

Overview: Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

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Mitchell County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2021). 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 aligned 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 2022-2025. 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 comment.

For 2022-2025, the Mitchell County Schools 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 2022-2025, Mitchell County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Mitchell County Schools Vision for local AIG program:

Mitchell County Schools' 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 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 2022)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* \$ 99,935.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 0.00

Standard 1: Student Identification

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

*** Practice A**

Develops both screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels. Provides opportunities 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.

We conduct a grade-level screener at grades 3 and 5 across the district. The nationally-normed screener assessment is administered to every student in these grades in October of the school year. Parents are informed by a note home and through Class Dojo as to the purpose of the assessments and to how the data will be utilized. 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. We collect other forms of data in our grades 3-8 AIG referral process which includes: BOG scores grades 4-5, EOG scores grades 4-5, NC Check-Ins, iReady data, a giftedness checklist, and referral forms that are completed by teachers, collected, and then evaluated by the AIG team. Parents may at any time refer students to the AIG referral process.

In grades 6-8, students are screened by middle school teachers for the purpose of recommending students to 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.

In K-2, as well as in grade 3, additional data from state screeners, iReady benchmarks, and anecdotal data, are collected to identify students that may benefit from advanced curricula. A student who has been evaluated and granted Early Admission to Kindergarten or other grade or subject acceleration in K-2 is also added to the referral pool.

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 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:

1. Formal identification of students begins in grade 4, 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. We conduct a grade-level screener at grades 3 and 5 across the district. These nationally-normed screener assessments are administered to every student in these grades in October of the school year. Parents are informed by a note home and through Class Dojo as to the purpose of the assessments and to how the data will be utilized.

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. We collect other forms of data in our AIG referral process which include: BOG scores in grade 3, EOG scores grades 3-5, NC Check-Ins, iReady data, a giftedness checklist, and referral forms 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.

2. 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, usually in mid-March or April. Students in the referral pool are small group-administered 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.

The SIGS forms (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students) provide standardized ratings for both parent and teacher evaluations. 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 of 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, English language 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 5% of the student population. Approximately 19.5% 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% of our average daily membership. We intend 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, specialists, and administrators wear many hats, so collaboration is key to success.

*** 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: Screening tests are administered to all 3rd and 5th-grade students 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 - March: Mailings are sent to parents for prior consent for further evaluation, also parent scales are completed and returned; referral materials are sent to teachers for data compilation for students with parental consent returned.

March to April: Further testing is administered; may include the full CogAT and achievement testing; all data including testing is recorded on the placement rubric.

April - June: School-based review teams meet.

June - August: AIG Coordinator reviews team decisions; 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.

Mid–August: Teachers are notified of student placements for the coming school year; DEP's are compiled.

September – October: Parent placement meetings are scheduled at each school annually 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/families, 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 a student's AIG identification process and evidence which leads to an identification decision. This documentation is reviewed with parents/families 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 and 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.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

While our student identification procedures are clear and comprehension, it is a high priority to make the process more equitable and that students receive the appropriate educational services.

Goals to improve these areas include:

- Determine which assessments might be best utilized for off-grade level testing and develop criteria for when to implement for a student.
- Include indicators/criteria on the placement rubric for the identification of highly gifted students at all grade levels (including K-3).
- 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.
- Return to face-to-face parent/guardian meetings to communicate information regarding screening, referral, and how the student will be served. Utilize the MAC 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 Flow Chart / Timeline (Linked to MCS AIG Webpage)

* Presentation of identification procedures developed and reviewed annually with school personnel.

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	 <u>MCS AIG Process Placement Timeline</u>  <u>AIG Identification Rubric</u>

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

*** Practice A**

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

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program strives to provide programming that will meet identified students' needs, and offer enrichment to advanced students to help develop their academic and intellectual potential. Mitchell County Schools' K-3 Nurturing Program is to provide students with advanced and enriched learning experiences before a formal AIG identification process begins. The Nurturing program will promote higher-level thinking in students who demonstrate the potential to benefit from more in-depth instruction.

