an 8th grader through NCVPS. Procedures are put in place for those students including communication with families and monthly with students to check on any academic or social emotional concerns.

- Students can be accelerated through certain classroom content by using resources provided by the AIG Lead to use within the regular or advanced classroom. Teachers can provide pre-tests in order to determine which students can accelerate through units of study. Teachers will work with the AIG Lead in order to offer accelerated activities.

- AIG Leads will provide resources and support for administrators, teachers, and families to better understand acceleration options and make informed acceleration/ placement decisions.

- AIG Leads will use an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) based on student needs to support acceleration.

*** Practice H**

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

Rationale: Research proves that nurturing is best practiced in grades K-3. Some students in primary grades in Hickory City Schools are currently working above grade level and are in need of an enriched curriculum or content acceleration.

- The Elementary AIG Lead will provide a K-3 monthly newsletter titled *Tiny Tidbits of Thinking* to provide K-3 teachers with talent development strategies that can be used in their classrooms. These strategies will be research based and align with best practices for gifted students.

- AIG Coordinator and Elementary AIG Lead will find or create training for teachers to access and implement talent development opportunities to cultivate potential of students in grades K-3.

- STEM West is working with Hickory City Schools to provide Lego robotics resources to develop critical thinking skills and talent development opportunities for students in K-8. These Lego activities will cultivate values such as teamwork, application, discovery, and innovation.

- Talent development will address the needs of students through fostering creativity, curiosity, critical thinking and access to advanced content.

- Teachers can communicate with the Elementary AIG Lead if a student needs to be referred for identification.

- AIG Lead will collaborate with classroom teachers and arts teachers to provide resources and support.

*** 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.

Rationale: It is necessary for the AIG Department to provide programs, services, and classroom support to develop talents and discover the potential in all students. At times there may be barriers, such as language, economic situations, and other exceptionalities, that keep gifted students from demonstrating academic or intellectual abilities.

- Hickory City Schools and AIG Leads will provide PD on recognizing and providing services that broaden access to advanced learning opportunities.
- Hickory City Schools Arts teachers will observe and encourage students who exhibit exceptional abilities within their subject. AIG Leads are available to provide support in developing extensions and enrichment opportunities.
- AIG Lead will work with K-3 teachers to identify students that may need enrichment. These students can be noted for identification once in 4th grade.
- AIG Leads will collaborate with English Language Learner teachers, Exceptional Children teachers, Title 1 and other teachers who have a specialized student focus to create appropriate service options and effective programming.
- AIG Leads will work with teachers to create opportunities for students to discuss service options outside of traditional services. This population of students may show potential that needs enriching and nurturing beyond the classroom instruction.
- Aptitude tests like the TONI and achievement tests like the KTEA will be used to assess students if needed for a change in placement or identification.
- AIG Leads will seek out mentorships, job shadowing, curriculum compacting for interest based exploration, and other services to respond to the needs of the students.
- AIG Leadership Team will focus on K-3 programs to cultivate the potential of and address the needs of all student populations.
- AIG Leads will work with administrators and teachers in order to offer advanced learning opportunities for AIG students as well as students with high potential.

*** Practice J**

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

Rationale: AIG students have needs and interests that must be addressed outside the classroom setting.

- AIG Leads will nurture academic and intellectual activities that are of interest or need to enhance the services for AIG students.
- Individual schools will provide service projects and/or clubs across grade spans that appeal to student interest.
- AIG Leads and classroom teachers will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate some of the interests explored during the school year. Various clubs and activities provided will address student interests in Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Arts, STEM, and other various topics.

▪ These extracurricular activities provide engaging opportunities to further enhance their talents and gifts. All extracurricular activities are advertised at the school level and communicated with families through School Status, the school website, and social media.

Hickory City Schools provides a wide-variety of extracurricular activities such as:

- Elementary - Battle of the Books, Catawba Counts, Elks Club Writing Contest, Science Olympiad, STEM, Jr. Beta Club, Chorus, Drama, Running Club, Maker Girls, Girls and Boys Club, GEMS and Art Club.
- Middle School- Mathcounts, NCCTM Math Contests, CVCC Math Contest, Battle of the Books, Robotics club, Junior Beta Club, Art Competitions, Chorus, Band and Orchestra Competitions, Spelling Bee, Writing Competitions and many sports opportunities
- High School- Art Club, Beta Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, French Club, French Honors Society, Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), Interact Club, International Club, Key Club, Latino Cultural Club, Literary Club, Mu Alpha Theta, National English Honor Society, National Honor Society, National Technical Honor Society, Quiz Bowl, Science National Honor Society, Smash Brothers Game Club, Skills USA, Spanish Club, Student Council, Mock Trial, Open Art Studio, National Art Honor Society, Coding Club.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Hickory City Schools works to ensure all students have access to advanced opportunities if that fits their needs. Talent development will be a new focus for our district as we work to gain more resources to support our K-5 teachers. We will work with the middle schools to make sure that advanced classes have the necessary rigor needed to challenge our gifted students. We plan to work closer with the high school to ensure AIG students are registered in the appropriate classes and are reaching their full potential.

Planned Sources of Evidence

* K-3 Newsletter - Tiny Tidbits of Thinking	
* Slideshow for Gifted Survival Guide Book Study	
* Transition from Middle to High School Presentation	

Type	Documents	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A		<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Tiny Tidbits of Thinking Newsletter  Gifted Kids' Survival Guide  Middle to High Transition

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

Hickory City Schools (181) 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.

Rationale: Based on NC Article 9B, gifted students require differentiated services and learning opportunities based on their intellectual and academic abilities. Based on research, and focus group conversations, Hickory City Schools recognizes the need to provide a range of services allowing for individual challenge that ensures growth.

- HCS will provide pull-out, push-in, and online opportunities and resources for AIG students in grades 4 - 8 to support differentiation opportunities.
- AIG Leads will work with classroom teachers on differentiation strategies for students that are working above grade level or have shown that they have mastered current content.
- AIG Leads will meet often with classroom teachers through professional learning communities (PLCs) to collaborate on services.
- In grades 4 through 8, students of similar identification will be clustered together for AIG services. This organization will allow principals, if practicable, at each school to address current legislation regarding advanced courses in mathematics.
- HCS and the AIG Leadership Team will provide coaching support and instructional resources for classroom teachers to adapt the NCSCOS for AIG students.
- AIG Leads and classroom teachers will collaborate to create and review the DEPs (Differentiated Education Plan) for gifted students.
- District-wide staff development will be provided for teachers to meet the needs of gifted learners.

