Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Mitchell County Schools (610) 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)

Mitchell County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards Article 9B (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.5). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide LEAs to develop, coordinate and implement thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs.

For 2025-2028, Mitchell County Schools local AIG Program vision is to be a school district in which every student will, upon graduation, be both locally and globally competitive and college/career ready. Our core values and beliefs address the following concepts:
•Diversity – Students have distinct needs and goals and deserve unique relationships.
•Collaboration/Accountability – We hold ourselves accountable for building relationships that expand opportunities for students.
•High Expectations/Hard Work – The highest level of personal responsibility and a high work ethic produces positive results.
•Adaptability/Innovation – Producing successful future-ready learners requires creatively approaching challenges and opportunities.
•Integrity – Respect and honesty in everything, by everyone, is the core of ethical practice.
•Compassion – Empathy and kindness build strong school communities.

The Mitchell County Board of Education and the LEA recognizes that there are students who, when compared with others of their age, show the potential for high performance capabilities either in specific academic fields, intellectual areas, or both. Our LEA supports the belief that each child has an equal opportunity to receive a program of differentiated educational experiences, beyond

those provided by the regular educational program, that meets their academic, intellectual, and social/emotional needs. These students are present in our population regardless of gender, various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, or other learning exceptionalities. The LEA and the Board of Education affirm the following:
•It is the responsibility of the LEA, through the direction of the AIG program, to modify curriculum in the regular classroom setting in order to provide appropriate levels of challenge for all students, including those identified as gifted. This requires the ongoing screening, referral, and identification of these students.
•It is also our LEA's responsibility to provide students with specialized instruction delivered by highly qualified personnel within a range of instructional settings that are integrated with, but apart from, the regular curriculum. Our LEA and Board of Education commits to providing students an opportunity to discover and reach their potential by maintaining a program for academically and intellectually gifted students that responds to best practices and research in gifted education, and North Carolina State Board approved Department of Instruction AIG program standards.

Our mission is to hire and train highly qualified educators to work with our Academically and Intellectually Gifted students to meet their diverse needs. Our mission is to collaborate with families and community partners to provide a safe, caring, and engaging learning environment that prepares all graduates to become responsible future-ready citizens in a diverse, global society.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* $ 103,330.00	* $ 0.00	* $ 0.00	* $ 0.00

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

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

The goal of the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program screening and referral process is to ensure a clear and equitable path that effectively leads to possible AIG identification at all grade levels. Mitchell County Schools AIG Program maintains an ongoing referral process for students that may benefit from identification and program services.

K-2 Screening - K-2 students will be considered for a nurturing group based on state approved screeners and benchmarks, teacher evaluation and recommendation, classroom performance and work samples. A student who has been evaluated and granted Early Admission to Kindergarten or other grade or subject acceleration in K-2 is added to the referral pool automatically.

3-8 Screening - A nationally-normed, grade-level screener is given in 3rd grade. All students in the district participate. In 5th grade the same nationally-normed grade level screener is given again for those not already identified, who are teacher recommendations and/or a parent request. Students in 4th, 6th - 8th are screened based on teacher recommendation and/or parent referral only. They will then follow the same process as our 3rd graders. Students who have placed and identified in one area prior to 8th grade will have the opportunity to be screened to obtain a dual placement before the end of their 8th grade year.

The initial screening begins with the NNAT3 (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test). It is typically given in October (3rd and 5th grade) of the school year. Depending on recommendation will determine time of year for other grades. Parents are informed by a note home, through Class Dojo, email or a phone call as to the purpose of the assessments and to how the data will be utilized. The NNAT3 is a culturally neutral and nonverbal measure of reasoning and problem-solving abilities that do not require English Language or Mathematics skills. In this screener, we are looking for student scores above the 85th percentile for age or stanines 7-9 to be included in the referral pool.

We collect other forms of data in our grades 3-8 AIG referral process which includes:

- BOG scores
- EOG scores
- NC Check-Ins

- iReady data
- a giftedness checklist
- referral forms that are completed by teachers, collected, and then evaluated by the AIG team

Parents may at any time refer students to begin the AIG referral process.

Additional screening in grades 6-8 takes place, by middle school teachers, for the purpose of recommending students for honors placement. Additional indicators, such as EVAAS for EOG, EOC, and the IOWA Algebra Aptitude Test are used in the evaluation process. An evaluation team along with the AIG Coordinator works together to identify students who meet AIG pathways or recommend students for further evaluation.

In high school, the Pre-ACT or PSAT are utilized as a screener for AIG identification, along with EOC scores, benchmark data, and the teacher/parents/guardians referral process.

Teachers and/or parents/guardians may refer any student in grades 3-12 who demonstrates the need for advanced or accelerated curricula for AIG evaluation. AIG referral forms are available on the MCS AIG website. Parents of students who are screened and qualify for inclusion in the referral pool are sent a “Prior Consent for Evaluation” form, which requires their signature of consent for further evaluation and data collection. Consent allows for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to support the student’s nomination. Further evaluations of the referral pool take place in the spring, K-12 nominations for referral may be submitted at any time to the AIG Coordinator.

* **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.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program utilizes a comprehension approach to identification using multiple criteria and is effective at all grade levels. Our procedures support students’ unique and diverse needs, and it is our goal to identify those who have talents and abilities that may provide a need for AIG program services. Our identification process included both objective and subjective measures, using research-based standardized instruments as often as possible. Our screening, referral, and identification procedures are as follows:

Formal testing of students begins in grade 3. Formal services begin in 4th grade, although a student may be referred and/or identified at any grade level K-12. Mitchell County Schools has established a flowchart/timeline to summarize the screening, referral, and identification procedures.

The universal screening includes the administration of the NNAT3 (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test), which is a culturally neutral and nonverbal measure of reasoning and problem-solving abilities that do not require English Language or Mathematics skills. In this

screener, we are looking for student scores above the 85th percentile for age or stanines 7-9 to be included in the referral pool.

Collection of other data sources for AIG referral process can include:

- BOG scores in grade 3,
- EOG scores grades 3-8,
- NC Check-Ins
- iReady data
- a giftedness rubric
- referral forms (if applicable) that are completed by teachers, then collected, and evaluated by the AIG team.

Parents may at any time refer students to the AIG referral process.

Once a parental/guardian consent signature is obtained to conduct further evaluations, the AIG Coordinator, with the cooperation of both the parents and the classroom teacher, advances the collection of further evaluative data. This occurs in the Spring semester between January and March.

The SIGS forms (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students) are sent to both parents and teachers to be completed before or while further testing is being completed. SIGS provides standardized ratings for both parent and teacher evaluations. These forms rate students based on observations in areas of General Intellectual Ability, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Creativity and Leadership. Results are noted on the giftedness placement rubric.

Students in the referral pool are pulled in small groups to complete the full CogAT battery of tests, which are used in order to obtain more specific identification of student strengths in reading or math skills or to further confirm nonverbal ability. They are also administered the IOWA Achievement Test -Survey Battery, which provides an achievement indicator in both reading/written expression and math. Both standardized tests are nationally normed. The school-based review team (consisting of the teachers, school administrator, and the AIG Coordinator) compiles the scores along with other criteria including parent and teacher rating scales, achievement data, classroom grades, and ability test results on the Mitchell County Schools Placement Rubric. At present, this rubric consists of four rating categories: (Well Exceeds, Exceeds, Meets, or No Qualifications) in six criteria category areas: Teacher Survey (SIGS), Parent Survey (SIGS), NNAT3 Ability Exams, CogAT Total Composite, Math Aptitude/Achievement (math class average, IOWA Achievement Math, CogAT quantitative score and/or quantitative/nonverbal score) and Reading Achievement (reading class average, IOWA Achievement Reading, CogAT verbal score). To be identified, a student needs to meet 4 out of 6 of the rubric categories. If one of the categories' data is unavailable, the number of categories to be met is adjusted accordingly. A majority of criteria must be met, unless one criterion is exceptionally high and indicates a need for service, such as a high ability score.

The following are the MINIMUM scores eligible to MEET the rating criteria:

1. Teacher Survey (SIGS) – Standard Score of 115

2. Parent Survey (SIGS) – Standard Score of 115

3. NNAT3 Ability Test – NAI of 110 (based on local norms)

4. CogAT Aptitude Test – Total Composite (QVN) 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7

5. Math Aptitude/Achievement (must meet 2 out of 3 to place in Math) - Class Achievement Grade Average (most recent) 88%; CogAT Quantitative/Nonverbal Composite (QN) or Quantitative (Q) 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7; IOWA Achievement Test Math 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7

6. Reading Aptitude/Achievement (must meet 2 out of 3 to place in Reading) - Class Achievement Grade Average (most recent) 88%; CogVerbal (V) 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7; IOWA Achievement Test Reading 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7.

EOG/EOC scores may also be used as quantitative evidence, as well as any qualitative evidence that may be relative to a particular student's placement.

The objective is to build a body of evidence to best understand a student's abilities and potential. Students' scores should meet or exceed a majority of the criteria areas to be considered for placement. This helps to ensure that no one criterion excludes a child from AIG identification.

Parents may also request the use of alternative assessments or individually administered testing by a licensed professional; however, the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program may not provide this testing, and parents will be responsible for the procurement and cost of such testing.

The AIG Coordinator maintains a list of approved assessments on the MCS AIG website.

There are 5 gifted designations under which a student may be identified:

• AR - Academically Gifted in Reading: Students who meet 2 out of 3 of the Placement Rubric criteria categories for Reading with achievement and ability scores that indicate an academic strength in Reading.

• AM - Academically Gifted in Math: Students who meet 2 out of 3 of the Placement Rubric criteria categories for Math, with achievement and ability scores that indicate an academic strength in Math.

• AG - Academically Gifted in Reading and Math: Students who meet both of the Placement Rubric criteria categories (2 out of 3 in each criteria category) for both Reading and Math, with achievement and ability scores that indicate an academic strength in both

Reading and Math.

• IG - Intellectually Gifted: Students who show high ability/intelligence (can be non-verbal) regardless of achievement/academic strengths. Such students may not meet 4 out of 6 rubric criteria categories and should have an ability score greater than the district norm for the upper quartile.

• AI - Academically and Intellectually Gifted: Students who meet 4 out 6 of the Placement Rubric Criteria, with achievement and ability scores that indicate an academic strength in Reading and Math, AND an ability scores greater than the district norm for the upper quartile in the grade level.

Through an MTSS Framework, students who do not meet the criteria for placement are nurtured in enrichment time in the master schedule. Their information is placed in a file for possible re-evaluation in the near future. Such students may not at the time be formally identified but may be recommended for educational services, enrichment, or settings that can develop their talent and potential for future identification. Students in all grade levels are eligible to be referred.

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

Mitchell County Schools' demographics are unique in that it is a small, rural district with limited cultural diversity. English learners include approximately 14.17% of the student population. Approximately 19% of our student population is identified as exceptional (EC) students. The largest single demographic in our LEA is that of economically disadvantaged students, which comprises approximately 59.45% of our average daily membership. We continue to focus on these populations to ensure our identification procedures are fair and equitable. Identification of twice-exceptional students requires our careful inspection of evaluation data and close collaboration between EC and AIG teachers and administrators. Our strategy to identify and cultivate students' gifts and talents is to modify identification procedures that contribute to the successful inclusion of students from typically underrepresented populations.

One strategy is the universal screening of the NNAT3 (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test) to all students in grades 3 and 5, which is a culturally neutral and nonverbal measure of reasoning and problem-solving abilities that do not require English Language or Mathematics skills. The CogAT screener allows for accommodations such as read-aloud, vocabulary assistance, and extended

time to be given to students with exceptionalities and for EL students. Also, teachers and parents/guardians may refer a student to the AIG Coordinator at any time for further evaluation.

Another strategy is incorporating AIG representation into the MTSS teaming structures on the school and district level: Data evaluation to monitor the health of Core instruction is considered to support equitable identification goals of possible AIG referral candidates. Within master schedules (K-8) a block of time is built-in to cultivate high-potential students for talent development. Implementing a time for enrichment requires the purchase of materials that support students and professional development for teachers on an ongoing basis. The AIG Coordinator is responsible for checking on the fidelity of implementation, along with school administrators. Within the MTSS teaming structures, a partnership with special populations instructors provides opportunities for students to show strengths that may lead to the identification and provides an opportunity to expand understanding of giftedness and address misperceptions about various student groups. Due to the size of our district, often educators, coordinators and administrators wear many hats, so collaboration is key to success.

Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
Female	---	---	---	---	---	---	11.23%
Male	---	---	---	---	---	---	12.47%
Total	---	---	<5%	---	---	---	11.88%

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

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* **Practice D**

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

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program uses various strategies to ensure consistency throughout the entire implementation of its screening, referral, and identification process. Communication with stakeholders regarding the procedures and timeline are detailed and available on a continuous basis. The AIG Coordinator is the foremost person responsible for oversight within the LEA, along with the AIG Advisory Council, and other Central Office administrators.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has a flowchart/timeline for monitoring the uniformity of the identification process from one school year to the next. The consistency of these procedures is necessary to inform stakeholders as well as establish the need for gifted program services.

Mid-October: Begin screening tests

- administered to all 3rd grade students district-wide
- administered to any 5th grade student not already receiving services, has a teacher recommendation and/or parent referral district-wide.

Late October to December: Analysis of screening scores provides a "screening pool" of referral candidates.

- Teachers are distributed lists of referrals and are allowed to add recommendations to the pool.

January to March: Parent Communication for Potential AIG Placement begins.

- Mailings are sent to parents for prior consent for further evaluation,
- Once consent is received, parent scales are mailed to be completed and returned
- Referral materials are sent to teachers for data compilation for students with parental consent returned.

April to May: Further testing is administered

- may include the full CogAT and achievement testing
- all data including testing is recorded on the placement rubric.
- School-based review teams meet.

June to August: AIG Coordinator reviews team decisions and Parent Notification is sent

- parents notified in writing of placement decisions (by postal mail).
- Parents return signed Initial Placement Consent form, agreeing to the identification and consenting to services.

Early–August:

- Teachers are notified of student placements for the coming school year

Mid-August

- DEP's are compiled.
- Parent placement meetings are scheduled to discuss the AIG program and services, provide parent review and input, and provide team signatures on placement/DEP (Differentiated Education Plan) documents.
- The school-based review team will be available to meet on an individual basis for IDEP's (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) and by parent request.

Re-evaluations, transfers into the district, or other referrals during the school year will be handled on an individual basis and are not dependent upon the timeline. However, the same general procedures for identification will apply.

All student AIG records and files, including the screening, referral, and identification data, are kept in the AIG Coordinator's district office. This includes files of students who have transferred out of the district, graduated, or may have been referred but not identified. These records are audited bi-annually at the time of each AIG fall and spring headcount.

The AIG Coordinator attends all-district principals'/leadership meetings and shares AIG identification information with administrators annually.

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

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program strives to share the information regarding the screening, referral, and identification processes with all stakeholders in a variety of modes and formats, utilizing technology where appropriate and applicable.

A graphic flowchart illustrates the timeline of the processes in an easy-to-follow graphic form and serves as a quick reference guide for all stakeholders. The chart is included in prior consent for evaluation mailings to parents along with a copy of the due process procedures. This chart is posted on the MCS AIG website along with a full narrative explaining each process. In the cover letter, parents and guardians are encouraged to contact the AIG Coordinator with any questions or concerns. A standardized presentation (similar to the one used to inform teachers, but adapted to address parents and the community) is used on the website explaining the process. During meetings with parents and guardians of EL students, we ensure a translator is available to verbally explain the process in the parent/guardian's home language and to answer any parent or guardian questions or concerns. Forms and letters mailed to parents/guardians during the screening, referral, and identification processes are also translated into Spanish, as this is the most frequent need to respond to our district demographics.

* **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.

An individual AIG record file is created for each student who is referred for identification through the MCS AIG Program. These files document all critical aspects of the identification process.

The gathering and analysis of evidence begin with the referral process. A Prior Consent for Evaluation Form with an explanatory cover letter is mailed to the parent for a return signature. Included in this mailing is a copy of the Due Process Procedures and the flowchart/timeline for the identification process, along with a pre-addressed, stamped envelope for the form return.

Once consent is received, parents/guardians receive a copy of the SIGS (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students) Home Form, along with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the tests, tentative testing windows and a pre-addressed, stamped envelope for the form return.

The students' teachers of record will complete the SIGS, School Form and return to the AIG Coordinator upon completion.

Other data points are collected and compiled:

- County-wide Aptitude Exams (NNAT-2)
- Aptitude Testing Results (CoGAT)
- Math Achievement Average Class Grade
- IOWA Achievement Test Results
- CoGAT (QN) Quantitative/Nonverbal Batteries Composite Score
- Reading Achievement Average Class Grade
- IOWA Achievement Test Results CoGAT Verbal (V) Battery Score
- Additional Quantitative/Qualitative data to be considered

The MCS AIG Placement Rubric, which compiles the data associated with the multiple criteria compiled for team analysis, along with the identification decision and date, is kept in the student's individual AIG file. For students that are identified, a Consent for Placement form is mailed along with a pre-addressed, stamped envelope for the form return.

Parents/guardians of students not identified will receive a letter as well. Parents/guardians of both identified and unidentified students may request a conference or ask for copies of the evaluation data. Copies of individual student quantitative and qualitative data and copies of all mailings are maintained in the file as well.

Files of identified students are kept in the AIG Coordinator's office filed by school and grade level. Files of students not identified are kept as well and maybe added if re-evaluated. Files of students who transfer out of the district are kept and copies may be requested by receiving school districts or parents. Files of graduated students are kept in storage.

* **Practice G**
Develops and documents a student plan that articulates the differentiated curriculum and instruction services that match the identified needs of the K-12 AIG

student, such as a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). This document is developed and reviewed annually with parents/ guardians to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) are formalized instructional plans designed to outline specific services, instructional strategies, and learning goals for identified AIG students.

DEPs help ensure AIG students receive appropriately challenging, enriched, and accelerated learning experiences beyond the standard curriculum. Teachers can use a variety of advanced learning pathways such as, but not limited to: curriculum compacting, acceleration and higher-order thinking opportunities to ensure challenges.

The DEPs are also in place to provide a consistent framework and ensure equitable access to appropriate differentiation based on their unique strengths. The DEP allows teachers to pinpoint any social emotional needs in our AIG students such as perfectionism, peer relationships and motivation. Service delivery options for a particular student, match that to a student's needs and strengths.

The plan details the types of services offered (both direct and indirect), where or in what setting these services will be provided, and specify when the services are provided and with what frequency they will occur. It also serves as a communication tool between teachers, students and parents/guardians about the student's learning needs and service options.

Presently, the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program asks teachers to collaboratively develop a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) at each grade level for each student that is formally identified. This plan describes the differentiated curriculum and services that a student will receive at that school.

Parents have the opportunity to provide input and feedback both formally and informally. Beginning of the year parent meetings offer a time for parents to collaborate with the AIG coordinator or AIG representative from the school. Parents can request an individual meeting to discuss placement and/or DEP goals with the school placement team and/or the AIG Coordinator. AIG parents are encouraged to attend a one-on-one conference with the classroom teacher to ensure student academic goals are set, followed and effective. Currently, the staffing is not in place to have individualized meetings with every parent, however our district is currently working to bring on an AIG specialist that could open up the opportunity to increase one-on-one meetings.

IDEPs (Individualized Differentiated Education Plans) will be developed when a student demonstrates a need for substantial differentiation at any grade level. They may also need to be developed for a student who is not achieving as expected and needs an AIG Intervention Plan. A student that is identified as twice-exceptional has their IEP used as a support document. Also, if a K-3 student is identified, these students may need an IDEP.

To support the transition of AIG students from middle to high school, the MCS AIG program holds a meeting for all 8th grade students and parents/guardians in February. This meeting is held at the high school before pre-registration, and the purpose is to give AIG students an opportunity to begin planning their 4 year experience and to receive pertinent information concerning honors/Advanced Placement courses and other advanced curricular opportunities. Teacher representatives from each department are available and students and parents are free to ask questions. Following this transition night, 8th grade students work with teachers to create a potential 9th grade schedule, that is then brought back to school and with the help of the Academic Counselor

and Student Advisor their freshman schedule is created. At the High School level, parents/guardians are offered an individual conference concerning the AIG students schedule and chosen pathway.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

While our student identification procedures are clear and comprehension, it is a priority to make the process more equitable for our all students with an emphasis on K-2 students so they can receive the appropriate educational services.

Goals to improve these areas include:
Include indicators/criteria on the placement rubric for the identification of highly gifted students within K-2.
Develop additional professional development opportunities to expand the understanding of giftedness and address misconceptions of subgroups of gifted students.
Develop procedures/timelines and maintain documentation to consistently and continually monitor student data for students who are referred, but not identified; as well as students who are identified, but may qualify under a different or additional designation to inform services.
Increase participation of our face-to-face parent/guardian meetings to communicate information regarding screening, referral, and how the student will be served.
Utilize the ThrillShare calling system, Class Dojo, email, and other media outlets to disseminate information to all stakeholders.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Mitchell County Schools AIG Identification Screening Rubric
*	The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program Flowchart/Timeline
*	Presentation of identification procedures developed and reviewed annually with school personnel.

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	AIG Placement Flowchart AIG identification/Placement Rubric Due Process Procedures

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Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

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

The AIG Program in Mitchell County Schools provides comprehensive services designed to meet the academic and intellectual needs of K-12 students identified as Academically or Intellectually Gifted. The program ensures that services are tailored to students' advanced learning needs and are implemented across all grade levels and learning environments through collaboration with teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Services are based on grade level bands and student needs beginning in our K-3 Nurturing Program. The Nurturing Program offers students with advanced and enriched learning experiences before a formal AIG identification process begins.

Teachers will be encouraged to observe students in the classroom and refer any student showing above average skills in critical thinking, creativity and/or problem solving.

While working towards the opportunity to hire an AIG Specialist, the AIG Coordinator will continue to work with teachers to develop critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills while providing enrichment opportunities. These opportunities include but are not limited to:

1. Creative and Critical Thinking Challenges
2. STEM and Problem-Based Learning Activities
3. Literature and Storytelling Enrichment
4. Leadership and Social Emotional Growth
5. Inquiry-Based and Passion Projects

The AIG Coordinator, classroom teacher and parents will collaborate and work to meet the needs of students that have the potential to be formally introduced into our AIG program.

Over the course of the 3rd grade year, an initial placement process begins. Testing is conducted and a more rigorous approach begins to identify students who will be formally placed in the AIG program by their 4th grade year.

Upon placement until the end of the 8th grade year, students will work towards increasing their critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and social emotional needs. The intentional placement of gifted students with qualified personnel must be a consideration that is supported with the adoption and implementation of a service delivery model that is consistent across the district. The Fidelity of the model must be maintained to derive maximum benefits to the students. A clear process for student placements in classrooms with qualified teachers also requires the integration of other best practices in gifted education as well, such as professional development requirements for all personnel who work with gifted students. We will also continue to promote flexible grouping in both ELA and Math at the elementary level. DEP's will be required, completed and updated annually to reflect differentiation for our AIG students.

Our middle school continues to offer services in ELA and Math through offering advanced blocks in those subjects, and students are first placed into these groups dependent upon their AIG identification. Additional students may be added to these groups for talent development if potential is demonstrated. These students are often screened and/or referred for identification. Our district-wide STEM program begins in the middle grades and continues through the CTE program at the high school, supported by grants which provide state-of-the-art STEM labs at each school.

Up until high school, district and school administration, teachers and parents have worked to ensure AIG students have a plan that will foster growth in different areas. As students enter into high school, they are given a bigger voice and choice. Student DEP's are integrated into their 4-year plan for graduation, beginning in the spring of the students' 8th-grade year. Students "self-select" courses at the high school level, with guidance from all previously mentioned stakeholders and now with the help of high school academic advisors and counselors.

The AIG Coordinator monitors AIG students' schedules to screen for any student who may need to be counseled to enroll in advanced classes. Communication between middle and high school administration ensures that students are scheduled for classes that will meet the advanced learning needs across all learning environments.

The AIG Coordinator serves as a member of the MTSS District Level Team. Using the MTSS Framework for Total School Improvement, the district will seek to ensure that advanced students' needs of all grade levels are included in the MTSS service structure as it is implemented. The plan will include the need to work with school counselors to address social/emotional needs of gifted students and enrichment course teachers (Art, Music, PE, STEM, and extracurricular events) to support the intellectual needs of our advanced learners as part of the district-wide AIG program.