Each school provides enriched learning experiences that encourage higher-level thinking, creativity, and leadership growth. Participation in the Nurturing Program will look differently at each site but might include any of the following:



- Independent Projects
- Investigations of areas of interest
- Math Enrichment
- Book Studies or Literature Circles
- Leadership Roles
- Problem-solving Activities

We currently support grades K-3 with advanced ELA curriculum materials. Our program's focus going forward will be to establish a formal nurturing program in critical thinking skills. Teachers will be encouraged to observe students in their classroom and refer any student that core instruction periods of the school day. Students are first placed into these groups dependent upon their AIG identification. Additional students may be added to these groups' talent development if they have demonstrated potential, and these students have often been screened and/or referred for identification.

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.

Our middle schools continue 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 that demonstrated potential, and 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.

Our program will continue to focus upon improving the high school DEP process, integrating the DEP with 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. The AIG Coordinator monitors AIG students' schedules to screen for any student who may need to be counseled to enroll in advanced classes. Students' advanced learning needs across all learning environments will be addressed under our MTSS Framework for Total School Improvement. The AIG Coordinator serves as a member of the District Level team, and the AIG Coordinator will seek to ensure that advanced students' needs of all grade levels are included in the MTSS service structure as it is implemented. This should include a plan for the school counselors to address the social/emotional needs of gifted students and enrichment courses (Art, Music, PE, STEM, and extracurricular events) will support the intellectual needs of our advanced learners as part of the district-wide AIG supports.

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*** Practice B**

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners, across all grade levels 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.

The SEL District Team has gained funding through local grants to create “Rapid Reset Boxes” for classrooms, purchase All Learning is Social and Emotional books for a book study and K-12 SEL curriculum. The SEL district team developed SEL learning calendars for summer programs using Nearpod lessons. Nearpod SEL has been purchased for teachers to use throughout the academic year as well. Teachers are also involved in the creation of these plans and are included in targeted professional development concerning the social/emotional characteristics and needs of their students as well.

Parents and guardians have a role in supporting their child's development as well. Our program is constantly working to provide, through 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.

*** 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 due to the lack of sufficient funding to hire AIG specialists to service the schools. Service delivery requires 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 Nearpod and 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 Powerschool, 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 district-wide staff meeting 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 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 identification, are given to each grade level and administrator 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 district-wide staff meeting 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 and emails 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. 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. We use 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. 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.

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.

In the development of district policies, we have updated our local Early Admittance to Kindergarten policy and have integrated the SBE's "Credit by Demonstrated Mastery" policy into existing policies and procedures, with information and forms for both available to the public on the district website. The Mitchell County Credit by Demonstrated mastery starts with a discussion between parent/guardian, student, AIG coordinator, administration and teacher and follows the guidelines set forth by the State Board of Education and NCDPI in Procedural Guidelines for Implementing Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) Spring 2021.

Additionally, we continue to support the opportunities accessible through online learning (ex., NCVPS, APEX Learning, etc.) and both on-site/off-site College and Career Promise courses (dual enrollment) for our students, which is especially helpful to our rural district with limited financial resources and personnel. Advanced Placement courses also offer a means of acceleration into college-level courses with increased rigor to our high school students.

*** Practice H**

Develops mindsets, policies, and practices to promote equity and excellence by broadening access to advanced learning opportunities through a variety of intentional efforts, including talent development, at all grade levels.

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 5% of the student population. Approximately 19.5% 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 56% 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 all students, paid registration fees and/or supplies for summer leadership conferences, paid fees for after school activities, such as Battle of the Books. On the occasion we have a highly-gifted student, an IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) is developed for that student.

Mitchell County Schools has and will provide summer bridge programs for rising 6th and 9th graders to frontload learning to support success and growth during big transitional years. MCS offers K-6 Camp Invention each summer to enrich and enhance students' interest in STEM, which nurtures our middle and high school STEM programs. CTE offers summer exploration in community business and job offerings for 7th-12th grade students. Students are surveyed to determine areas of interest prior to participating in summer offerings. 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 I**

Enhances and further develops the needs, talents, and interests of AIG students through extra-curricular programming.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program currently encourages participation in individual and group experiences targeted to gifted learners, such as the Duke TIP (Talent Identification Program) and Governor's School. We are advocating for increased participation in service clubs and competitions currently active in our district (such as the Jr. BETA Club, LEGO Robotics, Western Regional Math Competition, and Battle of the Books). Camp Invention is a summer STEM camp that is sponsored by the AIG Program for talent development.