Elementary:

- Students in grades K-3 will receive talent development opportunities that can support extensions of the grade level standards.
- Students in grades 4-5 will receive pull out services from the Elementary AIG Lead.
- Teachers in grades K-5 will be provided with elementary specific AIG strategies that can be used to differentiate content in their own classroom.
- Students are exposed to above-grade-level math activities and concepts beyond the regular classroom. Students may participate in Perennial Math competitions, Math Olympiad, and math quiz bowls during pull-out sessions, math talks, math seminars and online math websites to continually expand their mathematical thinking.

- Students' academic and intellectual needs are met through above-grade level text, vocabulary activities/competitions/programs, within pullout classes as well as the regular classroom.
- Students are involved with a variety of activities that engage in real-world scenarios and problem solving to encourage divergent thinking.
- Students are exposed to a variety of classic, age-appropriate literature to study in-depth and create differentiated products. Students are exposed to public speaking, paideia seminars, high-level questioning, critical thinking, higher-level vocabulary, execution of verbal skills and creative problem-solving.
- Gifted students use Google Classroom to communicate with classmates and K-5 AIG Specialist / Lead. This format provides a way for assignments, comments, and reminders to be shared among students and teachers.
- Elementary students in various elementary schools have the opportunity to participate in Battle of the Books, Robotics, Art Club, Spelling Bees, Catawba Counts Math Competition, Chorus, Boys and Girls Club, Running Club, Dance Teams, Safety Patrol, Student Council, Fire and Safety Competition, GEMS (Girls Engaged in Math and Science) and Junior Beta Club.

Middle School:

- HCS offers advanced classes(designed to be more rigorous and in-depth than regular classroom) in ELA and Math as one means of adapting the NCSCOS.
- Teachers use a variety of differentiation strategies including Kaplan's Depth and Complexity model, project based learning, problem centered learning, and curriculum compacting.
- In 8th grade, HCS offers an Advanced Math class, Math 1, and Math 2 as an option for acceleration.
- In the advanced classes as well as the regular classroom, the NCSCOS can be enriched through the use of differentiation strategies, seminars, problem-based learning,, choice boards, menus, Math Talks, learning contracts, curriculum compacting, simulations, tiered assignments, Project Based Learning (PBL), word stems, Breakout EDU activities, and high levels of questioning. Students can also participate in makerspace activities, STEM projects, and coding.
- Middle schools offer enrichment during their Advisory time that provides activities such as BreakoutEDU activities, seminars, competition groups, Genius Hour, book clubs, and STEM projects.
- Content acceleration and the use of online programming for acceleration will be offered for select gifted students.
- Students also have the opportunity to participate in Math Counts, NCCTM Mathematics Competitions, Battle of the Books, Jr. Future Business Leaders of America, STEM club, Art Competitions, Band Competitions, Orchestra Competitions, Chorus Competitions, Writing Competitions, and Junior Beta Club.

High School:

- The NCSCOS in high school is enriched through course options and offerings such as honors classes, Advanced Placement Courses, dual enrollment opportunities through Catawba Valley Community College and Lenoir-Rhyne University, NCSSM Connect course offerings, and online courses through NCVPS.
- Teachers of honors classes and Advanced Placement classes differentiate the curriculum while adhering to the NCSCOS by creating Honors Templates for each honors class.
- Honors options are available in English, Math , Science, Social Studies, CTE, Arts, and Foreign Language.

- HCS offers students the opportunity to take classes at Hickory High School and Hickory Career and Arts Magnet (HCAM). Students can be transported between the schools in order to take advantage of the many class options at both schools.
- HCAM offers a variety of academies that students may pick from. Each academy has opportunities to take college classes that align with their area of study.
- In addition to the variety of honors and AP classes available, students can also choose to pursue the AP Capstone diploma program.
- AP classes are offered in a variety of subjects including English, Mathematics, Science, History, Computer Science, Psychology, Visual Art, Art History, Studio Art - Drawing and 3D, Music, Spanish and French. These courses can address increased rigor in academics and the arts.

*** Practice B**

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

Rationale: All AIG students do not learn at the same rate or in the same way. As a result, the curriculum must be enriched, extended, and accelerated to accommodate a wide range of ability levels. After analyzing student data across the district, specific service criteria is necessary to appropriately meet the needs of all gifted students.

- HCS will consider a variety of strategies for providing rigor, depth, complexity, sophistication, and abstractness for differentiating in the AIG and regular classroom.
- Administrators and teachers will use cluster grouping according to the students' data (i.e. local diagnostic assessments, Check Ins, benchmarks, EVAAS, achievement, aptitude scores). The AIG Lead at each school maintains a data sheet with academic data and updates periodically throughout the year to address different needs of our gifted population.
- AIG Leads and teachers will utilize student interest to offer additional courses, enrichment activities, and/or independent projects. (i.e. Math Olympiad, Perennial Math, Battle of the Books, Robotics, Beta Club, Student Council, Math Counts, STEAM club, Art Club, Alternative Orchestra, and Student Government).
- AIG Leads and classroom teachers are able to extend, enrich and accelerate the NCSCOS and provide additional curricular resources to better meet students' needs and interests. AIG Leads can provide professional development and resources to support the following strategies which include but are not limited to:
 - Creative thinking
 - Logic puzzles
 - Higher level thinking stems (Justify answers, explain your thinking, etc)
 - Advanced reading material
 - Above grade level math skills
 - Differentiation strategies (choice board, menu board, games, etc)
 - Use upper levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (i.e. Analyze, Create, etc)
 - Use research from Gardner's Multiple Intelligences to create activities

- Open ended projects (PBL, Rube Goldberg machines, etc)

- HCS K-5 AIG Lead provides student services and assists classroom teachers with differentiation in the regular classroom. Consideration is given to the modification of content, process, products, student interest, and learning environment as they relate to differentiated gifted instruction. Specific instructional strategies that will be utilized include: differentiated lessons or units, individual study/contracts, curriculum compacting, learning center activities, seminars, simulations, research and multimedia projects, tiered assignments, and choice boards.
- Each middle school has a licensed AIG Lead to support teachers in providing a rigorous curriculum through advanced classes and professional development for teachers. This person will support the middle school teachers by working collaboratively with them through providing resources, lesson planning, and team teaching. The lead will work collaboratively to design curricular units that are aligned with, but also extend and enrich, the NCSCOS as well as appeal to student interest.
- High schools offer a variety of classes to differentiate learning for all students. Students have the opportunities to take honors classes, AP classes, community college classes, and dual-enrollment classes based on their interests and pathways.
- Students use their Career Development Plan to guide their course selections.
- All middle school teachers received Scaffolding training from Learning-Focused, which provides strategies for differentiating instruction for all students.

*** Practice C**

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

Rationale: Hickory City Schools should acquire research-based strategies and resources that are created for gifted students' learning needs. These materials help to strengthen the teacher's lesson content and exposure to a variety of materials.

