Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Polk County Schools (750) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

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

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

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

* Mission and/or Vision Statement(s)

The vision of the Polk County Schools AIG Program is to nurture advanced/gifted potential and open doors of opportunity for students (K-12) by fostering inquiry and a growth mindset, promoting durable skills, and encouraging rigorous differentiated teaching and learning environments that allow students to excel in intellectual, academic, and personal pursuits. In alignment with this vision, the mission of Polk County Schools, in partnership with parents and the community, is to prepare and inspire each student to be a literate, responsible, and productive member of a diverse society who believes learning is a lifelong process. Together, these commitments ensure that every student is seen as uniquely capable and deserves to be challenged and engaged in relevant, rigorous, and meaningful learning each day, ultimately fostering a culture of continuous growth and community responsibility.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* $ 170,603.00	* $ 23,000.00	* $ 0.00	* $ 0.00

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

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

Polk County Schools has developed screening and referral processes that lead to AIG talent development services and formal identification during grades K-12. Screening and referral are done in collaboration with the Multilingual (ML) and Exceptional Children (EC) departments to ensure that we are properly identifying and appropriately serving multilingual learners and twice-exceptional (2E) students.

Screening is the annual process of reviewing existing, generally available, or specifically documented data to build a body of evidence to examine for students who will be considered for AIG services. Screening guidelines are not equivalent to identification requirements. The goal of the screening/referral process is to build a comprehensive learner profile that helps determine whether students have needs beyond what is provided by the regular educational program. Referral is the mechanism for alerting the school AIG team of the potential need for these additional services.

K-3 (Screening and Referral)

- Screening and Referral: Classroom teachers screen using the following data, then complete a referral form if there is evidence of giftedness
  - 2-3 grade levels (and/or 90+%) above peers on research-based reading and/or math scores (e.g. Dibbles, EOG, BOG, etc.) AND
  - Gifted behavior screening form
- To support the screening and referral process, the AIGT (District AIG Team) provides annual staff development/information about the following screening and referral procedures:
  - How to identify gifted characteristics in children
  - How to schedule a trained individual to complete the gifted behavior observation form
  - How to use screening tools to find the 90th percentile and 2+ grade levels above peers
  - Twice a year, materials are sent to teachers to remind them to screen for students and to make appropriate referrals based on the screening.
- Additional referral evidence: To ensure there is a mechanism for finding students who might not have been highlighted in the above screening process, teachers, families, and students have the opportunity to refer students using an online form (or paper on request) that includes the following data:
  - observations of gifted behavior (through evidence such as behavior checklists, interviews, observation tools, and work samples)

- data about academic and/or intellectual strengths and challenges. This additional data may include technology programs that allow students to progress beyond the grade level (IXL, Beast Academy) and off-grade level assessments.
- data about social/emotional strengths and challenges.

- At the K-3 level, screening and referral may result in monitoring, classroom consultation/enrichment, subject/grade acceleration, flexible/cluster grouping, pullout (grades 3+) and/or testing for formal identification, using the criteria for identification (Standard 1B).
  - The AIG specialist guides the screening and referral process. Referral windows are October and May. Referrals will be responded to within 1 month and further testing completed within one additional month (not including school holidays/vacations)

  4-5 (Screening and Referral)

  - Screening: Continue screening as in K-3 (using EOG scores and other district/state-approved tests). In addition, in one elementary grade (currently 4th grade) all students are given a universal screener (currently CogAT). 5th graders who have been referred and did not take a 4th-grade aptitude test may take it during the fourth-grade testing window.
  - Referral: Continue referral as in K-3.
  - During 4/5th grades, after the universal screener, the school and/or district AIG teams continue to formally identify students based on aptitude, achievement, and classroom performance. The AIG specialist guides/completes the process.
  - At the 4-5 level, screening and referral may result in
    - Testing for formal identification or monitoring, using the criteria for identification (Standard 1B)
    - AIG or talent development services in regular or pullout environments
    - Classroom consultation/enrichment
  - The AIG specialist guides the screening and referral process.