There are numerous different enrichment options that could be added to the offerings currently available to students in our school district, with negligible impact on our limited funding. Some examples include those supported by outside entities, such as regional math and science fairs and competitions, problem-solving competitions, area summer camps, and other activities offered through local colleges and universities. Other options could be carried out locally, with school staff and volunteer support, such as group programs that showcase the work of talented students, local Saturday programs, technology seminars, or other activities designed to meet areas of student interest. Additionally, individual student options could include service-learning and mentorship programs.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

AP CTE Classes: Macroeconomics (new Fall 2022)

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

* SEL Book Study Curriculum / Nearpod District SEL Library / Rapid Reset Boxes

* Differentiated Education Plans

* Communicate in a timely manner to parents, families, and students about appropriate extra-curricular programs and events (ex. Camp Invention).

Documents

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

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - 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 through the use of differentiation strategies, including enrichment, extension, and acceleration.

he 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 classroom 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 June 2012. 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 (2012) 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 need to be aware of these guidelines. They are meant to ensure that all courses that carry the "Honors" classification are: more challenging than standard-level courses to foster growth for advanced learners, and distinguished by a difference in the depth and scope of work required.

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. 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 pulls together 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.

Mitchell County Schools has a district team in place to manage the applications and CDM process when necessary.

*** Practice B**

Employs diverse and effective instructional practices according to students' identified abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles to address a range of learning needs at all grade levels.

Mitchell County Schools' teachers are offered training in differentiation on a consistent basis. Currently, teachers in our LEA use a variety of processes and strategies to provide depth, complexity, and rigor into the learning experience for gifted learners. 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: Problem-based learning, Socratic seminars/Paideia seminars/Shared Inquiry discussion, tiered lessons and assignments, and the use of materials that promote problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Our district is a leader in the state in the implementation of MTSS (Multi-Tiered Student Services). Educators meet in PLCs to provide support for employing 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.

Currently, this is being offered to groupings of advanced students, but a possible improvement upon this practice would be to further progress monitor advanced students using an above grade level screener to ensure each individual student is growing and his/her needs are being met. Since only one teacher in our LEA has had any formal training in gifted education, our program must rely upon providing professional development to train regular content teachers on how to implement differentiated instruction. The regular classroom teacher, who may have a wide range of ability levels to address in one class, as well as multiple subject preparations, delivers our gifted services at the elementary level. 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 Council 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 enhance student learning.

While the addition of any supplemental resources in the classroom will assist the teacher in adapting the curriculum to meet student needs, this offers little in terms of program and district-wide consistency. 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. Examples of some of the supplemental resource programs being used in advanced classes include: P.E.T.S. - Primary Education Thinking Skills (grades K-3), Great Books and Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry (grades K-12), the Jacob's Ladder Reading Comprehension program (grades 3-8), and. Math materials may include the higher level materials in the currently adopted Math text, Go Math. Other materials may include, Hands-On Equations, and Noetic Learning Problem Sets. Due to hybrid learning, the district has added Lucid Learning and Nearpod. Both online learning platforms can be used with all learners, however; they offer high academic offerings and collaborative/creation opportunities.

Our AIG program continues to provide small classroom financial supplements for teachers to purchase materials 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 future-ready skills including critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, curiosity, and leadership.

The development of future-ready 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. Many of these skills are embedded into advanced coursework at all grade levels, including AP courses at the high school level.

We partner with our Career Tech Education department, which offers coursework at both the middle and high school level, to provide STEM opportunities as part of the curricular experience for all of our district students. To offer earlier exploration in the STEM fields, the MCS AIG program sponsors and helps to subsidize the cost of Camp Invention each summer. This program offers rising K- 6th graders the opportunity to become innovators through teamwork and immersive, hands-on creative problem solving. Project based learning is another approach used by Mitchell county schools from the elementary to high school level.