The resources listed below can be used to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills in addition to extending content standards. The suggested list of resources include but are not limited to:

- Google Classroom / Canvas
- NCDPI: Standards of Learning
- "How to Teach Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom" by Susan Winebrenner
- Junior Great Books and various novel sets
- William and Mary Center of Gifted Education resources
- Words Their Way, Word Masters, Word Trek
- Byrdseed
- CommonLit (above grade level content)
- Jacob's Ladder
- TED Talks

- DeltaMath
- 3 Act Tasks
- Online resources (Khan Academy, Reflex, MathCounts, Perennial Math / STAR math resources, etc)
- Extension activities and project-based learning through Eureka (math) myPerspectives (ELA) and enVison (math) curriculums
- Splash! Modeling and Measurement Applications for Young Learners in Grades K-1 by the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary
- Splash! A Mathematics Unit for High Ability Learners in Grades 2-4 by the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary
- Polygons Galore: A Mathematics Unit for High Ability Learners in Grades 3-5 by the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary
- Beyond Base Ten: A Mathematics Unit for High Ability Learners in Grades 3-6 by the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary
- Math Curriculum for Gifted Students: Lessons, Activities and Extensions for Gifted and Advanced Learners: Grades 3,4, and 5 by the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary
- Hands on Equations Kit
- AIG Coordinator and/or AIG Leads will attend local and regional AIG round table meetings, Regional AIG meetings, NCAGT, and NAGC when resources allow to gather materials and new research-based resources to support gifted programming.
- AIG Leads will provide regular classroom teachers with resources about differentiated lessons. They will also assist them in using other published resources, online resources, and strategies.
- AIG Coordinator will provide teachers and Leads with AIG materials in their professional library.
- Provide information to staff on current AIG topics, trends and issues.
- Professional development opportunities will be made available to address characteristics of gifted students and ways to support them academically and socially and emotionally. Strategies include but are not limited to:
 - Book study on The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children by Neihart, Reis, Robinson and Moon
 - SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) resources
 - Mindfulness and Coping Strategies (i.e. Zones of Regulation)
 - Collaboration with school counselors on social emotional needs

*** 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.

Rationale: In order to prepare students for top tier colleges and universities, HCS must provide 21st century learning opportunities at each student's readiness level. Hickory City Schools must ensure we are providing students the opportunity to reach their full academic potential. The goal of HCS is to make sure that all students are career and college ready by addressing not only academics but also the NC Portrait of a Graduate.

- HCS will ensure that all students are given opportunities to learn and practice the Portrait of a Graduate standards through Second Step lessons in elementary and middle school, as well as scenario based lessons in middle and high school.
- Teachers are encouraged to use the Portrait of a Graduate standards within their lessons.
- In advanced courses, teachers will find ways to support and enhance the use of adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility.
- AIG Coordinator will also work with the Curriculum department to ensure that the NC Portrait of a Graduate resources are appropriately applied and enhanced for honors level courses.
- HCS will support the development of global awareness, civic and economic literacies, health awareness, critical thinking and problem solving. Development of these skills will take place through communication, collaboration, applied information, media literacy, seminars, and opportunities to apply learning in real life contexts through problem-based learning.
- The middle schools will provide curriculum acceleration through advanced classes and online programs. These courses will also offer ways to support Portrait of a Graduate and creative thinking within the variety of products created to demonstrate their learning.
- All students in grades 8 and 10 will complete their career development plan, which will differentiate the different classes and learning paths available for advanced learning.
- The AIG team will analyze and evaluate current courses offered at the middle and high school level to ensure they provide rigor related to innovative, career, and technological skills.
- Students have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement classes and other advanced programming options that can foster critical thinking skills and other skills from the NC Portrait of a Graduate.
- HCS can promote future ready skills in the classroom through partnerships with community organizations, by using the following: real world scenarios, community service projects, mentoring, job shadowing, and/or apprenticeships with local businesses. Opportunities are available through CTE classes and CTE internships.
- AIG Leads, classroom teachers, and counselors will share opportunities for enrichment with gifted students as well as high achieving students. These opportunities include: NC School of Science and Math, Governor's School, North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS), Summer camps, scholarships, etc.

*** Practice E**

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

Rationale: Data must be used to design lessons to make sure students are appropriately challenged. Pre and post-test data should be used so that students are advanced deeper into concepts or accelerated through the curriculum when they have reached mastery of the concept.

- The AIG team and classroom teachers will use research-based tools and/or assessments such as local benchmarks, formative and informal assessments, EVAAS data, pre and post-tests on specific subjects in order to differentiate curriculum and meet the needs of students.
- Teachers and AIG Leads will use a variety of tools to differentiate curriculum including online programs to enhance student learning opportunities, above grade level material specific to the NC Standards, and interest based projects that dive deeper into the grade level content.
- The AIG team will use local and state assessment data as well as district established criteria to analyze student data for readiness and to identify specific services.
- Data review at the district, school, and grade level is an ongoing process and allows for students to receive differentiation when applicable.
- Elementary teachers use data to support flexible grouping practices and differentiate assignments. Middle school teachers use data to differentiate within their classroom and for flexible grouping during Advisory (Remediation / Enrichment time). High school teachers use data to support class recommendation and offer differentiation for students that receive honors credit.
- The middle school AIG Leads and classroom teachers will serve gifted students through advanced classes and cluster groupings.
- During Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), administration, classroom teachers, and the AIG Lead will analyze data to guide the need for differentiation in elementary and middle school. This group will use research-based tools and/or assessments such as local benchmarks, EOGs, Check Ins, formative and informal assessments, EVAAS data, common assessments, pre-and post- tests on specific subjects to drive instruction and provide differentiation.
- AIG Leads will analyze data to develop content modification for the DEP, direct student instruction, as well as guide placement, and school-wide Professional Development. In middle school, the data will guide the students' remediation/enrichment group as well as class placement. This data assists AIG Leads and teachers in determining what skills need to be strengthened, accelerated, enriched, or extended.
- AIG Lead will support the MTSS committee and will use data to determine areas of need and support students within different tiers.

*** Practice F**

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

Rationale: After analyzing surveys, research, and communications along with best practices, it is essential that classroom teachers and AIG leads provide challenging and appropriate resources for gifted students.

- AIG Leads will share research-based strategies as well current trends and issues involving gifted education.
- AIG Leads will attend PLCs with regular education teachers to assist in reflecting upon how they utilize differentiation strategies.
- AIG Leads will maintain constant communication and collaboration among personnel throughout the school year to help meet the needs of advanced learners.
- AIG Leads can provide professional development opportunities for regular education teachers as needed.
- AIG Leads will meet with classroom teachers to review and update the content modifications for each student's DEP.
- AIG Leads will work with school and district leadership to analyze data in order to best address student and teacher needs.
- High School teachers will meet to create, reflect, and refine the Honors Templates for their respective classes.