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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.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program provides professional development that includes resources addressing the characteristics of gifted learners and their unique affective needs. The MTSS (Multi-Tiered Student Support) school- based teams are included as a part of the process, helping to develop behavioral intervention plans for students who may have social/emotional needs. Our counselors take a lead role in helping to develop these plans at each school, which will sometimes also necessitate the development of an IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) for the students from the AIG program as well.

Professional development is provided to educators, counselors, and other support staff specifically concerning the characteristics of gifted learners and best practices in counseling them. Mitchell County Schools have established an SEL Team to oversee the implementation of meeting the social and emotional needs of all learners (with a focus on gifted students) to meet needs across all grade levels and learning environments.

Teachers in all grades have been trained and each have “Rapid Reset Boxes” in their classrooms. “All Learning is Social and Emotional” books are available to all K-12 teachers to help with the integration of social/emotional learning in the classroom. School Counselors in grades K-5 meet with students once a week to cover social/emotional topics, middle and high school counselors work in small groups and complete regular check-ins with students to keep a pulse on any needs our AIG students may have.

Parents and guardians have a role in supporting their child's development as well. Our program is constantly working to provide, through our Student Service team, social media and the MCS AIG website, readily available information for families regarding local agencies, specialists, and dependable websites where they can find information and support. In educating parents/guardians about the social/emotional needs of their children, we are enabling them to become better advocates for their children.

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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.

In order to ensure that our program's gifted services are connected with other instructional areas in the district, the AIG Coordinator is an integral part of the LEA administration and serves on district teams relating to student services, curriculum and instruction, and the MTSS District team. In addition, the Coordinator advocates for key standards and practices of the local AIG plan to be considered and included in the district and school level needs assessment and improvement plans. Also, representatives from each school serve on the MCS AIG Advisory Council. This ensures that school-level connections can help monitor AIG practices, as well as create access to our program’s resources.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has made improvements in providing specialized curricular resources for use in classrooms that serve advanced and gifted learners. We are striving to expand the use of these resources consistently across the

district and throughout as many grade levels as possible. Service delivery models that require fewer personnel resources are utilized in our district The AIG Coordinator continues to work with teachers on service delivery, encouraging and overseeing collaboration between educators, specialists, and support staff at the school and district levels.

We include information in the student DEPs (Differentiated Education Plans) that reflect how we align the use of these resources with different areas of the curriculum to serve identified needs (such as student placements in Math, Reading, or as Intellectually Gifted). All grade level teachers who serve the gifted population are required to document differentiation strategies on the DEP, and individualized DEPs must include documentation on how we will match the unique curricular and social/emotional needs of the student to available services. We are striving to ensure that the service delivery models that are chosen to provide services for each grade level span are implemented consistently across the district.

In addition to curricular resources, we advocate for counselors and other educators to develop strategies to be used toward meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners, both in group and individual settings. Platform and tools, such as Second Steps, Rapid Reset boxes, and professional development is targeted to equip our educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to meet the needs of our advanced learners.

* **Practice D**

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

In the elementary grades, students are strategically placed in groups for core instruction based on all available data. For core instruction, teachers within each grade level group students for reading instruction based on AIG identification, ability, and/or achievement. For math, they may also be grouped by grade level, or remain in their heterogeneous homeroom in small within-class groupings. Those students who remain in small within-class grouping are part of a designated advanced class roster in Infinite Campus, in which the "class" description is listed as advanced.

Middle school services in our district are largely provided by offering advanced sections of reading and math. In math, students who require acceleration are offered Math I for high school credit. Students are purposefully screened in the spring of their seventh-grade year to determine which are predicted to be successful with acceleration.

At the high school level, students/parents/guardians "self-select" Honors and AP courses based on student needs and choice. At both the middle school and high school levels, other content area teachers are made aware of the responsibility to meet the needs of gifted learners in their classes. These teachers also contribute to the DEPs for AIG students. Also, students at the high school level receive guidance from school personnel and the AIG program to register for coursework that best meets their abilities and needs. Students at all grade levels are also flexibly grouped during scheduled MTSS periods, and enrichment and extension activities are provided during these times to advanced students who don't demonstrate a need for intervention during this time.

Educators meet in PLCs by grade-level and content areas to determine flexible groupings of students between units and/or quarters.

* **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.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program shares information about all aspects of the local plan and its program policies and services, as well as the state regulations related to gifted education, with all personnel annually. Communication with all LEA personnel is accomplished through many different means. The AIG Coordinator shares a summary of plan updates and program goals at the beginning of the school year. Professional development in gifted education topics is available to most of the LEA's personnel each year, either locally or regionally. Other means of distributing information among personnel involve time on the agenda at district administrators' meetings, principals' meetings, scheduled AIG Advisory Council meetings, emails, phone calls, and both the district and AIG website.

The AIG Coordinator attends all-district principal/leadership meetings and shares AIG identification information and the local AIG plan with administrators and board members annually. The AIG Coordinator also gives teachers a short professional development refresher each year on best practices for identification to ensure consistent implementation across the district. This may take place face-to-face at school level meetings or by other communication means through the sharing of a video presentation. Other pertinent and timely information, (ex., legislation affecting services), is shared with relevant stakeholders at AIG Advisory Council meetings, faculty or grade-level meetings, and by phone or email.

Copies of student DEPs (Differentiated Education Plans), along with lists of current AIG students and their Identifications are updated annually and given at each grade level and to administrators to keep for reference at the school level.

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

All principals/teachers in the Mitchell County Schools district are informed annually of gifted student identification and service needs for the students that they serve. The AIG Coordinator presents an AIG update to personnel at the beginning of the school year. The AIG Coordinator provides guidance to parents and guardians, teachers, and administrators during key transition points through meetings, both face to face and virtual. Letters, emails and connection through Class Dojo are sent to parents and guardians to communicate when needed. The website is always available and provides contact information for the AIG coordinator.

In Mitchell County the key transition points are from primary to elementary, advancing from elementary to middle school, and transitioning from middle school to the high school level. At the elementary and middle school transition points, end of the year meetings are arranged between AIG students, their parents/guardians, and teachers. Additional meetings may occur at the beginning of the freshman year as well. At these meetings past experiences and the new AIG programs are discussed. These meetings allow questions to be answered about the continuation of services and allow pertinent data to be shared confidentially. At the high school level, an AIG parent night is held with counselors, principals, parents/guardians and students to discuss AP and

honors courses. At these transition meetings students can meet their new teachers, and explore their new environment and plan their education.

* **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.

A goal of the Mitchell County Schools AIG program is to assist administrators and parents in making acceleration decisions. Principals and other administrators are asked to utilize this tool, with the assistance of the AIG Coordinator. An IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) will be developed for a student if acceleration is utilized as a service option, detailing the method and means of acceleration. Depending on grade level will determine the type of acceleration a student may access.

In order to consider students for an acceleration path, the school and district staff must look at components of the students' learning and achievement to make an informed decision for acceleration. MCS will compile data with the following (but not limited to) information:

- Above-grade-level performance on benchmark assessments or EOG/EOC tests
- Teacher and/or AIG specialist recommendation
- Classroom performance and work samples
- Cognitive ability or achievement test data (local or norm-referenced)

K-5
Compacted: Students are exposed to this flexible instructional strategy which can streamline grade-level content by eliminating previously mastered material, allowing students to move through content at an accelerated pace. The time saved can be used to provide enrichment, extension activities, or access to higher-level content.

Subject/Grade Acceleration: In some cases a student may show mastery at a young age to be considered for a subject or grade acceleration. MCS uses the IOWA Acceleration Scales, which is a tool to help schools and district teams make informed decisions concerning grade skips and subject acceleration.The purpose of using this resource is to develop a study team to analyze several factors and make objective decisions.

MCS does have an Early Kindergarten Admittance Policy. Applications with evidence, interviews and test/screener data must be submitted in order to be considered for early admittance. This policy does incorporate the CDM requirements as it applies to a pre-kindergarten student.

6-8
Compacted: While the concept can be used in our K-5 classes, our middle school also uses a compacted class/curriculum. In the

area of middle school math, our sixth and seventh-grade advanced classes use a compacted math curriculum. These courses compact four years of math into three by increasing the pace of instruction and preparing students to be successful in Math I in 8th grade. Student math EOG scores and/or EVAAS predictor scores are screened by the AIG Coordinator to ensure students scoring at the highest levels are considered for placement in advanced classes in addition to already identified AIG students.

Subject/Grade Acceleration: The process follows the same as the elementary. Middle school students can apply for the CDM process in a high school level course only.

9-12
Honors Courses: Using the compacted approach students are placed in a more rigorous learning environment to cover content in a specific course. These courses are not limited to core academics, but can also include CTE courses.

Advanced Placement Courses: MCS currently offers up to 5 AP courses through the College Board platform. These classes can be offered in semester or year long options. MCS partners with the North Carolina School of Science and Math to provide other AP classes they may not be offered within our high school. This effort is to maximize the opportunities for our students pursuing courses that we do not have the capacity to offer.

Subject/Grade Acceleration: The process follows the same as the elementary. Middle school students can apply for the CDM process in a high school level course only.

Credit By Demonstrated Mastery (CDM): Any parent or student can request the chance for a student to receive a credit through CDM by demonstrating readiness for more advanced content. However, MCS would only recommend the CDM process for students who:

- Show exceptional academic ability in a specific subject
- Achieving a Level V score on an End of Course (EOC) test in a subject for which an EOC test is offered
- Achieving a score of 93% or higher on courses for which a CTE Post Assessment is available
- Achieving a score of 94% or higher on an assessment for a course in which an EOC or CTE Post Assessment is not available.
- Are motivated and self-directed learners

Students pursuing the CDM must complete an application and complete two phases before being reviewed by the guidance counselor and a CDM team.

- Students complete Phase I: A locally approved assessment demonstrating foundational knowledge
- Students who qualify move to Phase II: Creation and presentation of an artifact or performance task - The artifact will be a project or portfolio that demonstrates the student's ability to apply the knowledge and skills of the course. It will be developed

and assigned by the school and may take the form of a written project, a skills demonstration, an oral presentation or interview, and/or other assessments appropriate for the course.

- Successful completion awards full course credit; instruction in that course is waived

Dual Enrollment/College and Career Promise (CCP): Students are encouraged to enroll in classes offered by our local community college to obtain high school and college credit classes. Students have the option of online and face-to-face learning with CCP courses. Parents and students are informed of these classes during freshman orientation and reminded each year from the AIG Coordinator, guidance counselors, community college liaison and other high school staff. While these classes are offered to any student, AIG students could be eligible to begin these classes before their peers.

Additionally, MCS continues to support the opportunities accessible through other online learning platforms such as NCVPS and APEX Learning. Our district ensures all acceleration decisions are made equitably and transparently, with opportunities available to all students regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or language background. Families are engaged in the process and provided clear information about options and expectations.

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

MCS recognizes that students in all grade levels should have the potential to work at the highest level of potential and be challenged. In the primary years, many students may show potential that has not yet been fully realized due to limited exposure, developmental timing, or differences in language and background.

We support collaborations between the AIG Coordinator and K-3 teachers in an attempt to recognize young students with outstanding potential and respond to their needs. In order to intentionally cultivate the potential of K-3 students, all instructional staff communicate and collaborate to develop differentiated instruction. In the 2025-2028 cycle, our goal is to add additional support with an AIG specialist. In K-2 we will focus our efforts to begin developing more structured environments for advanced students. We will include a combination of:

A Nurture Program - We will Implement school-based “nurture groups” that provide enrichment experiences in critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. Students will be part of a pull-out group at least once a week to focus on verbal reasoning, math thinking, analogies, flexible thinking, and inquiry-based learning.

Enrichment Clusters - Interest-based small groups that meet weekly for students to explore topics beyond the standard curriculum. This could include STEM, visual arts, storytelling, and invention.

Classroom teachers will also support the student and AIG specialist by offering flexible grouping in math and reading instruction as a

daily feature of classroom differentiation. Professionally facilitated and increased support through PLC's, will foster collaboration amongst specialist and classroom teachers to monitor teaching and learning efforts for advanced students. Consistent and close attention to classroom performance allows for routine use of above-level materials and cross-grade grouping both during instructional blocks, in Intervention & Enrichment (WIN time) periods and scheduled AIG time with the specialist.