The clubs that are available to our middle and high school students, such as the National Honor Society and the Jr. Beta Club, foster service learning and the development of leadership skills and instill a natural curiosity to explore academic and professional options. In addition, the Key Club provides collaboration and a partnership with a local Kiwanis Club. The CTE department at the high school level collaborates with local businesses to provide mentoring, job shadowing, and internships.

Due to the restraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, we paused many extracurricular clubs and activities, but it is a goal to reinstate advanced programming opportunities, such as Battle of the Books and Odyssey of the Mind.

All Mitchell County Schools' students are assessed by quarterly benchmark testing, and annually by state-required End of Grade/End of Course/North Carolina Final Exams testing. 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%ile 3) Classroom final average in 7th grade math - Minimum average 80. 4) 7th EOG Math score, 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, inform curricular decisions, and to support flexible grouping practices. PLCs drive effective data analysis conversations to determine the pacing for advanced learning and academic growth of our advanced learners.

* **Practice E**

Uses ongoing assessment, both formative and summative, to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction and inform flexible grouping practices.

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*** Practice F**

Addresses the social and emotional needs of AIG students through affective curricular and instructional practices.

Gifted students, as a population, encounter a number of unique issues and concerns that affect their social/emotional well-being. Classroom teachers offer the first line of service to the gifted student in this realm, and can serve their gifted students' needs in various ways that are integrated with curriculum units.

School guidance counselors are in a unique position to help bridge the work of teachers, other educators, and parents/guardians in best meeting the student's individual needs. The counselor can help gifted students understand and cope with their unique intellectual and social/emotional needs during various phases of their development. They can help to create a supportive environment by serving as a student advocate and a link between other professionals serving that student. School guidance counselors in Mitchell County School have been provided print and digital

resources, as well as targeted professional development, to assist them in becoming more aware of the social and emotional needs of gifted learners, and in developing the strategies and skills to better meet their needs.

Being that the Mitchell County Schools district population is small and mostly rural, teachers in the system also have a general awareness and a desire to meet the social and emotional issues of all of their students. This applies to the gifted students in their classroom as well. There remains a great need in our district for all teachers who serve gifted students to receive training in strategies to effectively meet needs of their gifted students.

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. The SEL District Team has gained funding through local grants to create “Rapid Reset Boxes” for classrooms, purchase All Learning is Social and Emotional books for a book study and K-12 SEL curriculum. The SEL district team developed SEL learning calendars for summer programs using Nearpod lessons. Nearpod SEL has been purchased for teachers to use throughout the academic year as well. Teachers are also involved in the creation of these plans and are included in targeted professional development concerning the social/emotional characteristics and needs of their students as well.

*** Practice G**

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

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program supports 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 to cultivate potential in K-3 learners.

In K-3, flexible grouping in math and reading instruction are a daily feature of classroom differentiation and are professionally facilitated and supported by collaborative planning and monitoring efforts of grade level teams and instructional leaders. This consistent, close attention to classroom performance allows for routine use of above-level materials and cross-grade grouping both during instructional blocks and in Intervention & Enrichment (WIN time) periods. Indicators that a child may need advanced, differentiated instruction may include formal assessment data (e.g., Kindergarten Entry Assessment, MClass and iReady, and grade-level benchmark assessments) and observational data that a student is often performing two or more grade levels above his/her peers. Consistent with principles of flexible grouping, K-3 students who receive advanced instruction on either a rotational or daily basis are

regularly monitored and regrouped appropriately. Reimplementation/Retraining of PETS (due to high teacher turnover) will be high priority for teachers that works with high academic learners.

*** Practice H**

Develops and implements differentiated curriculum and instruction that addresses the academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners, across all grade levels, through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.

Learning experiences for all students should address the learners' needs through interest, readiness, level of support and degree of challenge. The implementation of MTSS (MultiTiered Support System) framework in our district is supportive of the collaboration of all instructional personnel within each school, within which teachers can reflect on how they, as a team (PLCs and School Improvement Teams), can best serve students, including those who are twice-exceptional (identified AIG and EC) and may have specialized needs.