- AIG Leads can work with classroom teachers to develop unit plans that incorporate differentiation opportunities that would accelerate, enrich, or extend. AIG Leads will work with teachers to ensure the rigor is appropriate and can encourage productive struggle.
- AIG Leads will work with parents to keep lines of communication and support open. AIG Coordinator will create a quarterly newsletter for families. AIG Coordinator and Leads will send important announcements about opportunities through School Status.
- AIG Leads will work with counselors to support the social emotional needs of our gifted students.
- AIG Leads will collaborate with EC and EL teachers to support some of our twice exceptional and multilingual students. In addition, strategies will be shared in PLCs to provide teachers with ways to support students within the classroom that are EC or ML as well as gifted.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Continued work on Honors Courses and templates in high school in all subject areas that receive honors credit. Hickory City Schools AIG Coordinator intends to work with middle schools to create honors templates for advanced classes in order to ensure that the rigor is appropriate.

Planned Sources of Evidence





* HCS Honors Template and Evaluation	
* HCS IDEP Document	
* AP Academy Contract	

Documents

Document/Link

AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources

N/A

-  [HCS Honors Template](#)
-  [HCS Honors Template Evaluation](#)
-  [IDEP](#)
-  [AP Academy Contract](#)

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

Hickory City Schools (181) 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.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools has an AIG-licensed coordinator in place to lead the district in guiding and implementing the AIG plan.

- AIG Coordinator is a member of the Teaching and Learning / Curriculum Department within Hickory City Schools
- AIG Coordinator is the primary contact within the district for any questions or disputes concerning AIG services.
- AIG Coordinator guides the process for revising the local AIG plan.
- AIG Coordinator communicates with the AIG Advisory Board and provides information that is pertinent for revising and developing the AIG Plan.
- AIG Coordinator works with district leadership, principals, and AIG Leads to ensure that the AIG Plan is followed with fidelity.
- AIG Coordinator collaborates with local and regional AIG coordinators
- AIG Leads work to support teachers by providing materials and collaborating on lessons to extend curriculum and instruction
- AIG Coordinator meets with AIG Leads to discuss student concerns, student data, curriculum needs, and successful implementation of the AIG plan

*** 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.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools has employed AIG-licensed leads that serve all 9 schools within our district.

- One certified K-5 AIG Lead supports our 5 elementary schools
- Four certified Secondary AIG Leads support our 4 secondary schools
- Responsibilities for AIG Leads document was shared with Leads and administrators.
- AIG Leads will provide services and resources that address the academic, intellectual, and social and emotional needs of gifted learners.

- AIG Leads can provide services including but not limited to consultative, inclusion, enrichment, and resource models.
- AIG Leads provide classroom teachers with strategies and resources for differentiation. Secondary AIG Leads also provide more specific curriculum support as they are curriculum contacts for their building.
- AIG Leads provide topics of discussion for Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings that address the needs of gifted learners and the implementation of the AIG plan
- AIG Leads collaborate with school counselors to meet the social and emotional needs of gifted learners. AIG Leads and counselors discuss any concerns and work together to create a plan and communicate with students and families.
- AIG Leads will indirectly support students and families by providing resources through the HCS Advanced Learning and Gifted webpage.
- AIG Leads have a leadership role within their building and participate in school based teams such as School Improvement Team, MTSS teams, and grade level teams.
- AIG Leads will continue to review current research including professional articles and other resources to stay current on best practices for gifted students.

*** 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.

- Rationale:** Hickory City Schools has a small percentage of AIG certified teachers and is working to provide more opportunities for teachers to receive professional development and training to support state and local licensure
- HCS encourages teachers to participate in professional development.
 - AIG Coordinator and K-5 AIG Lead provide at least one professional development session during the district's annual professional development day.
 - AIG Coordinator works with the Curriculum Department to send a monthly newsletter addressing professional development opportunities that are specific to gifted learners.
 - AIG Coordinator communicates with teachers about opportunities available for AIG licensure including the AIG Regional License offered through NWRESA, where teachers that complete this training will be considered AIG certified with the NW Region of North Carolina
 - AIG Coordinator plans to roll out a specific and detailed pathway system for staff who seek to earn AIG certification or licensure.
 - 1. AIG Local Certification program for Hickory City Schools.
 - 2. AIG Regional Certification for the Northwest region of NC by successfully completed the AIG program through NWRESA
 - 3. AIG State Licensure by completing a program for an add-on gifted licensure from an institute of higher education (IHE)
 - 4. AIG State Licensure by passing the Praxis

- AIG Leads will participate actively in professional development opportunities, including statewide initiatives to support gifted programs and advanced learners.
- AIG Leads will provide the opportunity for targeted professional development in a variety of formats for each of the various stakeholder groups, to help all personnel understand the needs of gifted learners and the local AIG program. This training may be adapted to the specific role of the stakeholder. These modules may include:
 - use of Booster Shots from NCDPI for PD
 - trainings through online platforms such as Canvas or Google Classroom
 - training / mini-PD sessions during PLC's or individual sessions based on teacher request
 - annual professional development sessions provided by AIG Leads to a district wide audience through the district Professional Development Day
- AIG Professional Development sessions can occur throughout the year in PLC's, faculty meetings, workdays, after school, summer sessions, and off-campus locations (such as NCCAT) and could receive Continuing Education Units (CEU) for their participation.
- AIG Coordinator will provide professional development for school administrators during Principal Meetings when available.
- AIG Coordinator will work with the Exceptional Children's Director and Director of Federal Programs to develop professional learning that can be provided at the school level to address gifted learners that are twice exceptional and / or multilingual.
- AIG Leads will work with Exceptional Children Teachers and Multilingual Teachers to provide professional learning for classroom teachers addressing gifted learners that are twice exceptional and / or multilingual. This professional learning will support teacher awareness and provide strategies to support students.
- It is HCS's expectation for counselors, administrators, support staff, and teachers of advanced learners to participate in professional development that addresses the academic and social / emotional needs of gifted students
- Surveys will be provided to gather feedback on professional development that has been conducted as well as future professional development topics needed.

*** Practice D**

Provides general education services by personnel who have earned an AIG add-on license or have met the LEA requirements for that position.

Rationale: Since our district has a very small percentage of AIG certified teachers, we will work to ensure general education teachers are adequately trained to work with gifted students.

- Research shows that AIG students benefit from being grouped with other AIG students for optimal growth to occur.
- Administrators will schedule AIG students to have classes with general education teachers who have appropriate credentials when / if available.
- AIG Leads will partner with administrators to ensure effective AIG student placement
- Students should be clustered with other AIG students. These students will be in a class with AIG certified gifted education teachers when possible.