* **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.

Mitchell County Schools' demographics are unique in that it is a small, rural district with limited cultural diversity. local demographics play a role in how our gifted services are structured, in that there are a relatively small number of identified gifted learners who are culturally or ethnically diverse or are Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. LEP students include only approximately 14% of the student population. Approximately 19% of our student population is identified as exceptional (EC) students. The largest single demographic in our LEA is that of economically disadvantaged students, which comprise approximately 60% of our average daily membership.

We provide student AIG identification information to personnel who have a specialized focus (such as ELL and EC teachers) that provide those services to some of our gifted students. We monitor our economically disadvantaged students in order to provide financial assistance to any student whose need would present a barrier to participation in the core curriculum, enrichment, or extracurricular activities. Examples would be paid Camp Invention registration for students, paid registration fees and/or supplies for summer leadership conferences, paid fees for after school activities, such as Battle of the Books. On occasion we have a highly-gifted student, where an IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) is developed for that student.

Mitchell County Schools work to provide as many opportunities for students to develop their academic needs without discrimination to any demographic.

Camp Invention - (3-5) This program is held each summer to enrich and enhance students' interest in STEM, which nurtures our middle and high school STEM programs. Students can attend Camp Invention at no cost.

Battle of the Books - (3-8) Students have access to all titles and attend regional competitions to showcase knowledge of reading material.

MEP Summer Camp - (K-5) ELL students receive extra support in their home language, along with English, to help front load and review academics.

Noetic Math Competition - (4) Our 5th grade accelerated math enrichment class meets to prepare for the advanced math competition each year.

Summer Learning (6-8) Students have the opportunity to complete front loading to prepare them for the next school year, while receiving enrichment in STEM and the arts.

Students in middle and high schools are also encouraged to apply for summer camp opportunities through the North Carolina School of Science and Math. We also encourage academically gifted students at the high school level to consider attending Governor's School and/or Tarheel Girls and Boys State.

Our early college, Mayland Early College High School, also addresses the needs of these populations of students as part of its stated mission. Our program provides opportunities through online learning and College and Career Promise enrollment to assist students who demonstrate the need for participation in those courses. MEC also offers a Summer Leadership Institute for all students grades 7-12 that demonstrate leadership qualities in their school and community environments.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program attempts to ensure that underrepresented populations receive the same opportunities and services across the district. All personnel are offered professional development concerning the characteristics of gifted students and the special needs of all special subgroups of gifted students. Students who show exceptional potential, but may be lacking in language skills, are placed in talent development in advanced classes with support from the ELL teachers. Likewise, students who may be identified as twice-exceptional are monitored in advanced classes for any difficulties that may be addressed through assistance from the EC teacher. When necessary, a student who has extraordinary circumstances that need intensive interventions will have an IDEP developed to specify what special services that student will receive. AIG and other LEA budget resources are allotted for students who may face difficulties participating in curricular or enrichment opportunities because of financial constraints.

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

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program recognizes that talent and interest development plays a big part in the growth of our students. Our program offers several ways to encourage participation in individual and group experiences targeted to gifted learners in and out of school.

Academic Club and Organizations:

- Battle of the Books
- History Bee
- Noetic Math Competition

Leadership Development Programs

- Student Council
- Peer Tutoring/Mentoring
- Summer Tutoring/Mentoring Program

STEM Opportunities

- STEM lab using the Paxton/Patterson labs
- Partnering with our local 4-H to offer a robotics program and bring the Innovation Station to our schools

After-School/Summer Enrichment

- Open Mic - students showcase talents in writing, musical or theatrical talents to perform in front of peers and teachers
- Duke TIP
- Governor's School
- NCSSM Accelerator Programs
- Camp Invention

We continuously advocate for increased participation in all of these activities and seek new opportunities to ensure students are given the chance to foster talents and interest all year long.

With the addition of a part time AIG Specialist in the 2025-2026 school year, we hope to see our programs and opportunities grow.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

The addition of the AIG Specialist will open up opportunities that we have not had for our students. This support will increase the attention and instruction that these students receive.

We would also like to look at the extra-curricular offerings we currently have and boost participation and also add to these to give students more opportunities.

Formally meet with administrators individually at least once a year to ensure all principals and central office personnel understand the AIG Standards, the local AIG plan, and analysis of AIG data at the LEA and school levels. Develop a resource for all personnel to help them understand the essential components of the plan.
Communicate in a timely manner to parents, families, and students about appropriate extra-curricular programs and events.

Sponsor academic and intellectual activities, both during and after school hours, that are high interest to AIG students and/or meet their needs.
Establish meetings involving teachers at the key school transition points: elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school.
Continuation of a formal talent-development program in grades K-3; train primary teachers to recognize characteristics of gifted students and refer students for identification.
Work with the MTSS/PBIS district team to include the needs of advanced learners and identified AIG students, including social and emotional needs.
Concentrate upon providing professional development in differentiation for all teachers.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Noetic Learning Competitions
*	Camp Invention
*	"Rapid Reset" Boxes

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	Noetic Learning Competitions Battle of the Books Elementary and Middle

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

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

The NC Standard Course of Study can be used as an entry point for differentiation; however, high student achievement among gifted students is more likely to occur within inclusion of high-quality curriculum that contains ever-increasing levels of challenge. Differentiation is achieved by extending, enriching, and/or accelerating the Standard Course of Study objectives.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program offers students at the K-8 level experiences in the general education classrooms that utilize differentiation strategies such as extension, enrichment, and acceleration to adapt the NC SCOS to make it more challenging for advanced learners. This often includes flexible grouping strategies to facilitate instruction. All teachers of K-8 students in the district are expected to differentiate the needs of the AIG students in their classrooms in all core subjects. Teachers are expected to adapt the NC SCOS objectives and to differentiate by means of the content (extension of the standard objectives), the process (the method through which the content is presented), and/or product (the demonstration of learning expected from the student). In grades 9-12, students and their parents self-select honors level, dual enrollment, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses to meet the students' needs. Even at this level of rigor, it must be recognized that Honors, AP (Advanced Placement), and College and Career Promise courses are not in themselves differentiation for gifted learners, and some learners' unique needs will dictate differentiation beyond that of the Honors or AP course. High school teachers in other classes are to be expected to consider the AIG students' needs as well.

The State Board of Education approved the updated Honors Level Course Rubric in July 2023. This rubric will be the foundation for courses developed at the honors level and ensure local fidelity with programs across the state. The Honors Level Course Rubric (2023) will be used in the development process of honors courses at the LEA level and guide the local level Honors Level Course Portfolio Process. Our high school teachers are aware of these guidelines. They are meant to ensure that all courses that carry the "Honors" classification:

- provide students with opportunities for enhanced rigor, depth, and complexity.
- develop critical-thinking skills, students take ownership for their learning, and become creative problem-solvers and collaborators
- provide a distinguish difference in the depth and scope of work required

- incorporate Literacy Instruction Standards

Our program constantly strives to provide professional development to provide materials, coaching, and instructional support for teachers who work with advanced learners. Consistency is encouraged among district schools regarding service delivery and grouping methods at grade level spans, which facilitates the implementation of professional development initiatives. We will support the development of and utilize regional training initiatives such as regional endorsement training that focus on the standards of and prepare teachers for the Gifted Education Praxis (5358) and encourage all teachers to add the area to their license. The MCS AIG Program will pay for teachers' registration fees when they submit a passing score. We also strongly encourage teachers to consider completing an approved AIG licensure add-on program through a college or university. These lead teachers will work closely with the AIG Coordinator and will provide coaching to teachers in their building.

Support will also be available to Honors teachers by providing assistance and professional development to teachers developing Honors Course Portfolios.

Our program looks for ways to expand enrichment opportunities available to all students for talent development and includes this part of the AIG budget. We encourage the participation of enrichment activities that may or may not take place in the school day/year. This consists of the support of academic competitions (Battle of the Books, etc...), Camp Invention (STEM-based), after-school clubs, and supporting diploma endorsement and online learning opportunities for advanced students.

Subject and/or grade level acceleration is encouraged to meet an individual student's needs and when practicable. The AIG Coordinator determines a school and/or district-based team to make acceleration determinations and decisions on an as-needed basis. The team uses the IOWA Acceleration Scales to provide direction for the team's decisions. CDM (Credit by Demonstrated Mastery) is now being offered to middle and high school students to whom it would benefit. Information on applying for CDM is available on the AIG program website and the high school registration handbook. All classes (Core, CTE, Exploratory) are expected to consider the AIG students' needs as well.

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

Mitchell County Schools encourages and offers teacher training on differentiation as it applies to AIG students teaching and learning. This training encompasses student abilities/strengths, readiness and personal interests to meet the needs of the whole child.

Teachers use a range of formal and informal data—such as performance assessments, interest inventories, and observational notes—to customize learning experiences that are both meaningful and appropriately challenging. This is achieved in the modification of content, process, product, learning environment, or a combination of these options. Some of the strategies used include, but are not limited to:

- Readiness-Based Differentiation: Students receive instruction that is matched to their current academic level and zone of proximal development. This may involve flexible grouping, tiered assignments, or curriculum compacting to accelerate learning.

- Interest-Based Engagement: Learners are offered opportunities to pursue topics aligned with their passions and curiosities through independent projects, choice menus, interdisciplinary studies, and mentorships. (Problem-based learning, Project-based learning)
- Ability-Aligned Curriculum:Enrichment and acceleration options are tailored to meet students at their demonstrated ability levels in specific subjects, ensuring that instructional materials and activities promote growth, depth, and rigor. (Socratic/Paideia seminars, Shared Inquiry discussion)

Educators are encouraged to meet during PLC time to discuss students needs, breakdown data collections, collaborate and plan to provide support for utilizing diverse and effective instructional practices for all learners with a focus on advanced learners. Dedicated time is built into the school schedules for addressing student academic and social/emotional needs. For advanced learners and gifted students, this often means supplementing the students' core instruction by focusing upon appropriate learning activities that may include curriculum acceleration (presenting above-grade-level content or pacing content delivery at a faster rate) or content enrichment and extensions.

MCS currently has 4 teachers with AIG certification credentials. These teachers serve as leaders in the schools to guide gifted education in the classroom. We will continue to provide training in gifted education so that our limited certifications do not hinder meeting student needs and to help increase the knowledge of meeting those needs. With the possible addition of an AIG Specialist for the 2025-2028 cycle, more attention to strategies, teaching styles and techniques will be included in guidance for classroom teachers. This addition will help with facilitating a deeper dive into screeners with more progress monitoring to determine overall needs of our advanced learners.

Currently, no one school or the district as a whole adheres to any one particular curriculum and instructional model that would help guide instruction. The MCS AIG Advisory Council and AIG Coordinator will continue to look at models that seem to fit our LEA's initiatives and mission to arrive at a unified model or combination of models for our program.

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

The district offers a broad range of evidence-based resources to meet the diverse academic, intellectual, and social-emotional needs of AIG students. These resources are selected based on current research in gifted education, best practices in differentiated instruction, and the developmental characteristics of advanced learners. Supplemental resources in the classroom will assist the teacher in adapting the curriculum to meet student needs. Most of our resources are offered district-wide with teachers having the autonomy to choose what best works for a particular group of students. Resources include, but are not limited to:

- **Academic & Intellectual Resources**

- Curriculum Extensions: Materials such as P.E.T.S. (Primary Education Thinking Skills), Jacob's Ladder Reading Comprehension, Great Books and Junior Great Books (high-quality literature, student-centered discussion, and activities that support reading comprehension, critical thinking, speaking and listening, and writing), Shared Inquiry, Think Up Math for rigor, Noetic Learning
- Instructional Frameworks: Strategies such Problem and Project based learning, Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK)
- Digital Tools: Online platforms like Khan Academy, Code.org, iReady and Newsela Pro provide adaptive content aligned with students' readiness levels.