These teams also are expected to determine how to support the advanced and gifted learners in areas of their strengths to develop their talent and potential. The AIG Program, supported by the AIG Coordinator, is available as a support system for general educators implementing best practices for meeting the needs of the gifted, through offering continued professional development opportunities and providing resource materials. In addition, the AIG Coordinator lends expertise and leadership in the implementation of these components. The AIG Coordinator and the Curriculum and Instruction Director work together to ensure differentiated curriculum is supported district-wide and to endorse the expectation that all district staff will differentiate for advanced and gifted learners. This is especially vital to programming and services in our district due to the absence of AIG specialists at present.

*** Practice I**

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 reviewed annually with parents/guardians to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) provide an outline of service delivery options for a particular student, matched to that student's needs and strengths. It should detail 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. The basis of the services offered should depend on one or more established models of delivery that are evidence-based and include best practices in gifted education. The DEP plan should outline the services best suited to the chosen model.

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 group parent and guardians meeting, with parents/guardians having access for individual meetings with the school placement team and /or AIG Coordinator upon request. With only the AIG coordinator in the absence of AIG specialists, it is difficult to conduct individual DEP meetings for every student that is served by our program. 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 March each year called "High School 101". 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. This is followed through each year with a review of each student's schedule using the services form (DEP) located on Powerschool. These forms are sent to parents/guardians to sign and return. Parents/Guardians are offered an individual conference concerning the DEP if requested. The students' AIG identification is indicated on the template provided to teachers so that services can be developed to match needs. These plans are discussed and signed at a yearly AIG meeting.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Early spring parent meeting for upcoming 8th-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).

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

- * Rapid Reset Boxes
- * SEL Book Study Survey
- * Math Curriculum for Advance Learning (Think-Up Math)

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	 <u>Placement Guide/Rubric for Acceleration Math I</u>  <u>AIG High School 101 Presentation</u>

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

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

*** Practice A**

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

An effective coordinator of a gifted program must satisfy particular responsibilities, knowledge, and competencies in order to effectively administer the program. The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program currently has a Coordinator who is AIG-licensed per Competency-Based Assessment Via the Gifted Education.

Following is a job description of the AIG Coordinator for Mitchell County Schools, 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 process 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 staffs, 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, social, and emotional needs of K-12 gifted learners.

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.

Two teachers in the district have AIG licensure, but are not employed as specialists. All teachers are given the opportunity to receive professional development to learn best practices for serving the gifted learners in their classrooms. During the 2022-2025 cycle, MCS plan to pay 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 their school districts.

Should funding become available, it is the goal of the MCS AIG program to employ at least 1 full-time AIG specialist to assist these 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.

*** 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. Records are kept of attendance at these workshops, and CEU credits are given to

attendees.

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 for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, Exceptional Children personnel, counselors, and school administrators at all grade levels K12. However, 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 does not have instructional coaches or AIG specialist, therefore; educators are expected to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of our advanced learners in K-5. We are able to specialize more 6-12.

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 WRESA to promote regional training options. Another option is to offer a course sequence through GT Ignite, a company that provides online and on-demand professional development that teachers can access through a subscription paid for by the AIG program. The ultimate goal will be to have teachers prepared to take and pass the gifted Praxis exam. In the event we have funding to employ AIG specialists in the future, we will require that they are AIG-licensed or are willing to obtain AIG licensure.

*** 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.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program currently does not have a plan or policy in place that addresses the placement of its identified AIG students in regular education classrooms. The manner of grouping of students, and the placement of those students with particular personnel, is managed at each individual school by the principal. Some deliberate placement is occurring at the elementary and middle school levels where part-time flexible grouping of students by ability is managed within the school schedule. The AIG Coordinator works in partnership with the school-based administrators to ensure the optimal placement for the growth of the district's gifted student population. Preference for placement of advanced learners during core instruction at all levels is given to general education teachers who have had training and/or experience with advanced learner groups.

*** Practice E**

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

Recruitment to our district for AIG-licensed professionals may be difficult, due to the fact we do not have AIG Specialists. However; we do desire that all educators that work directly with advanced students K-12 be highly qualified to nurture students' strengths and build upon areas of improvement.