- AIG Leads will use a system of placement criteria (listed in standard 1) to monitor class placement of AIG students
- HCS has the expectation that teachers who serve gifted students will complete an AIG certification program through either an IHE, NWRESA, or through the HCS Local AIG Certification Program within the next 3 years. Priority will begin with teachers in grades 4-12.
- AIG Coordinator and AIG Leads will be available to mentor and support those that are pursuing their AIG certification.
- AIG Leads will work with administrators and TLS staff to analyze student data and teacher data to determine the effectiveness of class placement and any needs for professional development

*** Practice E**

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

Rationale: Hickory City Schools is implementing a variety of district professional development initiatives, therefore, all PD must align the efforts within these initiatives.

- AIG Coordinator and AIG Leads will provide all staff with information regarding AIG licensure or certification opportunities. Leads will encourage interested staff by providing support and resources when needed.
- Teachers, specialists, and instructional support staff will work collaboratively to integrate best practices for gifted learners across PD settings and topics.
- AIG staff will research local certification programs (i.e NWRESA) that cover a variety of topics such as Characteristics of Gifted Learners, Methods and Models for Gifted Instruction and social and emotional needs of gifted learners – using current research and models.
- AIG staff will consider ways to share resources when designing and delivering PD which will include finding ways to collaborate with neighboring school districts, partnering across a region, and/or utilize “Booster Shots” and other resources available NCDPI.
- AIG staff will promote opportunities for PD outside of the district to support best practices and state/national standards.

*** Practice F**

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

Rationale: In order to assure that each school will have someone accessible to support specific professional development needs, HCS has tasked AIG Leads to work with staff and students in order to determine the unique needs of each building. The AIG Leads then work with the AIG Coordinator to create and find PD and training that addresses those needs.

- AIG Leads will collaborate with EC and ML teachers by communicating and analyzing data to determine what PD is needed to support twice exceptional and multilingual gifted students.
- AIG Leads will collaborate with regular classroom teachers during PLC’s as well as planning times to give individualized assistance to teachers to support gifted learners.
- K-5 AIG Lead will provide a monthly newsletter (*Tiny Tidbits of Thinking*) that targets K-3 talent development and strategies that can be used in the classroom. The newsletter is shared with all staff of each elementary school so that all teachers have access to the strategies shared and can

differentiate for their students if needed.

- AIG Coordinator provides a monthly PD newsletter to all staff in the district with PD opportunities for that month and any upcoming PD including AIG certification training.
- Secondary AIG Leads will work to provide monthly mini-PD in PLC that specifically addresses either academic or social / emotional needs of gifted learners.
- AIG Leads will survey staff to determine the professional development needs
- At the high school, the Advanced Placement (AP) teachers will meet regularly in a PLC to discuss AP-related topics such as testing, instructional practices, AP pathways, etc.

*** 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.

Rationale: AIG Staff will define the district's local AIG program goals, and share how the professional development opportunities are aligned to these goals and focused on addressing the needs of AIG students utilizing best practices in gifted education.

- AIG Coordinator will ensure that all AIG professional development opportunities align with the district strategic plan (Empowering Academic Excellence; Highly Qualified and Effective Personnel).
- AIG Staff will sponsor at least one session of general AIG information every year for the Hickory City Schools Professional Development Day events to address needs of gifted students, differentiation, etc.
- AIG Staff will poll teachers and staff to determine the AIG professional development opportunities most needed.
- AIG Staff will work with staff members to provide appropriate materials, resources, and exemplar lessons when needed for program improvement and differentiation.
- AIG Staff will serve on school and district committees to provide input to advocate for gifted learners when available.
- AIG Staff will attend PLC meetings to collaborate and integrate best practices for gifted learners.
- AIG Staff will partner with MTSS committees to ensure the needs of gifted learners are addressed.
- AIG Staff can partner with EC or ML teachers to provide professional development on twice exceptional and multilingual gifted learners.
- Any professional development opportunity that is sponsored or encouraged by the AIG staff will identify which goal / practice it aligns to within the local AIG plan and with the district strategic plan.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Hickory City Schools will be creating a Canvas course to provide local licensure. Activities will need to be built so that they are content and grade specific. The Professional Development opportunities that our AIG Department provides will need to be varied and grade specific.

Planned Sources of Evidence

* ALGE Leads Description	
* AIG PLC Agenda 24-25	
* Differentiation PD Session	

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	 ALGE Leads Description  AIG PLC Agenda  Differentiation PD Conference

Standard 5: Partnerships

Hickory City Schools (181) 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.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools partnering with the community opens doors for future opportunities with intentional and meaningful support to meet the academic, intellectual, and emotional needs of our AIG students.

- AIG Advisory Board is composed of school administrators, school counselors, teachers, parents, community leaders and AIG Leads. This representative team meets to discuss information regarding decisions for the AIG program. They analyze data at all levels to look for strengths and weaknesses across the district.
- The AIG Advisory Board will review and offer input for revisions before the implementation of initiatives to improve the education of gifted students.
- AIG Coordinator will create a quarterly newsletter that will be shared with families of gifted students and posted on the Advanced Learning and Gifted Education website for anyone to access.
- HCS Advanced Learning and Gifted Education site will include an “Ask Me” button that will allow for anyone to send questions directly to the AIG Coordinator.
- Surveys for families and staff will be administered periodically in order to receive feedback on the implementation of the AIG plan and any suggestions for improvement.
- Parent meetings will be scheduled when needed in order to provide support for families of gifted students.
- Hickory City Schools will communicate through means including but not limited to: district and teacher websites, social media, SchoolStatus, emails, parent meetings, DEP meetings, open houses, report cards, weekly student folders, parent/teacher conferences, local newspaper articles, student performances, and award ceremonies.
- Hickory City Schools will continue to have a partnership with Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Appalachian State University Hickory Campus, and other local colleges. Appalachian State University offers Summer Ventures, Entrepreneur Camp, Honors College activities and research opportunities.
- Hickory City Schools also partners with NC School of Science and Math and shares out their resources, PDs, camps, conferences, and courses. This will include offering summer camps and competitions for gifted learners, providing local events for staff held within the district, and field trips to the colleges.

- Students have the opportunity to attend or participate in the NC School of Science and Math, Governor’s School, and dual enrollment at various colleges, Lenoir Rhyme Scholars Academy, and Career and College Promise.
- HCS will continue to have a partnership with the Science Center and other local businesses that can support programming options and services for gifted learners.
- HCS will support family involvement with community events and enrichment activities to increase partnerships with families and engage AIG students.
- Documents can be translated into other languages for families in order for all stakeholders to stay informed.
- The AIG team will continue to share information on the district AIG website with parents and staff about community events and programs that are designed for gifted children.