- **Social & Emotional Support**
  - Affective Curriculum: Second Steps Curriculum, Youth Mental Health First Aid (high school only),
  - Counseling Supports: School counselors and AIG teachers collaborate to offer small group sessions, guided discussions, and reflection journals focused on goal setting, resilience, and self-awareness.
- **Individualized Supports**
  - Flexible Grouping & Compacting Tools: Teachers use pre-assessments, curriculum maps, and diagnostic tools to adjust pacing and depth for students demonstrating mastery.
  - Tiered Assignments
  - Subject Acceleration
  - Choice Boards

The adoption and application of supplemental resources that present advanced concepts through models and frameworks, which have been developed for use with high ability learners, offers our teachers a dependable and cohesive approach for addressing the instruction and assessment of gifted learners. Using similar materials district-wide also simplifies budgeting. In addition, the implementation of the resources can be accompanied by meaningful and focused professional development. Teacher instruction needs to be followed up by fidelity checks, along with coaching, and refresher training as needed. Therefore, the Mitchell County Schools AIG program focuses on getting similar evidence-based supplemental curriculum programs for gifted learners into the schools and classrooms on a consistent basis. The purchase and distribution of these materials is preceded by targeted professional development necessary for the implementation and sustainability of the use of these resources.

Our AIG program does provide small classroom financial supplements for teachers to purchase materials(outside of the district purchases) of their choice to aid in differentiation of the core curriculum. These funds are provided to teachers who have the most contact with gifted learners during the course of a day, such as high ability math and reading groupings at the elementary and middle

school level, and honors and AP teachers in high school. Funds are also dedicated in the AIG budget to provide a limited number of district personnel to attend the annual NCAGT (North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented) Conference to allow them personal exposure to new evidence-based resources and to gather materials to support gifted programming.

* **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.

The development of durable skills in a real world context provides a framework that is intended to communicate knowledge, skills, and understanding at an advanced content level to enable students to experience success as global citizens. Students must learn and apply skills such as critical thinking and reasoning, creativity, curiosity, problem-finding and solving, and decision making. They need to master communication and collaboration skills, as well as use effective information, media, and technology strategies as well as develop the curiosity to think outside the box and be creative in their approach to life. Students must learn to adapt in different situations, show empathy for those around them, grow their learner's mindset and understand their personal responsibility to be a productive citizen.

Many of these skills are embedded into advanced coursework at all grade levels including AP courses at the high school level.

Adaptability – Students learn to navigate change, embrace challenges, and develop resilience through flexible learning environments and open-ended tasks.
Collaboration – Students are required to complete group projects, and/or are placed in team-based competitions to nurture the ability to work effectively with diverse peers and value multiple perspectives.
Communication – Students are given the opportunity for oral presentations writing across genres and digital media production to build strong expressive and receptive communication skills.
Critical & Creative Thinking – Students engage in higher-order thinking through inquiry-based tasks, complex problem solving, and design thinking frameworks.
Empathy – Through service-learning projects, interdisciplinary studies, and literature exploration, students develop emotional intelligence and global awareness.
Learner's Mindset – A growth-oriented approach is reinforced through goal-setting, self-assessment, and reflection, encouraging continuous improvement and curiosity.
Personal Responsibility – Structures such as learning contracts, independent study, and mentorship promote accountability, initiative, and time management.

MCS focuses on these skill sets all through a student's educational journey. Planning within the district along with partnerships in our community help to provide opportunities for our students to graduate and be successful. Core academic classes integrate many of the skills in everyday teaching and learning. Our Career and Tech Education department offers opportunities for job shadowing, local business mentors and real world experiences integrated into the curriculum. Future Business Leaders of America allow students collaboration, public speaking, growth in learner's mindset, personal responsibility and critical/creative thinking. Key Club, Beta Club and National Honor Society fosters empathy with service projects and embodies many of the Portrait of a Graduate Skills.

Other after school clubs (Open-Mic, Battle of the Books), core and extra-curricular academic programs (STEM, Camp Invention, Noetic Math, enrichment time) help to ensure we are pushing our advanced learners for post-secondary success.

These skills cannot be accessed by state standardized tests, but rather by the accomplishments and personal growth (in and outside of the classroom). Students are encouraged to compete in regional and state competitions that determine skill quality, carry out projects in and out of the classroom to measure success and knowledge of a skill and then to carry this out as they apply for summer programs and post-secondary opportunities.

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

All Mitchell County Schools' students are assessed by quarterly benchmark testing, and annually by state-required End of Grade/End of Course. Our district, assisted by the AIG program, also utilizes a locally designed matrix to screen all 7th grade students for acceleration into Math I in eighth grade. This matrix uses multiple criteria to determine which students might need acceleration, and which would be better served in an advanced 8th grade math class. The matrix form consists of five criteria:

1) IAAT score (Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test) score - Minimum score 77%ile. This screener is given to every 7th grader.

2) EVAAS Predictor score for Math I - minimum score 75%

3) Classroom final average in 7th grade math - minimum average 80.

4) 7th grade EOG Math if available - Minimum Level 3.

5) Teacher recommendation - Must be minimally or strongly recommended.

The form has a place to indicate a student's AIG identification, if applicable, and also any additional qualitative data that may need to be considered. A team at each middle school consisting of math teachers, the principal, and the AIG Coordinator evaluates the forms and recommends students who need 8th grade advanced math versus Math I. Also, any student scoring the highest level on the 7th grade math EOG will automatically be placed in the Math I class, unless a parent chooses to opt their student out. The overall purpose of the screening is to use the assessment matrix to determine the differentiation level for each student in a fair and equitable manner. To ensure advanced students are prepared for the grade-level acceleration, 6th and 7th grade advanced math classes are compacted to accomplish 6th, 7th, and 8th grade objectives that are all introduced by the first semester of 8th grade.

The Mitchell County Schools district is using MTSS (Multi-Tiered Student Support) to apply progress monitoring to all students, utilizing the school MTSS teams. On a program-wide scale, continually analyzing student assessment data for gifted students throughout the district assists the AIG program in matching service delivery options to overall student needs. All of these types of assessment are necessary to successfully drive differentiation for gifted students, both on an individual, classroom, and program-wide basis. In addition, teachers in the classroom are encouraged to use pre-assessment to help match instruction with academic

need and to inform curricular decisions. Teachers meet regularly in PLCs for data analysis conversations to determine the pacing for advanced learning and academic growth of our advanced learners.

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

To ensure high-quality, responsive instruction for AIG students, Mitchell County Schools chooses a team based approach. Bringing appropriate stakeholders to the table to determine student needs helps build a strong program with greater outcomes. These partnerships are essential to the effective planning, delivery, and monitoring of differentiated curriculum and instructional strategies that support academic challenge and growth. Key stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Classroom Teachers – Co-plan differentiated units, compacted curriculum, and flexible grouping strategies to address readiness and interests.
- AIG Specialists (new to MCS in 2025-2026) – Provide enrichment resources, consult on student needs, model strategies, and co-teach advanced learning experiences.
- Instructional Coaches – MCS currently has an Early Literacy Specialist that works with our K-5 teachers. She offers professional development and support in designing rigorous, standards-aligned tasks with depth and complexity in literacy only.
- School Counselors – Assist in addressing social-emotional needs of gifted learners, support goal setting, and facilitate transition planning.
- Administrators – Ensure appropriate scheduling, staffing, and policy support for implementation of advanced learning pathways
- Exceptional Children (EC) and EL Specialists – Collaborate on strategies to support twice-exceptional learners and English learners who may also be gifted.
- Families and Community Partners – Engage in shared decision-making and support talent development beyond the classroom through mentorships and enrichment opportunities.

This team-based approach ensures that differentiated instruction is not the sole responsibility of one educator, but a shared commitment to meeting the needs of advanced learners through intentional design, collaboration, and ongoing reflection.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Transitional parent meeting for upcoming 9th-graders to showcase and discuss honors and AP programs.

Encourage teachers of honors courses at the high school level are significantly differentiating from the standard curriculum, following

the Honors Level Course Rubric to develop course objectives. Encourage the expansion of enrichment opportunities available to all students.

Expand and maintain the use of supplemental resources already being utilized. Explore future expansion of research- based supplemental resources for core academic areas such as science and social studies. Continue to support personnel state conference attendance (NCAGT and others). Teacher training through NWRESA or WRESA for the AIG credentials class.

Maintain the K-3 curriculum enrichment initiative to develop and cultivate the potential of younger students, using resource materials such as P.E.T.S. (Primary Education Thinking Skills). Purchase program materials and offer professional development to K-3 teachers and administrators district-wide for program follow-up.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Math I Placement Rubric
*	Parent Meeting Presentation
*	Advanced Math Curriculum (Think-Up Math)

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	Math I Placement Rubric Freshman AIG Orientation

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.

An effective coordinator of a gifted program must satisfy particular responsibilities, knowledge, and competencies in order to effectively administer the program. At this time the AIG Coordinator does not hold an AIG license, but will be pursuing this certification. The AIG Coordinator acknowledges that correctly trained personnel is imperative, therefore the goal during the 2025-2028 cycle will be to hire an AIG Specialist. This collaboration will ensure the integrity of the program is consistent with the Mitchell County Schools AIG plan, requirements set forth by NCDPI and best practices for gifted learners.

The AIG Coordinator being without a certification does not hinder the job performance and following of the job description for the AIG Coordinator in Mitchell County Schools. Following is that job description, not necessarily all inclusive:

Identification/Placement:

- Develops an identification process that assures an individual body of evidence for potentially gifted students' knowledge and abilities as required by state standards and legislation and State Board of Education Policy.
-Selects assessments that include multiple sources of information about students. Monitors the identification procedures and processes to ensure fidelity.
-Maintains an accurate program headcount and submits headcount to state authorities.

Programming/Curriculum/Instruction:

-Plans and implements the district-wide programs and services for K-12 gifted learners that are specifically designed for the identified needs of the local population, in accordance with state standards and legislation and State Board of Education Policy, which has been approved by the LEA's school board.
-Observes and evaluates the program's activities.
-Designs programs in consultation with experts in the field based on research and "best practices". Assesses the overall effectiveness of the program. Initiates and directs improvements in the program.
-Develops and solicits approval for policies including early entrance, acceleration, grouping, dual enrollment, honors and Advanced

Placement, and curriculum modification.
-Collaborates with counselors to develop a comprehensive guidance program that addresses the unique social/emotional needs of gifted learners, as well as assistance with academic planning and vocational and career awareness.
-Provides communications that include orientations and workshops that inform all stakeholders of program services and policies, as well as the academic and social/emotional needs of gifted learners.

Personnel/Staff Development:
-Acts as a liaison between the Central Office administrative staff and local school staff, state, and regional administration.
-Articulates the roles and responsibilities of persons working with gifted learners.
-Develops procedures for the selection of teachers that work with gifted learners that includes placement in classrooms where teachers have met local requirements for that position or have earned an AIG add-on license.
-Determines needs and develops a comprehensive ongoing professional development plan for all personnel that work with gifted learners.
-Maintains accurate records of personnel regarding gifted licensure and/or local requirements.
-Facilitates implementation of staff development activities.
-Evaluates and reports staff development activities to appropriate personnel.
-Provides leadership for appropriate personnel.

Administrative Duties/Public Relations:
-Provides leadership in the administration of the AIG program, and implements the plan for K-12 gifted learners in accordance with state standards and legislation and State Board of Education Policy, which has been approved by the LEA's school board
-Ensures that necessary administrative procedures are maintained.
-Participates actively in regional meetings, personal professional development opportunities, and other state initiatives to support gifted programs.
-Locates and facilitates the special and related services which support the program.
-Establishes and leads an AIG Advisory Council that includes representatives from all stakeholder groups.
-Evaluates the program on an on-going basis, both formally and informally.
-Reports to stakeholders on an annual basis regarding program evaluation and activities and the progress of gifted students in the program, using data and information from all stakeholders to make or suggest changes in learning environments.

Fiscal Management:
-Uses cost effective procedures in fiscal management.
-Establishes and maintains control of financial resources specific to the continuum of services provided by the program.
-Develops and administers a defensible budget that adheres to federal/state/local policies, while allowing for full implementation of the local AIG program plan.
-Consults with the superintendent and finance officer on fiscal matters.
-Participates in program audits and shares budget information with relevant stakeholders.

* **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.

Presently, our AIG program does not have sufficient funding to employ AIG licensed specialist positions to provide service delivery to our gifted learners. We rely on our general education teachers at all grade levels from K-12 to differentiate the curriculum and meet the needs of these students. All teachers are given the opportunity to receive professional development to learn best practices for serving the gifted learners in their classrooms.