  6-8 (Screening and Referral)

  - Continue screening/referral as in K-3 (using EOG/EOC/Check-ins and other district/state-approved tests).
  - Based on the screening/referral, students are referred for official identification.
  - At the 6-8 level, screening and referral may result in
    - Testing for formal identification or monitoring, using the criteria for identification (Standard 1B)
    - AIG or talent development services in regular or honors/advanced classes
    - Classroom consultation/enrichment
  - The ELA AIG teacher guides/completes the process.

  9-12 (Screening and Referral)

- Continue screening/referral as in K-3 (using EOC/Check-ins and other district/state-approved tests).
- Based on the screening/referral, students are referred for official identification.
- At the 9-12 level, screening and referral may result in
  - Testing for formal identification or monitoring, using the criteria for identification (Standard 1B)
  - AIG or talent development services in regular or honors/advanced classes
  - Classroom consultation/enrichment
- The academic specialist advisor for AIG students guides/completes the process.

* **Practice B**
Establishes a process and criteria for AIG student identification at all grade levels, K-12, that provides multiple opportunities to reveal a student's aptitude, achievement, or potential to achieve. The criteria may include both qualitative and quantitative data in order to develop a comprehensive learner profile.

Polk County Schools provides for AIG student identification at all grade levels K-12. The purpose of student identification for AIG (Academically and Intellectually Gifted) is to provide appropriate educational services. Polk County strives to make identification procedures clear, equitable and comprehensive.

Students are provided with multiple opportunities to reveal their aptitude, achievement, or potential to achieve. No one criterion shall exclude a child from AIG identification. A comprehensive learner profile is used to determine the needs of the students for advanced learning, which takes into account MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) data and input. The school-based AIG team decides on whether to identify. If they cannot make that decision, the district AIGT reviews and makes the final decision.

Please note, the individual aptitude test (currently TONI-4) will be administered at most 2 times in the K-12 grade span AND with a 2-year interval apart from any school-administered aptitude test. The windows for referrals for identification are in October and May.

Note: All students who are identified in any North Carolina LEA before transferring to Polk County retain AIG identification. Out-of-state, private, and charter school AIG students are placed based on documentation from the previous schools if there is matching aptitude and/or achievement data. The AIG label is not removed by the district once a child is identified by an LEA in North Carolina.

K-3 (Identification)

1. Classroom teachers are taught to screen for and refer students for identification (see Standard 1a above). At this level, students must have the following achievement/aptitude results (a, b, and c)
   a. Students performing at least 2 grade levels above peers in reading and/or math achievement on state/national tests and
   b. 97/130+% on the TONI-4 or other nationally-normed aptitude test and
   c. Gifted behavior observed (Observation form completed and scored by a trained staff member)
   d. Other substantial evidence submitted by teachers/family/student may replace a or b (e.g. local environmental factors and a student's circumstances, talent development/portfolio work samples)

4-12 (Identification)

Placement Options	Criteria	Scores Needed
Intellectually Gifted (IG)	Aptitude	K-3: 130/97+% composite on a nationally-normed aptitude test 4-12: 130/97+% on a nationally-normed aptitude test
	Achievement	Not applicable
	Classroom Performance	Not applicable
Academically Gifted Reading Only (AR) OR Academically Gifted Math Only (AM)	Aptitude	K-5: 120/90+% or higher on nationally-normed aptitude test 6-12: not applicable
	Achievement	K-3: 2+ grade levels above for at least one semester on approved achievement test 4-5: 93+% on BOG/EOG/EOC or other nationally-normed achievement test in the subject area 6-12: 2+ consecutive years level 5 (or 93+%) on BOG/EOG/EOC or other nationally-normed achievement test in the subject area
	Classroom Performance	K-3: Gifted Behavior Observation Form 93%+ 3-12: Classroom Grade A/B in the subject area
Academically Gifted in Reading AND Math (AG)	Aptitude	Same Criteria as for AR and AM in both reading and math
	Achievement	
	Classroom Performance	