*** 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.

Rationale: It is our goal to keep everyone informed of the AIG program, plan, and policies to ensure accountability occurs at all levels. It is imperative that Hickory City Schools advocates for our AIG population of students.

- AIG Leads will ensure that families and district employees are aware of the location of the district AIG plan; it will be available on district website as well as at each school and the administrative building.
- AIG Leads can partner with our district Education Foundation and apply for the Innovation Grants to support the local program with new resources.
- AIG Leads will meet once a year with 4th-grade parents to inform them about AIG programming, placement, and policies.
- The district uses a SchoolStatus to deliver messages to parents and staff to share information and upcoming events.
- Hickory City Schools will Inform stakeholders (parents, staff, students, community members, etc) through teacher webpages, district AIG website, email, and social media about information regarding the plan and policies related to gifted students.
- AIG Leads will meet with school personnel to provide information on the AIG program and referral process.
- AIG Leads will present AIG information to the Board of Education and at Principals’ meetings when needed.
- AIG Leads will communicate with parents about specific content modifications that are shown on the Differentiated Education Plan and explain how their child will be enriched during the school year. At key points of transition, information will be provided to help prepare students and parents for expectations and program goals in middle and high school.
- During High School registration, Hickory High, HCAM, Challenger High School, and Discovery High school provide a parent night and open house to learn about the school and program options.
- Opportunities provided by the NC School of Science and Math will be communicated to families by school personnel, newsletters, and SchoolStatus.
- AIG Leads will continue their partnership with local colleges, universities, and local businesses. This could include but not limited to field trips, camps, guest speakers, intern/mentorships, service learning, etc.

- AIG Leads will reach out to other local businesses to partner with the gifted program for activities and service projects.

*** Practice C**

Establishes and utilizes an advisory group to develop, implement, monitor, and revise the local AIG program and plan. This advisory group is representative of the diverse populations of the district and is at least comprised of community members, AIG parents/guardians, AIG teachers, and other instructional and support staff.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools has an AIG Advisory Board from a variety of backgrounds and roles within our educational community. Because the board is made up of school administrators, instructional and support staff, teachers, counselors, parents and community members, it provides us with a wide variety of experience levels across the district. The advisory board is there to analyze survey data, review program standards and provide support and feedback to the AIG program for the district.

- AIG Leadership Team will invite, meet, and inform the AIG Advisory board through emails and meetings (face to face or virtual) to stakeholders who are representative of the district's populations. This is a representative group of community members, AIG parents and families, AIG teachers, administrators, and instructional support specialists. This meeting will occur after normal work hours to accommodate as many schedules as possible. Meetings will happen either in person or via Zoom / Google Meet.
- AIG Leadership Team will provide the AIG Advisory Board with updates from DPI, share feedback received on the plan, as well as provide them with the documentation of how progress is coming on meeting the goals of the plan. The Advisory Board will provide feedback and guidance as the best way to move forward with these goals.
- AIG Leadership Team will meet with the Advisory Board as needed so that the Advisory Board can assist with developing the local AIG program and plan, monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the AIG program and plan, and discuss AIG programming for the district.
- The Advisory Board will work collaboratively with the school district to monitor the AIG program.

*** Practice D**

Informs all students, parents/guardians, and the community of the following:

- Local AIG Plan
- Local AIG program services
- Policies and procedures relating to advanced learning and gifted education
- Ways to access advanced learning opportunities

Communication is ongoing and responds to the diverse language and other needs of the community.

Rationale: It is our goal to keep all stakeholders updated on AIG policies and the AIG program. Hickory City Schools wants to be able to reach out to all families by providing information in various languages.

- AIG Leads will inform parents, staff and students of opportunities available through emails, social media, letters, phone calls, and teacher / district websites.
- AIG Leads will update contact information via phone and email annually or as needed.





- AIG Leads will create an informational handout that outlines the structure of the program. This handout can be made available on paper or digitally on websites. This information can also be in the form of a digital presentation that will be posted on the district website.
- AIG Leads will offer information through written form or virtually through digital platforms.
- Information can be translated into students'/families' native language.
- AIG Leads will ensure that families and district employees are aware of the location of the district AIG plan; it will be available on district website as well as at each school and the administrative building.
- Hickory City Schools will utilize a partnership with Hickory Daily Record through our Director of Communication and Community Relations. Information will also be posted on the district website and social media to "share good news" about student accomplishments to improve perception and community relations.
- AIG Leads will post lists regarding events and enrichment opportunities that gifted students may be interested in attending. These opportunities can include speakers, summer camps, online classes, etc.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Continue to work with community partners to offer opportunities for gifted students. Communicate with families at least quarterly about social emotional topics as well as opportunities available for their gifted child.

Planned Sources of Evidence

* Governor's School Presentation	
* Middle School DEP Parent Night Presentation	
* AIG Advisory Board Meeting Presentation	

Type	Documents	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A		<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Governor's School Presentation  Middle School DEP Parent Night  AIG Advisory Meeting 2  AIG Advisory Board members

Standard 6: Program Accountability

Hickory City Schools (181) 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.

Rationale: To ensure that Hickory City Schools is educating AIG learners, a local plan will be developed that follows state legislation. The AIG plan is a “living, breathing” document that should be reviewed using various types of data to evaluate the comprehensive program.

- Hickory City Schools has and will continue to develop a written AIG plan describing the AIG program in accordance with state legislation.
- HCS will follow the guidelines set forth by state legislation, Article 9B, as well as best practices in gifted education.
- HCS plan will be submitted to the Local Board of Education in May of 2025 and once approved will be submitted to the Department of Public Instruction by July 15, 2025.
- An AIG Advisory Board and an AIG team will be utilized to help create and monitor the AIG plan. As revisions are made, updates will be communicated to all stakeholders.
- Surveys are sent to gather feedback from a variety of stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, etc) in order to review and revise the AIG plan.
- Hickory City Schools will use data to review and revise the local AIG program and plan. This data can include:
 - Stakeholder surveys
 - Stakeholder meetings
 - Disaggregated EOG and EOC data
 - EVAAS predictor data
 - AP enrollment and scores
 - Student data (PLC meetings, team meetings, school / district level meetings, etc)

*** 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.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools will monitor the implementation of the AIG Plan to ensure the fidelity of the program.

- Hickory City Schools will continue to follow the program accountability guidelines set forth by the state legislation, the Department of Public Instruction, and the local School Board policies.
- The AIG Coordinator, district level instructional support team, building administrators, and AIG Leads will monitor the implementation of the AIG plan to evaluate the progress and success of the program practices
- The AIG Leads and AIG Coordinator will hold monthly meetings to discuss and monitor plan efforts.
- Building district support staff will conduct classroom walkthroughs and observations to ensure that differentiated, challenging, and rigorous instruction is taking place.
- The AIG Leads will gather feedback from stakeholders through surveys concerning progress towards program implementation.