Mitchell County School's goal is to hire an AIG Specialist during the 2025-2028 cycle. The specialist will have specific roles in ensuring our gifted program is meeting the needs of students. As this becomes available, the AIG Advisory Council along with Central Office Personnel and the AIG Coordinator will work to create the expectations of this new role.

The AIG Specialist will play a pivotal role in ensuring the academic, social, and emotional success of gifted learners by serving as a leader, collaborator, and advocate within the school community. Working across all grade levels, the AIG Specialist will support differentiated instruction, talent development, and equitable identification practices to meet the diverse needs of advanced students. Following are the criteria for the specialist:

Instructional Leadership & Support

- Designs and delivers enrichment lessons, advanced content, and acceleration strategies in collaboration with classroom teachers.
- Models and co-teaches best practices in differentiation, including curriculum compacting, tiered assignments, and inquiry-based learning.
- Assists with the integration of evidence-based instructional frameworks into the general curriculum.

Identification & Programming

- Leads the AIG referral and identification process, ensuring that multiple criteria are used to recognize giftedness in diverse learners.
- Collects and analyzes assessment data, classroom performance, and observational evidence to recommend appropriate service options.
- Supports early talent development in K–3 and ensures appropriate transitions across elementary, middle, and high school AIG services.

Collaboration & Consultation

- Partners with general education teachers, instructional coaches, EC and EL staff, and counselors to implement effective differentiation strategies.
- Collaborates with administrators and district leaders to align AIG services with local, state, and national expectations.
- Supports and is a thought partner in the planning of professional development focused on gifted learners.

Social-Emotional Support & Advocacy

- Supports the social and emotional well-being of AIG learners through effective curriculum, goal-setting, and small group facilitation.
- Advocates for appropriate placement, acceleration, and extracurricular opportunities aligned with students' strengths and interests.
- Promotes equity and access by identifying underrepresented students and creating inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments.

Program Coordination & Family Engagement

- Communicates with families regarding AIG services, student progress, and enrichment opportunities.
- Maintains documentation, reporting, and compliance related to state AIG plans and local implementation.
- Coordinates special programs such as talent development initiatives, summer learning, academic competitions, and community mentorships.

Until this hire can be made, the AIG Coordinator, AIG Advisory Council and classroom teachers will continue to support AIG learners with the above expectations to the best of their ability. Should funding become available, it is the goal of the MCS AIG program to employ at least 1 AIG specialist to assist teachers in meeting the varied needs of gifted learners in their classrooms, by offering coaching to the teachers and/or direct services to the students.

MCS also recognizes the value that teachers with the AIG certification can contribute. We will continue to offer the opportunity for classroom teachers to receive professional development and pursue certifications in AIG. MCS pays registration fees for passed Praxis exams to encourage licensed educators to obtain AIG add-on licensure. This promotion will be directly targeted toward educators with extensive experience planning and providing gifted services in the district.

* **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.

Professional development that has been provided in previous years by the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has largely consisted of occasional workshops concentrated upon the characteristics of gifted learners or methods of curriculum differentiation. We recently partnered with the North Carolina School of Science and Math to provide professional development on Problem and Project based Learning for students. K-12 teachers had the opportunity to attend, but our high school had the most attendees.

We currently have four teachers that have the AIG certification License. Our goal will be to use these licensed teachers to provide support, within their buildings, to other teachers. We would like to provide time during PLC's and afterschool for them to share best practices, ideas and lessons for gifted learners.

Ideally we want this work to happen from the top down. Administrators would be key in ensuring our teachers are differentiating instruction to gifted learners, just as they would an EC or EL student. Training for administrators would include scheduling considerations, program requirements, and policy development to support equitable access.

Classroom teachers, student service personnel, support staff and our instructional supports all need to be prepared to recognize, nurture, and challenge gifted learners throughout their K–12 experience.

While this is the first stage in preparing staff to work with gifted learners, we also recognize the need for more of our teachers to be trained and obtain formal AIG training. Direct services to identified AIG students are best provided by staff who have AIG licensure, which is obtained through the university pathway or by a passing score on the gifted education Praxis test. In lieu of staff who have not received this licensure, our district needs to have in place a specific scope and sequence of coursework that meet our AIG program's local requirement goals. This is difficult to accomplish because it would mean that nearly every general education teacher in the district would be required to obtain licensure, based upon our current structure of services. We feel this is an unrealistic goal. However, our program will support any teacher who expresses a desire to obtain the statewide add-on licensure by subsidizing the cost of their training and PRAXIS assessment.

MCS encourages personnel who regularly serve gifted and advanced learners to pursue additional licenses, training, or professional development through opportunities such as:

-National Board Certification or college/university programs
-workshops or conferences for differentiation, evidence-based curriculum/teaching models for heterogeneous classes, formative/ongoing assessment, gifted or twice exceptional learners, standards-based grading, 21st century skills, or honors/PreAP/Advanced Placement curricula
-face-to-face, local Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups or electronically through state or national organizations' Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) Beginning Teachers and annual "AIG Refresher Training" each fall for all staff, including regular education teachers, special education teachers, instructional support staff, guidance counselors, and administrators.

The AIG Coordinator works with RESA both in the West and Northwest to promote regional training options as well. With changes taking place in the upcoming school year, we are hopeful to increase teacher participation and understanding of how to fully serve our gifted learners.

* **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.

Currently for grades K-2, students have not been officially identified through testing, however teachers work within core instruction to differentiate instruction for students that show higher achievement levels. There are currently no teachers in our K-2 schools that have an AIG certification or license. The AIG Coordinator works with school-based administration to find the best placement for students who show giftedness.

We begin a more concentrated focus on advanced learners as they enter into the 3rd grade. Students are identified through reading groups and placed with a specific teacher that the administration feels is the best qualified to work with advanced learners or has AIG training. Formal testing for our AIG program takes place in 3rd grade so that we can further pinpoint students with advanced learning needs.

As students enter into the 4th grade, we continue to place AIG students together that have been identified in reading. These students are placed with the teacher that will accelerate, increase rigor and challenge students in the area of reading. Math students may not be separated based on placement, but we have now added an enrichment/intervention block to help support students. In the case of students who have been identified in math, the enrichment block is used to have students, with the math placement, to work with a strong math teacher that can accelerate, increase rigor and challenge students. This process is also used for our 5th grade.

For our middle school grouping happens based on academic needs. To ensure AIG placed students receive compacted, accelerated and rigorous academics, we place them in advanced or compacted classes for math and reading.

High school students self-select classes and are encouraged to register for Honors, AP and early entrance for College and Career Promise (CCP or Dual Enrollment) classes. Teachers for our Honors courses must complete the Honors Portfolio as set forth by NCDPI and approved within the LEA. Those who teach our AP classes must go through an initial training and are encouraged to complete professional development provided by College Board.

MCS recognizes the need for more personnel to earn the AIG licensure and to work more closely with school-based administrators to ensure those are the teachers delivering effective instruction to our gifted students.

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

While the number of teachers with AIG certification is low, recruitment within our district for AIG-licensed professionals will continue to be highly promoted. All educators will continue to work directly with advanced students K-12 with the expectation that they are highly qualified to nurture students' strengths and build upon areas of improvement.

With the goal to add an AIG Specialist, MCS feels that more focused work can be placed on our academically gifted students. Until this hire can be made the coordinator and school administration will work to have more interaction with teachers when working on differentiated educational plans and give more input in the classroom learning.

With the goal of hiring an AIG Specialist, we should see further encouragement and interest for more staff to become AIG certified. MCS continues to utilize WRESA and NWRESA, along with the NCDPI AIG Website to provide information to prepare teachers and support staff to earn AIG licensure through the Praxis exam. As stated in 4c, we subsidize the cost of training and PRAXIS assessments.

As funding allows, MCS plans to implement an AIG Support Initiative to support educators already licensed or plan to achieve AIG licensure. A portion of AIG funding will be allocated to provide membership to NCAGT, registration to state and national conferences, and local PLC support to share ideas and strategies for nurturing our advanced learners. HR will work closely with the AIG, AP Director and AIG Specialist to support hiring practices that lend itself to recruitment of AIG Professionals and how educators collect CEU's for overall licenses.

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

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program makes every effort to relate the professional development it provides locally to national (National Association for Gifted Children/Council for Exceptional Children) and state (North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented) standards, as well as best equitable practices in gifted education. Whenever possible, professional development includes instruction in methods and models that stress future-ready skills. Several teachers, including members of the AIG Advisory Council, regularly attend the state gifted conference sponsored by NCAGT. Our LEA also regularly participates in professional development offered in the field of gifted education regionally at our Western Regional Education Service Alliance (WRESA) and Northwestern Regional Education Service Alliance (NWRESA) and at NCCAT (the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching).

Membership to professional organizations provides educators with access to networks of other educators and experts in the field, publications, and other resources, which we support for conference attendees. Attendance at the state gifted conference allows attendees to stay informed of the latest research and best practices for working with gifted learners, while networking and advocating for gifted education with others in the field. Also, WRESA and NWRESA trainings allow local access to quality staff development that meets the needs of gifted programs in our region.

MCS focus for professional learning during this cycle will be geared towards:

- Data Driven Equity Audits to analyze representation data in AIG programs and identify gaps and equip staff with tools for setting equity goals and tracking progress.
- Supporting Twice-Exceptional Students to understand the interaction between disability and giftedness.
- Planning supports that meet both academic and social-emotional needs.
- Job-Embedded Coaching and PLCs to provide site-based support to apply new strategies and examine impact on student outcomes.

Providing this support will help move our district closer to realizing its vision of equity and excellence in gifted education.

* **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.

Professional development opportunities offered by the MCS AIG program are aligned to the local program standards, while at the same time aligning with other district initiatives whenever possible.

For this cycle, the AIG Coordinator along with the AIG Advisory Council and school-based administration will collaborate on professional development needs centered around gifted learners. As stated throughout the plan, we will work to encourage staff to pursue licensures and/or certifications and ensure costs are not a barrier to these licenses/certifications.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program makes every effort to relate the professional development it provides locally to national (National Association for Gifted Children/ Council for Exceptional Children) and state (North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented) standards, as well as best practices in gifted education.

MCS will continue to encourage outside of the district learning, but with the possible addition of the AIG Specialist, who will have the AIG licensure add-on, our goal is to offer more professional development and support within our own system.

Structures that we will work to put in place are:
-AIG Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) Scheduled district or school-based PLCs will be held where the AIG specialists,

classroom teachers, and support staff analyze student work, explore differentiation strategies, and co-plan lessons. Topics may include curriculum compacting, tiered assignments, enrichment planning, and equity in identification.
-Co-Teaching and Collaborative Planning Models where the AIG specialists partner with classroom teachers to co-teach enrichment lessons or model differentiation strategies during the instructional block. Specialists assist with pre-assessment, lesson design, flexible grouping, and reflection to support just-right learning for advanced students.
-Instructional Rounds or Peer Walk-Throughs that foster structured classroom observations where teachers and AIG specialists visit classrooms to see differentiation in action. A follow-up debrief would occur that focuses on identifying effective practices, challenges, and strategies for support.

If these structures are put in place MCS would be working towards ensuring that AIG services are not isolated but deeply integrated into the fabric of every classroom.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Ideas for strengthening include a possible addition of an AIG Specialist.
The AIG Coordinator will work to promote better communication and learning opportunities for teachers on gifted learners.
The AIG Coordinator will work closer with school administration to look at schedules to make time for gifted learners enrichment time until a hire can be made.
Establish local professional development requirements for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, exceptional children personnel, counselors, and school administrators.
Use technology to share new ideas and grade-appropriate resources.
Encourage and financially support conference attendance and participation (presenters); encourage membership in professional organizations that support gifted education.
Alignment of AIG Program professional development offerings with LEA and individual school-based improvement and strategic plans.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	RESA registration for AIG Credentials
*	Teacher Registration fro NCAGT
*	NCCAT Registration

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link

AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A

Mitchell County Schools (610) 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.

Intentional, two-way partnerships with parents and guardians as essential collaborators in the educational journey of AIG students, is key to the success of our program. These partnerships should be built on mutual respect, consistent communication, and shared responsibility for supporting the unique needs of advanced learners.