MCS partners with local IHE communities to provide support for staff interested in AIG add-on licensure. MCS utilizes 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 subsidizing the cost of training and PRAXIS assessments.

During the 2022-2025 cycle, 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 subsidizing, 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 and AP Directors to support hiring practices that lend itself to recruitment of AIG professionals and how educators collect CEUs for overall licensure.

*** 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.

*** 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. The AIG Coordinator works to ensure the AIG perspective is evident within district professional development initiatives, including MTSS (Multi-tiered Student Services) and the development of curriculum maps. This involves advanced planning and collaboration among the AIG Coordinator and other district administrators.

In an effort to have more teachers who have had training in best practices of gifted education and ultimately statewide add-on licensure, we will work to reach this goal by subsidizing the cost for as many teachers as possible to work toward passing the state praxis exam through local and/or regional offerings. Teachers will also be encouraged to pursue licensure through the university pathway on their own as well. In addition, we will continue to offer professional development that addresses curricular needs, such as the talent development programs we sponsor and the evidence based resources we encourage teachers to use in their classrooms.

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Association for the Gifted and Talented) standards, as well as best practices in gifted education. Whenever possible, professional development includes instruction in methods and models that stress future-ready skills.

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*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

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

* New Hire/Beginning Teachers Orientation Agenda

* Teachers' NCAGT Registration & Membership

* AIG Coordinator AIG Licensure

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
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AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	
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Standard 5: Partnerships

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - 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.

Frequent and meaningful two-way communication with parents/families, and the community at large, promotes the AIG program in a positive manner. Parents of gifted students often both request and need additional information on the needs of their children, and the AIG program can assist in referring and acquiring appropriate resources and making them accessible.

Two-way communication methods such as parent nights, e-mail, phone, and regular mail, and communication apps such as Remind and Class Dojo are leveraged to ensure that parents and families, including students, can contact the AIG Coordinator both safely and efficiently. Also, news about the AIG program and its students is shared with local media outlets to improve positive public perception and community relations. We offer basic information on our website, along with suggested resources available for parents, written in simple language, to promote understanding in the exceptional needs of their gifted student. The Mitchell County Schools' local AIG Plan is available for viewing through the district website. Contact information for the AIG Coordinator is included for any interested individuals to ask questions or voice concerns. Families of AIG students are invited to an annual meeting to obtain current information about the program and to ask questions. Presentations from the parent meetings are also available on the website. The district automated phone system is used to help inform parents about meetings and events. Parents are asked to

serve on the AIG Advisory Council, with efforts made to include parents of students from different grade levels (elementary, middle, high school, early college) and from different demographic regions in the district.

Parent representatives are asked to serve on the AIG Advisory Council as stakeholders to provide their unique perspective. Parent and community advocates for quality gifted education in the district formed a local P.A.G.E. (Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education) Chapter during the 2016- 19 plan cycle. The purpose of the chapter is to provide extra educational opportunities for students, as well as to inform parents about the characteristics and needs of gifted students. This empowers them to become better advocates for their student. The P.A.G.E. group focuses upon utilizing community partners as guest speakers and to facilitate interest-based activities for advanced students. The chapter has not been active in the 2018-19 school year due to a lack of interest in members serving as officers. With the retirement of the previous AIG Director and COVID-19, reactivating the P.A.G.E. group has not been a priority; however, the 2022-2025 cycle will work to re-establish the important work.

Differentiated Education Plans are vital in communicating how students' academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs are addressed. MCS work to develop partnerships with parents/families/guardians in their annual work to create, review, and/or revise Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) aligned to students' AIG identification.

*** 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. The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has some already established partnerships, such as including parent/community representatives on the AIG Advisory Council and supporting students at the Mayland Early College High School and MEC Summer Leadership Program. A partnership with parents/families needs to extend beyond representatives our AIG Advisory Council to foster involvement in the planning and implementation of the local AIG program.

We support and encourage the re-formation of a NC P.A.G.E. (Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education) chapter in our district, to provide a practical means of advocacy for the program. These advocates can solicit local businesses for both financial assistance and other means of support.