*** 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.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools will utilize state funding appropriately to support the local AIG program according to state directives.

- The AIG Coordinator and district-level instructional support team will have input on managing the state allotment for AIG funding in our district to ensure that funds are appropriately expended.
- The AIG budget is allocated for salaries, testing resources, field trips, competitions, and additional curriculum materials to support differentiated instruction.
- Money will also be allocated for training and licensure opportunities through an application process that will be reviewed by the AIG Leadership Team.
- The AIG Leadership Team will seek opportunities for grants and additional funding streams to enhance programming.
- The AIG budget will be monitored by the AIG coordinator, the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, and the Finance Officer with budget discussions occurring at least twice a year.

*** 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.

Rationale: Data for AIG students will be analyzed for students' growth and achievement to ensure the validity of the AIG program

- The AIG Leads will regularly work with the Teacher Leadership Specialists (TLS) and the testing coordinator to gather data on identified students. Data that will be gathered includes scores from Check Ins, local diagnostic assessments, Common Formative Assessments, EOG's, BOG, K-2 math assessments, mClass, and NCENSI.

- The AIG Lead will discuss data with EC and EL teachers to identify students with exceptionalities in order to develop talent.
- The AIG Lead will work with classroom teachers to analyze testing data (state, district, local) for patterns to provide opportunities for differentiation and acceleration among all students.
- The AIG Lead will work with Testing and Accountability, Student Services, and Curriculum and Instruction departments to access and analyze data looking for patterns to provide opportunities for differentiation and acceleration among all students.
- The AIG Coordinator, AIG Leads, and support team will ensure that all subgroups are represented in differentiation strategies to nurture AIG potential. When reviewing subgroup data, the team will identify the top 5% of the subgroup to target acceleration strategies and nurturing. At the secondary level, this practice is used for scheduling students in advanced classes. In the elementary classroom, this nurturing can include classroom teachers meeting with the AIG Leads, core differentiation in the classroom, or push-in support to the classroom teacher.
- The AIG Lead will monitor academic progress as well as growth for identified and “watch and wait” students.
- The AIG Lead will work with school leadership to analyze gifted students’ EVAAS data for trends.
- The AIG Lead will use data to evaluate student growth and performance to ensure that all students have their needs met through class placement and acceleration opportunities.
- The AIG Coordinator and AIG Leads will analyze and share information to stakeholders as it relates to student performance trends, progress toward graduation, and drop-out data for AIG students.
- The AIG Leads will work with high school counselors to inform families about opportunities such as Career and College Promise, LR Scholars, Governor’s School, and North Carolina School of Science and Math.
- The AIG Leads will include in the K-3 AIG Newsletter and in the curriculum newsletter an informational section that shares qualities of gifted students that are often overlooked to build a mindset and understanding of gifted traits.
- Build staff capacity in understanding criteria and applying differentiation strategies for all students working at advanced levels to maximize learning potential.
- The AIG Coordinator and AIG Leads will collaboratively plan with teachers to ensure differentiation strategies are implemented for all learners.

*** Practice E**

Maintains and analyzes multiple data sources focused on the referral, identification, services, and retention of students within the local AIG program to ensure that students’ racial, ethnic, economic, or other demographic factors, including other exceptionalities and language differences, do not reduce their likelihood of access to and participation in gifted education.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools will purchase testing materials to ensure that all populations are receiving tests that showcase their abilities.

- The AIG Leads will use nationally normed aptitude and achievement tests, local assessments and classroom performance data for advanced learning opportunities. An alternative aptitude assessment (TONI) will be provided for students who have strong non-verbal scores to better serve our students.
- The AIG Leads will work with the ML teachers to identify Multilingual Learners. AIG Leads will work with ML students to build relationships with them and help teachers identify any gifted traits within these students.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The AIG Leads will work with special education teachers to identify students who may have dual exceptionalities and offer accommodations to ensure their successful learning experiences. ▪ AIG Leadership Team will ensure that all subgroups are represented in differentiation strategies to nurture AIG potential. When reviewing subgroup data, the team will identify the top 5% of the subgroup to target acceleration strategies and nurturing. At the secondary level, this practice is used to schedule students for advanced classes. ▪ AIG Leadership Team will ensure that highly gifted students have access to and be able to make informed decisions about accelerated services such as grade and/or content acceleration, AP Coursework, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, College and Career Promise, Dual Enrollment, LR Scholars, NCSSM, etc. ▪ AIG Leads will encourage students to participate in extra-curricular opportunities that support academic excellence such as Battle of the Books, Math Counts, Governor’s School, Science Olympiad, etc. ▪ AIG Leads will study and monitor demographic enrollment in terms of identification and services. ▪ Multiple data points will be disaggregated by demographics to identify progress and areas of need for student populations and service delivery options. Data points include: AIG enrollment numbers, student enrollment in high school advanced and AP courses, and student participation in extracurricular academic opportunities.
<p>* Practice F Maintains and utilizes current data regarding the credentials of personnel serving K-12 AIG students to align with the goals and strategies outlined in the Local AIG Plan.</p>
<p><u>Rationale:</u> To serve AIG students appropriately, Hickory City Schools must employ personnel who have had formal training in gifted education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ensure we have appropriately licensed teachers serving AIG students, Hickory City Schools' Personnel Department along with the Curriculum and Instruction Department maintains documentation for personnel that work with AIG students. ▪ Hickory City Schools will provide AIG certification options and local certification options through Hickory City Schools, NWRESA, and also acknowledge state licensure through taking the appropriate PRAXIS, or course work through an institute of higher education. HCS' support in this process will ensure that classroom teachers have the necessary credentials and knowledge base to meet the needs of all AIG students. ▪ The AIG Leads will discuss with school leadership in terms of identification, services for advanced learners, to ensure that AIG students are served by staff with AIG training and how to appropriately meet the criteria of the AIG plan.
<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.</p> <p><u>Rationale:</u> Hickory City Schools welcomes all feedback for the use of recommendations and commendations for the effectiveness of the local AIG program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hickory City Schools annually surveys students, teachers, and parents to provide the opportunity to share feedback about the program. ▪ Hickory City Schools meets with AIG stakeholders annually to review the district plan and the survey data to identify areas for improvement. This group includes the AIG Coordinator, the AIG Leads, teachers, and staff, administrators, parents/guardians, and community members.

- AIG Coordinator will create a newsletter for AIG parents to learn about gifted traits, trends in gifted education across the state, and the local AIG program.
- The AIG department will collaborate with building and district administrators to ensure service delivery is accessible and consistent across schools.