MCS understands that parent support is imperative to building student success in our AIG program. These partnerships are continually evolving to build efficacy in our program for better student outcomes.

To build Academic and Intellectual Partnerships we focus on regular Communication. Families are kept informed about AIG services, student progress, enrichment opportunities, and differentiated instruction through emails, conferences, Class Dojo messages and our AIG District Website. We also offer a face to face transition time for rising freshmen. A session is planned just for the AIG parents and students to be able to hear important information about AIG at the high school level and to ask any questions. Each year we create the Differentiated Educational Plans (DEP's) that are shared with parents. Parents are given the opportunity to collaborate with AIG Coordinator and teachers to co-develop or review advanced learning plans that reflect student interests and academic goals.

For the Social and Emotional focus we ensure there is responsive communication between school and home. Families have a trusted point of contact (AIG Coordinator, teacher, counselor) they can reach out to for concerns or ideas regarding their child's academic or emotional well-being.

MCS recognizes there are areas that need improvement. With the possibility of an AIG Specialist we hope to increase home engagement to provide parents with enrichment ideas, book lists, problem-solving activities, and creative outlets to nurture students' intellectual curiosity beyond the classroom. We also would like to increase parent awareness with the social and emotional piece of a gifted learner. With district lead, we feel that offering parents educational sessions on common social-emotional traits of gifted learners would be beneficial.

By sharing information, educating and communicating with our parents/guardians, they will become better advocates in developing both the minds and hearts of our AIG learners.

* **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.

Partnerships with stakeholders are essential to the well-being of the local AIG program and the students that it serves. These partnerships are in place to enrich the academic and social-emotional experiences of AIG learners. They provide real-world relevance, mentorship, and advanced opportunities that extend learning beyond the classroom.The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has established partnerships with our Institutions of Higher Education to offer Dual Enrollment and Enrichment. Partnerships with Mayland Community College, Mayland Early College High School and Mitchell High School to provide students the opportunity to take college level courses while attending high school, begin pre-college programs (ex. nursing,welding, etc.) and be part of academic competitions (MEC Summer Leadership Program). We also provide field experiences for students led by guidance counselors and our college liaison to coordinate campus visits for high school students Our middle school students have year long access to a STEM lab.

Local Business and Industry Partners play a major role in shaping our AIG students. Our partnership with the Career and Tech Education department (CTE) offers opportunities for AIG students to explore careers aligned with their interests through job shadowing, mentorships, and internship, entrepreneurship, arts, and communication. This department is also instrumental in bringing business and industry members to speak with students about careers in all different areas (within our community and out of the community). For our elementary students, we coordinate with our local Farm Bureau Women's Chapter to offer a day devoted to the agriculture field. We have brought in partners from NC State University, Lees-McRae College, our local 4-H and farmers/agriculture advocates from across the state. We recently partnered with the North Carolina School of Science and Math to offer professional development on Project and Problem -Based Learning. From this training, teachers have partnered with businesses to design real-world challenges that students can solve collaboratively, developing their critical thinking and innovation skills. Our CTE Department also arranges students to hear guest speakers and travel for site visits to local businesses or industries. Quartz Corp and Sibelco (local mining companies) are very involved in our schools and educating students about job possibilities with the mining industry. This department also arranges various student visits to businesses and organizations to highlight how academic learning translates into real-world impact.

Many of our AIG students are involved in our Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). Students are part of service-learning and leadership projects that develop empathy, communication, and problem-solving aligned with the Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

We would like to continue building our program to offer things such as the Science and Math Olympiads and science fairs. Our goal is to extend learning, inspire innovation, and prepare students for post-secondary success in both academic and real-world settings.

* **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.

An active AIG Advisory Council meets quarterly as part of the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program. The purpose of the council is to serve as a collaborative and reflective body that: 1) Offers diverse perspectives on AIG programming, identification, and service delivery. 2) Reviews and provides feedback on policies, practices, and outcomes. 3) Helps identify needs and gaps in program equity, access, and effectiveness. 4) Assists in promoting understanding of AIG services in the wider community. 5) Develops, implements, monitors and revises the local AIG plan.

Currently, the council includes includes:

Classroom Educators K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12

Specialists

School Administrator

Parents (Elementary, Middle, High School)

AIG Director

AP/Honors Program Director

Community Member

During this cycle, we would like to work towards adding business representatives, Penland School of Arts representative, and an IHE community member. We will add the AIG Specialist as well.

Functions of the AIG Advisory Council include:

- Meeting regularly and working together to offer advice about the development or improvement of gifted student services; helping to establish program priorities.
- Becoming knowledgeable about current programs, research, and best practices in gifted education and its relationship with general education.
- Providing feedback about the effectiveness of the gifted education plan and reviewing it annually.

- Fostering a collaborative relationship between the school personnel, the local Board of Education, and the council.
- Making suggestions to promote community awareness of gifted education.
- Supporting professional development training for staff.
- Advocating for gifted education initiatives in the district and providing input and support for funding at all levels.
- Encouraging communication and a better understanding of gifted education issues among teachers, parents, and the general public.
- Serving as a liaison to help the community understand and support gifted education services.

Since our district presently lacks the funding for hiring AIG specialists in the schools, the Advisory Council helps to fill the need for school representation. Members of the AIG Advisory Council who are school employees serve as their school's representative, helping to manage school AIG identification teams and solicit and disseminate information at the school-level. Together we can collaboratively improve our program to meet the needs of diverse learners in our 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.

Mitchell County Schools AIG Program understands the importance of effective communication to parents/guardians and the community. Our goal is that our communication is ongoing, accessible, and responsive to the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of the community, with the goal of increasing awareness, access, and engagement.

Shared information is covered in plans, services, policies and procedures through many communication outlets.

- **Local AIG Plan** - Our plan is available in digital and printed formats. It can easily be found on our AIG website. It outlines our district's philosophy, identification criteria, service delivery models, and goals for continuous improvement.
- **AIG Program Services** - While these are known within our schools and amongst staff, we are working to provide this information digitally and more easily accessible as we are continuously updating our website. This would include clear

descriptions of what services are offered at each grade band (K–12), including differentiation strategies, enrichment opportunities, acceleration options, and talent development programs. Parents are also made aware of these services through DEP's, teacher and parent conferences, Class Dojo, email and phone calls.

- **Accessing Advanced Learning Opportunities** - Accessing enrichment programs, summer learning, after-school activities, and early college or CTE pathways are communicated through teacher and parent conferences, transition events at the high school level, Class Dojo, emails, phone calls and our social media outlets. As we continue to update our website this will be added here as well.

While our multilingual population has been lower than most districts and AIG placement has been minimal amongst ELL students, we have seen an upswing in potential placement of these students. We continuously work on having all forms of communication translated into other needed languages to close the communication gap and understanding amongst these families.

Timely and effective communication ensures that all stakeholders feel informed and connected to the AIG process and to the success of AIG students.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

To strengthen this standard, the coordinator will work towards the addition of an AIG Specialist and the goal to improve community partnerships will help to strengthen our advisory group.
To strengthen this standard, the coordinator will work with administrators and school faculties to integrate the local AIG plan into all school improvement plans, and the district strategic and improvement plan, when they are updated.
To strengthen this standard, the coordinator will work with teachers to offer more enrichment opportunities that meet the advanced learning needs of AIG students.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Partnering with local business to promote a Entrepreneurship Day to showcase small business.
*	District AIG Website
*	AIG Advisory Council Agenda

Documents

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

Mitchell County Schools (610) 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.

Every three years, the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program completes the development of a local AIG plan with the assistance of the AIG Advisory Council, the Regional AIG Coordinator's Roundtable, and has it approved by the local Board of Education.

The AIG Coordinator writes the local AIG plan, in cooperation and assistance from the AIG Advisory Council. This council plays a vital role in the comprehensive evaluation of the local AIG program and assists in conducting an informal program evaluation on an annual basis, using multiple sources of data. Any major changes in the program will be reflected in a revision to the local LEA plan, and subsequent Board of Education approval.

When writing the plan, each practice is addressed based on data and local context. The plan is submitted to the local BOE for approval and then to NCDPI for review and comments. The plan may be revised before the end of the next plan cycle; major revisions that reflect a change in policy or practice will need to be resubmitted for local BOE approval. During the three year cycle and before a submission, an on-going evaluation of the local AIG program directs the revision of the plan. Annual stakeholder surveys and other data collection methods and sources, such as EVAAS AIG subgroup growth scores are taken into consideration. The data available accounts for student growth as well as school and district level subgroup growth. This data is shared with the district level strategic planning team and each school's School Improvement Team.

Interim reports and/or policy updates from NCDPI are used as an opportunity to determine if changes are needed in the local AIG plan. All plan changes will be brought before the AIG Advisory Council for feedback and to review the plan document. The group will propose changes that the AIG Coordinator may incorporate into the plan and present to the local BOE for re-approval.

The final plan is available for review on the LEA's website and in written form upon request. The plan is based on guidelines approved under NC AIG Program Standards, and also mandated by legislation under Article 9B, Academically or Intellectually Gifted Students (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.05-.08).

The AIG Coordinator writes the local AIG plan, in cooperation and assistance from the AIG Advisory Council. This council plays a vital role in the comprehensive evaluation of the local AIG program and assists in conducting an informal program evaluation on an annual basis, using multiple sources of data. Any major changes in the program will be reflected in a revision to the local LEA plan, and subsequent Board of Education approval.

* **Practice B**
Monitors the implementation of the local AIG program and plan in accordance with current legislation and state policies to ensure fidelity of implementation for all AIG program components.

The AIG Coordinator, along with assistance from the AIG Advisory Council and applicable Central Office staff, is responsible for successful local AIG plan implementation and the continual monitoring of the plan on a consistent basis.

The aim is to ensure that what is documented as policy in the plan is what is being carried out in practice. Interim reports are made during each three-year plan cycle to the State Consultant of Gifted Services at the NC Department of Public Instruction. The Mitchell County Schools AIG Coordinator currently oversees the implementation and fidelity of the local plan and program on an on-going basis.

Annual informal program evaluations are conducted with the assistance of the AIG Advisory Council, which includes stakeholder feedback. These evaluations could include, but are not limited to:

1. Student Focus Groups - This can happen during the school day and be facilitated by the AIG Coordinator or by the teacher serving the AIG student. Parents would be made aware of the questions and when the focus group would meet.
2. Quick Surveys - Distribute short, easy-to-complete surveys during parent-teacher conferences or through Class Dojo using tools like Google Forms or paper forms.
3. Classroom Visits - Conduct casual walk-throughs to observe AIG strategies in action and gather anecdotal feedback from teachers.

The results of the informal evaluation are shared annually at a district administrators' meeting and a program update is given at a local Board of Education meeting.

* **Practice C**
Develops and monitors a budget using allotted state funds, and local funds if applicable, to address the needs of the Local AIG Plan in accordance with state policy.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has a yearly budget in place to categorize expenditures for implementing and facilitating the local AIG plan.

The AIG Program's budget prioritizes costs and program needs to provide the best alignment possible with the local plan. Each category of the yearly budget is tied to at least one standard and practice of the local AIG plan. The AIG Coordinator is responsible for the development and maintenance of the budget, while considering the feedback of the AIG Advisory Council. During regular AIG Advisory Council meetings, alignment of the budget and the local AIG plan are discussed. The Coordinator requests and receives regular updates from the district Finance Officer about expenditures and balances in each budget category. All state funds received for the gifted program are necessary to meet program goals and are made available for that purpose.

Any personnel paid from state AIG funding must have AIG licensure and spend the majority of their teaching time with advanced students.

The AIG Advisory Council advocates for and seeks out other funding sources as well, including local monies, grant funds, and business partnerships to help meet the needs of our gifted learners and the program.

* **Practice D**

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

The AIG Coordinator is the primary person responsible for compiling and analyzing the data at the LEA level and distributing the data to all relevant stakeholders, and therefore takes an active role in the LEA's data team. Such data supports program fidelity and accountability, and serves to guide the program's services.

Data maintained and analyzed to determine student achievement and growth over time includes, but are not limited to: Attendance, benchmarks, screeners, and summative assessments, CTE certifications and AP/IB/CIE successful completion rates.