Mayland Community College, in partnership with the Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey County school systems, supports the

Mayland Early College High School. The enrollment there includes approximately 10% identified AIG students, and many of these students are from underserved populations and come from all three surrounding counties. We would like to expand our partnership with the school and our AIG students in attendance there to include them in extracurricular and enrichment opportunities offered to our other high school students.

Existing partnerships with local businesses and industry include support from the Sibelco, a local nationally known mining company, for our science programs at the middle and high school level. They supplement the purchase of lab equipment and consumable supplies, which aids our district in offering quality higher-level classes, such as Advanced Placement, in science. In the past, they have supported enrichment and extracurricular activities in our schools such as science fairs and Olympiads.

Our AIG program would like to see a reappearance in these types of activities in our district, and a renewed involvement with other potential supporters of STEM activities in our region. We would also like to increase our involvement with other institutes of higher education to expand enrichment opportunities for our students, as well as professional development in gifted education and potential AIG licensure for teachers. Mayland Community College offers dual enrollment courses for college credit with our high school, both on our campus and theirs. Other nearby colleges and universities include:

- Appalachian State University
- Lees-McRae College
- Lenoir-Rhyne College
- Mars Hill University
- Western Carolina University

Additionally, with the aid of technological resources, potentially any institute of higher learning could become a resource for our program, and we will continue to seek further partnerships with these institutions.

*** 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 council works with the AIG Director to develop, implement, monitor, and revise the local AIG plan. Currently, the council

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 the 2022-2025 cycle, we plan to work toward adding business representatives, Penland School of Arts representative, and an IHE community member.

The teachers on the council serve as school representatives for the AIG program, assisting the coordinator with the dissemination of information and providing school-level support for other teachers in the building.

*** Practice D**

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

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

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

While the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program presently uses several methods of communication with its stakeholders (5a), it is evident from recent AIG program parent surveys that some parents desire more frequent and meaningful communications from the AIG Program.

MCS understands that students may not fully participate in academic/intellectual and social-emotional opportunities without support from home, so MCS employs a variety of ongoing, two-way communication with gifted learners' parents/families in addition to the annual introductory and transition events and DEP meetings. School websites, principal phone calls, and social media platforms (Remind, Facebook, and Twitter) highlight and provide additional notice of these opportunities. We have a website in place, and it is connected to an AIG event

calendar. We also utilize an automated phone system to inform parents/families of upcoming events meeting notifications, and joint district opportunities that the AIG program supports.

A special effort is made to maintain an effective and attractive website for the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program that is updated on a regular basis. Email distribution lists are compiled to facilitate the timely sharing of information. Whenever possible, we translate both written and spoken communications into home languages (primarily Spanish).

Our program will continue to utilize all available means of communication to update and maximize our effectiveness with our program stakeholders.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Coming out of COVID restriction, provide parents/families information on current issues in gifted education, especially academic, intellectual, and social/emotional needs of gifted students, in a variety of ways (including face-to-face family/guardian nights).

Find ways to get information out to the general community. One example might be an “showcase” of programs and activities offered to students at parent nights, etc. - and have some of those activities open to our general student population as talent development opportunities, such as we do for Camp Invention.

Invite newspaper to parent nights or have a representative submit an article/photos to the newspaper.

Advertise showcases and parent nights on WKYK/WTOE website and Facebook.

Provide childcare at district-wide meetings to boost parent participation with the help of child care students and teachers at the high school.

Include a glossary of acronyms and terms with the AIG plan and on the AIG website so that all stakeholders have the same understanding of vocabulary.

Planned Sources of Evidence

* District AIG website

* AIG Advisory Council Sign-In Sheet & Agenda

* AIG Event Calendar

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
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AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	
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Standard 6: Program Accountability

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - 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]), which 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 with and with assistance from the AIG Advisory Council. 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). Feedback is gathered from stakeholders to guide the process and assist program self-assessment. 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 final plan is available for review on the LEA's website and in written form upon request. 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.

*** 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.

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.

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.

*** 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 not limited to: Attendance, benchmarks, screeners, and summative assessments, CTE certifications, 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.

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. 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.