*** Practice H**

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

Rationale: The AIG department recognizes the need to disseminate program evaluation data to the general public.

- The AIG team will share all relevant program evaluation data with stakeholders including but not limited to school staff, students, families, and community members using various communication tools such as websites, handouts, digital presentations, etc.
- The AIG stakeholders will meet annually to review all program evaluation data. This data can include but is not limited to:
 - Stakeholder surveys
 - Disaggregated EOG and EOC data
 - EVAAS predictor data
 - AP enrollment and scores
 - Student data (PLC meetings, team meetings, school / district level meetings, etc)
- The AIG team will protect the confidentiality of all stakeholders who provided feedback during the comprehensive program evaluation.
- The AIG team will protect confidentiality and adhere to the rules of FERPA when sharing student data with the public.

*** 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.

Rationale: Hickory City Schools AIG program has policies in place to protect all AIG students as well as a process to communicate these policies with stakeholders. These processes must be followed accurately to ensure the confidentiality of student records.

- 4th-grade parents receive written notification about the screening process for taking the CogAT
- HCS requires written consent for further testing as needed.
- Parent notifications can be translated into other languages as needed.
- Parents are notified of CogAT results and whether or not the student qualifies for placement in the AIG program. Parents/guardians will sign for consent for placement, and sign the DEP to consent to services.
- HCS accepts student AIG identification from within North Carolina State schools without further testing.

- HCS will evaluate student data and determine appropriate placement and services within the local context when a student is from another district in North Carolina.
- The AIG leads will analyze out-of-state records to determine if further testing is needed and to provide comparable services.
- Due process is a guaranteed state and district requirement. Hickory City Schools will abide by state laws and guidelines to ensure that the rights of AIG students are protected through Hickory City Schools' policies and procedures.
- While Hickory City Schools hopes to resolve any concerns or disagreements regarding AIG identification and program services at the local level, clearly established procedures are in place for a parent/student following the event that an agreement cannot be reached.

Due process procedures can be found on the district's AIG website. These procedures are also available in the local schools as a procedural reference document and found below.

Due Process Procedures

- Hickory City Schools continues to seek ways to make our schools quality learning environments. A collaborative effort between the home and school is necessary to achieve quality learning environments.
- Hickory City Schools' Gifted Education Program goals, objectives, and service options should be clearly communicated to parents. In the event that a parent/guardian disagrees with a decision, it is hoped that the concerns may be resolved at the local level. The following procedures should be followed to resolve any disagreements.

STEP I: Appeal to the School Gifted Site-Based Identification Team and Principal

- The parent/guardian may request a conference with the Gifted Identification Team and the child's school principal together. This request must be in writing as soon as possible but no later than 30 days of the grievance. The parent/guardian must provide the following information in writing: (1) the name of the school system employee or other individual whose decision or action is at issue; (2) the specific decision(s) or action(s) at issue; (3) any Hickory City School board policy, state or federal law, state or federal regulation, or State Board of Education policy or procedure that the parent or guardian or student believes has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated; and (4) the specific resolution desired. The Gifted Identification Team should be given 5 business days to convene all members and the principal together for a conference.
- At this conference, the individual student profile will be examined and discussed. Information used to determine eligibility for service delivery options shall be reviewed with the parent/guardian. If needed the child's teacher may be asked to provide further documentation concerning student characteristics and achievement by the Gifted Identification Team.
- At this conference, all information is shared with parents/guardians and minutes are recorded on minute's forms and signatures are obtained from those involved.
- Following the conference, the Gifted Identification Team and principal will respond together to the parent's concerns in writing within 10 business days of the conference.

STEP II: Appeal to the Superintendent

- The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the School Gifted Identification Team and principal to the superintendent in writing within 5 business days of the decision. Appeals should be addressed as follows:

Superintendent

Hickory Public School

432 Fourth Avenue, SW

Hickory, NC 28602

• The superintendent may review the written documents and respond or the superintendent may schedule and hold a conference with the grievant, principal and any other individuals the superintendent determines to

STEP III: Appeal to the Local Board of Education

• If the grievant is dissatisfied with the superintendent's response to his or her grievance but has not alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local board of education policy or procedure, then within five days of receiving the superintendent's response, the grievant may submit to the superintendent a written request for a hearing before the Hickory City School Board of Education.

• If the full Hickory City School board will be meeting within two weeks of the request for a hearing, the board will decide at that time whether to grant a hearing. Otherwise, the Hickory City School board chairperson will appoint a three-person panel to review the request and determine whether to (1) deny the appeal; (2) review the superintendent's decision on the written record only; or (3) grant a hearing. The panel will report the decision to the Hickory City School board. The Hickory City School board may modify the decision of the panel upon the majority vote at a board meeting.

• If the Hickory City School board denies the appeal, the decision of the superintendent will be final and the grievant will be notified within five days of the board's decision.

• If the Hickory City School board decides to grant a hearing, the hearing will be conducted pursuant to policy 2500.

• The Hickory City School board will provide a final written decision within 30 days of the decision to grant an appeal unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

STEP IV: State-Level Grievance Procedure

• Once all efforts have been exhausted within the system, the parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing in accordance with Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the Administrative Procedures Act of North Carolina.

• The issues for review shall be limited to:

1. Whether the local system improperly failed to determine eligibility for services within its gifted education program.
 2. Whether the local system implemented and provided those services specified within the differentiated gifted education plan.
- Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall serve the final decision. The administrative law judge shall give a copy of written findings and the decision to the parties and to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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

* **Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Create new surveys that address our new goals and practices this year.

Use the Advisory to review the results of those surveys.




Create Quarterly AIG newsletter and ask for feedback about the information provided

Planned Sources of Evidence

* BOE AIG Plan Presentation	
* Did Not Place Letter	
* Placed Letter	

Documents

Document/Link

-  [BOE AIG Plan presentation](#)
-  [Did Not Place Letter](#)
-  [Placed Letter](#)

Type

AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources

Document Template

N/A

Hickory City Schools (181) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:

04/28/2025 


AIG Related Documents


Hickory City Schools (181) 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)]	Local Board of Education Approval Signatures
Optional Documents	
Type	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary DEP Middle School DEP HCS AIG Placement Form
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Tidbits of Thinking Newsletter Gifted Kids' Survival Guide Middle to High Transition
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCS Honors Template HCS Honors Template Evaluation IDEP AP Academy Contract
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALGE Leads Description AIG PLC Agenda Differentiation PD Conference
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor's School Presentation Middle School DEP Parent Night AIG Advisory Meeting 2 AIG Advisory Board members

AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources

N/A

 [BOE AIG Plan presentation](#)

 [Did Not Place Letter](#)

 [Placed Letter](#)

Glossary

Hickory City Schools (181) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Phrase	Definition