MCS monitors achievement data from juniors' ACT and seniors' ACT WorkKeys accountability testing as an indicator of rigor in its college preparatory and Career/Technical Education. MCS administers the PreACT universally to 10th graders and uses its results as a leading indicator of ACT performance, then uses the ACT as a leading indicator of WorkKeys performance. The AIG coordinator collects and monitors students' PreACT and ACT subtest scores in reading, math, science, and English and shares them with high school teachers upon request to facilitate differentiation.

Often data that includes potential failures or dropouts, especially at the high school level, can serve to indicate students who would benefit from individual counseling, mentoring, or an academic intervention plan (IDEP or Individualized Differentiated Education Plan). A relationship is maintained with the counselors and dropout prevention coordinator at the high schools by the AIG Coordinator in order to collaborate services for gifted students who may need an individualized plan of action.

ECATS Early Warning System will be used as a tool to monitor AIG students’ overall strengths and pinpoint areas of need. The monitoring of the overall performance and growth data of AIG students helps the coordinator and administrators evaluate program effectiveness on a continual basis.

Data collected can span several different areas to shape mindsets, drive policies and practices within the program. While we tend to concentrate on academic data, our team will continue to look at demographic data. Our area is rural and there is not a large geographic difference. Our plan will concentrate efforts on the breakdown of AIG enrollment by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender.

We will continue to promote a growth mindset to all stakeholders with data collection. It is important that our AIG program coordinators and advisory members have a seat at the table when decisions are made with budgets and monetary allotments.

Data collected can show the needs for resources to enhance the program and opportunities for our students. As mindset changes, policies can change too. Monitoring student data and discussion centered around that data, could allow for more flexible, tiered approaches. MCS currently relies heavily on cluster grouping, but would like to see more efforts made toward talent development, nurturing groups and support on dual identification for AIG and special education.

Data will help drive the practices used in our program as well. MCS will continue to offer opportunities for professional development for AIG licensure and to potentially pilot new initiatives within the program.

Due to FERPA rules, personal information is shared only with administrators, counselors, and other faculty at the schools on an as needed basis. Overall group data (not personally identifiable) is shared with school and district level administrators as well as the local BOE as part of our AIG program evaluations.

* **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.

Due to the size of our district and lack of AIG Specialists, it is tremendously important that school and district level teams work together with the AIG Director to gather, analyze, and act on multiple data points in regard to referral, identification, non-discriminatory services, and retention of students within the AIG program.

In order to be sure that students from underrepresented populations are being served, it is essential for the AIG Program to not only look at the growth and achievement data of each subgroup of the gifted population, but also how these groups are being referred, identified, and served. Often, other types of specialists that work with these students can recognize gifted characteristics in these students more readily than other educators, and should be encouraged and trained to cultivate potential and recognize giftedness. Our AIG Coordinator collaborates with the district's EL and EC administrators and teachers, as well as counselors and other support staff, to ensure that our services are responsive to all students in our population who show the potential and need for talent development and/or AIG identification and services. Data to be reviewed may include, but are not limited to, student performance on the NNAT3, our local benchmarks, state check-ins and the overall observation of the student by the teacher in regards to how the student learns and approaches higher order skills.

The AIG Coordinator also monitors the bi-annual headcount data and EVAAS data to review and analyze AIG representation from underrepresented population groups and the growth of these students. (See demographic section)

Trends are discussed with stakeholders at AIG Advisory Council meetings to discuss potential program changes and improvements. A goal for the 2025-2028 cycle will be to provide better services to AIG students through funding a specialist at the primary, elementary and middle school level. Discussion with all stakeholders on the value and need of a specialist will ensure nurturing groups for our youngest students and more individualized attention to our older students.

* **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.

Mitchell County Schools and its AIG Program currently do not have the funding for an AIG teaching specialists. Therefore, we rely on regular education teachers to deliver instructional services to our gifted students.

The AIG Director works closely with district and school leadership teams on school improvement plans and need assessment surveys in order to align professional development needs with the AIG goals outlined in the local AIG plan. Data collected from surveys will drive decisions on the AIG programs function as a whole for MCS. The types of professional development to help staff better serve AIG students will be driven by survey responses. Allotment of funding to professional development, activities and student support will be driven by the data from the surveys. The data will also gauge how well stakeholders value or program and where improvements can be made.

Professional development records for all employees of the LEA are officially kept in personnel files maintained by the Human Resources staff at the Central Offices. The folders contain certification and licensure records and include Continuing Education Credits an employee has earned.

As of the 2024-2025 school year, four employees have a gifted education license. The program keeps a separate set of files for this purpose, maintained by the AIG Coordinator, that includes all coursework and professional development in gifted education completed by district personnel. We are continuing the process, during the 2025-2028 plan cycle, of establishing local professional development requirements for teachers who work with gifted students. Accurate records will need to be kept by the AIG Coordinator, and cooperation with the Personnel Director at our Central Office is essential in this process.

* **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.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has an active AIG Advisory Council, which meets regularly (at least quarterly) during the school year. Its members represent the demographics of the district and include Central Office staff. As a group that offer their

perspective, expertise, time, and commitment to the implementation of the local AIG program, their leadership is important to the success of our program.

In order for our Advisory Council to ensure our program is most effective, we feel that feedback from stakeholders -- students, parents/guardians, families, teachers, and community members will drive our goals for the program. Goals that we wish to focus on include:

- Promoting a culture of collaboration and transparency among all stakeholders.
- Identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in the AIG program.
- Ensuring the program meets the diverse academic, social, and emotional needs of gifted students.

To work towards meeting our overall vision of the program we will:

- Gather actionable feedback from all stakeholder groups.
- Utilize the feedback to inform program updates, staff training, and resource allocation.
- Create clear communication channels for stakeholders to understand how their input shapes program decisions.

Feedback can be accessed on many different platforms. MCS program will focus on surveys to be given at least twice a year. Surveys would include questions about program effectiveness, instructional practices, communication, and resource availability. We will also offer stakeholder interviews in a one-on-one or small group setting with randomly selected participants from each stakeholder group. We will conduct the interviews to focus on areas such as program alignment with individual student needs, communication, and overall satisfaction.

Once our feedback has been gathered we will use the data to work towards the overall goals we have set and then identify more detailed areas of concern to better our program. We will identify recurring themes, strengths, and areas for improvement and pay special attention to feedback that highlights gaps in equity, inclusivity, and accessibility.

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

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program conducts self-assessments completed by the AIG Advisory Council in preparation for revising the local AIG plan as required by the state. We also gather survey data broken down by building and grade level. Evaluation data is summarized and communicated to relevant stakeholders in a timely manner.

Collection of data and goal setting are crucial steps in ensuring AIG program growth and stakeholder satisfaction, but we must ensure this work is shared. Through shared data, the program can maintain transparency about the program's effectiveness and

growth.

Updates on the findings are shared at a monthly administrator meeting and to the MCS AIG Advisory Council. Both of these entities are expected to share the information out to their respective faculties or stakeholder groups.

Survey data updates will be shared in an annual presentation to our school board members. Updated information to the program may result in other board presentations as needed. Updates will also be shared with program parents through our school communication platforms:

MCS AIG Website:

- Website is updated as needed, linking the local plan, and all upcoming events and opportunities for our advanced learners, along with updated parent/guardian information.
- Website houses survey links, so the community and staff members may provide input.

Thrillshare:

- We communicate to families/guardians to make calls and/or post to all of our social media outlets to communicate upcoming meetings/opportunities.

Our goal is to inform stakeholders of priorities and overall satisfaction of the program. MCS strives to follow a continuous improvement cycle to ensure our program does not become stagnant.

* **Practice I**
Safeguards the rights of all AIG students and their parents/guardians through established written policies, procedures, and practices. The LEA plan includes: informed consent regarding identification and placement, reassessment procedures, transfers from other LEAs, and procedures for resolving disagreements.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program works to safeguard the rights of all AIG students and parent/guardian through the referral and placement process.

The MCS AIG Program has written policies in place regarding the identification and placement of students. Signed forms for prior consent for evaluations must be obtained at the time of student referral. Parents are

provided with a copy of the Due Process Procedures and a flowchart/timeline.

At the time of student identification and placement, parents must sign a consent form for the identification and placement of the student as determined by the school team in order for the student to receive services. The rights of AIG students to receive appropriate services are further protected by the yearly DEPs (Differentiated Education Plans). These are approved yearly by the

AIG Coordinator and signed by parents at school meetings. Parents may request a change in services at any time. The request will be reviewed by the AIG Coordinator and School Administrator to determine if changes are deemed necessary.

Students who transfer to the district indicate on a school registration form if they were previously identified as AIG in their previous school. If so, the student information data manager will report the student's basic information to the AIG Coordinator for investigation. The AIG Coordinator will contact the parent for prior notice/consent before services begin. If a student transfers from a district within the state of North Carolina, their information will be obtained from the Infinite Campus database, and the student will be placed in services according to their identification area. Transfer students from outside the state will be evaluated the same as a new referral, in order to determine AIG identification area(s).

Re-evaluation of the identification area will occur as appropriate in each student's case or if requested by the parent. The evaluations timeline will vary upon the individual situation.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program follows due process procedures for parental grievances or disagreements concerning student placement or services. Details about this process are available on the district AIG website, as well as disseminated with parent placement communications. A parent may request a copy of the Due Process Procedures at any time from the AIG Coordinator.

The Due Process Procedures are also described below:

1. The parent/guardian requests a conference with the school-based review team.

   a. Parent/guardian may make a request for a conference with the team to discuss the concerns about the recommendation.

   b. The team will review the student's records and their previous nomination, identification, and service option decision. The team may gather additional information about the student from teachers and or parent as needed.

   c. The team grants the conference within five school days of the request and responds to the parent in writing within five school days of the conference.

2. The parent/guardian appeals the team's decision to the AIG Coordinator.

   a. Parent/guardian may appeal the team's decision in writing to the AIG Coordinator within five days of receiving the written response from the team.

   b. The AIG Coordinator reviews the grievance within five school days of the receipt of the Appeal.

   c. The AIG Coordinator responds in writing to the outcome of the review within ten school days.

3. The parent/guardian appeals to the Superintendent of Mitchell County Schools.

a. The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the AIG Coordinator to the superintendent within five school days of receiving the response.

b. The superintendent reviews the grievance within five school days from the receipt of the Appeal.

c. The superintendent responds in writing concerning the outcome within ten school days to the parent/guardian, AIG Coordinator, and principal of the given school.

4. The parent/guardian appeals to the MCS Board of Education.

a. A parent may appeal to the MCS Board of Education in writing within ten school days following the written response from the superintendent.

b. The Board may offer a final decision within thirty days of written receipt.

5. The parent/guardian petitions the administrative law judge for a contested case hearing.

a. Parents/guardians may file a petition for a contested case hearing under ~Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

b. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings of fact and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of ~Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decision of the judge becomes final, is binding on all involved parties, and is not subject to further review under ~Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

In the event that the procedure developed under G.S 115C-150.7(b)(7) fails to resolve a disagreement, the parent or guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

The scope of review shall be limited to

(i) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted student

(ii) whether the local plan developed under G.S. 115C-150.7 has been implemented appropriately with regard to the child.

Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings of fact and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on the parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. (1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18 s. 18.24(f)).

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*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

To strengthen this practice, the coordinator will work with administrators and school faculties to integrate the local AIG plan into all school improvement plans, and the district strategic and improvement plan, when they are updated.

Inclusion of the practices of the local AIG plan in all other strategic plans at the school and district level.
Collect data regularly, both informally and formally, from a variety of sources, especially student growth data.
Local high school dropout rate reports and potential failure reports compared to AIG headcount.
Gather multiple sources of data for continuous program improvement. Yearly annual review of plan/program evaluation, facilitated by the AIG Coordinator and the AIG Advisory Council

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	AIG Budget
*	AIG Advisory Council Meeting Agenda
*	BOE Approval Form

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	Due Process Procedures and a flowchart/timeline

Local Board of Education Approval

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:
06/30/2025

AIG Related Documents

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

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

Optional Documents		
Type	**Document Template**	**Document/Link**
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	AIG Placement Flowchart AIG identification/Placement Rubric Due Process Procedures
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	Noetic Learning Competitions Battle of the Books Elementary and Middle
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	Math I Placement Rubric Freshman AIG Orientation
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	Due Process Procedures and a flowchart/timeline

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Phrase	Definition