One program improvement for the 2022-2025 cycle will be a focus on fostering a mindset of talent development, nurturing potentially gifted students, and focusing on the attributes of a gifted student. This goal will be accomplished through professional development and PLC discussions with classroom educators to refocus mindsets on the attributes of a highly gifted student. MCS will be able to nurture students' talents within all demographics to build a more equitable pathway to AIG status and retention.



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*** 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 does not have enough funding to facilitate the hiring of 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.

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 2021-2022 school year, three 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 2022-2025 plan cycle, of establishing local professional development requirements for teachers who work with gifted students. This will include almost all teachers in our district within our current structure. 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 implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program.

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 and school administrators, teachers, parents, and interested community partners. Members perform an important and

necessary role as a group of stakeholders that offer their perspective, expertise, time, and commitment to the implementation of the local AIG program.

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. The AIG Coordinator collects data for program evaluation using an LEA Self-Assessment Tool, which asks for feedback and ratings on each standard and practice along with comments and sources of evidence to substantiate the data. Each school's representative completes the tool with the support of his/her faculty and administrator. These are collected and compiled into a single document by the AIG Coordinator, which includes the Coordinator's perspective and feedback as well. The compiled tool is used to inform needed changes and areas of focus for program improvement. Staff and parent/guardian AIG Program surveys are on the MCS website too. These surveys are analyzed and the feedback is used in program plan development.

*** Practice H**

Facilitates a comprehensive evaluation of the local AIG program utilizing multiple sources of data to revise the local AIG plan every three years.

As stated in 6g, MCS AIG Advisory Council holds 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, and any major changes in the program will be reflected in a revision to the local LEA plan, and subsequent Board of Education approval.

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 revised plan will then be resubmitted to NCDPI for review.

*** Practice I**

Shares all data from local AIG program evaluation 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.

Updates on the findings are shared at a monthly administrator meeting and to the MCS AIG Advisory Council, and both of these entities are expected to share the information out to their respective faculties or stakeholder groups. The findings are included in program updates to the local Board of Education.

The MCS AIG 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. The MCS AIG website has surveys linked, so the community and staff members may provide input. MAC calls are sent out to families/guardians as needed to communicate upcoming meetings/opportunities.

*** Practice J**

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 and placement, reassessment procedures, transfers from other LEAs, and procedures for resolving disagreements.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has a Due Process Rights policy in place as set forth by North Carolina General Statute. The rights are posted on the AIG Website, as well as included on parent brochures and orally read and discussed at most parent meetings. We will be maintaining this practice as well as translating the policy into home languages.

Mitchell County Schools 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 also 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 changes made if 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 Powerschool 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 form teachers and or parent as needed.
 - c. The team grants the conference within 5 school days of the request and responds to the parent in writing within 5 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 5 school days of the receipt of the appeal.
 - c. The AIG Coordinator responds in writing to the outcome of the review within 10 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 5 school days of receiving the response.
 - b. The superintendent reviews the grievance within 5 school days from the receipt of the appeal.
 - c. The superintendent responds in writing concerning the outcome within 10 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 10 school days following the written response from the superintendent.
 - b. The Board may offer a final decision within 30 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 ~Article3 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, or (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**

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

* BOE Approval Form

* AIG Budget

* Need Assessment Surveys

* AIG Advisory Council Agenda/Minutes

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	 <u>AIG Prior Notice and Consent Letter</u>

Local Board of Education Approval



Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:

04/28/2022 

Original Application Submission Date: 05/02/2022


Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
Local Board of Education Approval Signatures [Upload at least 1 document(s)]	 <u>Local Board of Education Approval Template</u>	 <u>AIG Board Approval Signatures</u>

AIG Related Documents

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - 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	AIG Board Approval Signatures
Optional Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Glossary [Upload up to 1 document(s)]	N/A	
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	MCS AIG Process Placement Timeline AIG Identification Rubric
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	Camp Invention Schedule
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	Placement Guide/Rubric for Acceleration Math I AIG High School 101 Presentation
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	

AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	 <u>AIG Prior Notice and Consent Letter</u>

Glossary

Mitchell County Schools (610) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Phrase	Definition
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The Local AIG Plan glossary is provided in an uploaded document.