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG)	Aptitude	130/97+% on nationally-normed aptitude test
	Achievement	95+% in Reading and/or MATH on BOG/EOG/EOC or other nationally-normed achievement test with 90+% in other subject area recommended
	Classroom Performance	Classroom Grades A in Math and Reading

- Polk County will provide one universal screener (currently in 4th grade); 4th graders who miss this screener will be permitted to take it the following year. Polk County will provide up to 2 additional opportunities to take an individual aptitude test. These must be at least two years removed from other Polk County-administered aptitude tests. Aptitude test scores are valid for a period of 2 years. If a test is administered by a licensed psychologist and the student is 8 years or older, the aptitude score is considered valid indefinitely.
- Achievement test scores are valid for a period of 12 months.
- Following the guidance that “no one criteria shall exclude a student from AIG services”, the school AIG teams will consider evidence presented by school staff, the student or the family that might impact one of the criteria and make the student a candidate for AIG placement. If the school AIG team is unable to make a decision, they will refer the evidence to the district AIG Team.

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

Polk County Schools ensures that AIG procedures are learner-centered through the following procedures:

- Screening, referral, and identification procedures and teacher training that emphasize the need to expand opportunity for AIG in grades K-12.
- Procedures include evidence beyond testing. Other substantial evidence submitted by teachers/family/student may replace aptitude/achievement/classroom performance scores (e.g. local environmental factors, a student's circumstances)
- Multiple pathways for identification (AM, AR, AG, IG, AIG)
- A strengthened K-3 talent development program and continued opportunity for talent development/identification for students not identified after the 4th grade universal screener.

- Increased family events to gather input and to inform families of how they can support their children.
- Growth area: A district-wide committee to look at how to expand opportunity for AIG in grades K-12, especially in high school honors and AP classes, and ongoing review of data to ensure that AIG services are learner-centered.
- Growth area: Partnerships with EC, ML, Title I, and MTSS teams to discuss how evidence from those program assessments can be used for AIG identification.

Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
Female	---	---	12.31%	---	---	---	17.32%
Male	---	---	18.33%	---	---	---	16.62%
Total	---	---	15.20%	---	---	---	16.96%

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

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* **Practice D**

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

Polk County Schools monitors the screening, referral, and identification processes for consistent implementation. The AIG coordinator meets at least quarterly with the district AIG Team (AIGT), which includes (at minimum) the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and elementary, middle and high school representatives. The AIGT meeting agendas follow a yearly progression which includes the following:

- Fall: review screening/referral/identification processes to ensure consistent implementation
- Late Fall: review data and any referrals
- Winter: review new data and/or trends in gifted education
- Spring: overall AIG program review

In addition, the AIG Advisory Group meets at least 2 times/year to review and advise on AIG programming, using publicly accessible data from the AIGT.

The AIG coordinator provides training resources/professional development (in person, virtual, and posted on the internal AIG website) to ensure staff consistently implement screening, referral, and identification procedures. The AIG coordinator works with all schools to develop consistent forms including the following:

- Referral forms
- Screening forms and checklists

- Identification forms
- DEPs/IDEPs

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

The AIG program disseminates information about the AIG screening, referral, and identification procedures using the following methods:

- The procedures, as well as the Local AIG Plan, are available on the district AIG website, with links from school websites. Directions for receiving a translation and/or a printed version are included. The information is shared in a chart, slideshow, and audio format. The links are shared with stakeholders annually.
- The AIGT publishes news articles on the district website and local newspaper highlighting AIG events and student voice, along with directions for finding more information about the AIG program.
- The AIG coordinator, specialist, and teachers are available and identifiable at a variety of open house/informational events and other meetings (ML learners, parent groups, community partners, etc.) with printed materials and translation services available.
- The AIGT provides additional guidance to families after the universal screener in elementary school and during school transitions through meetings and printed/online communication.
- The AIGT publicizes and holds 2 community events a year on AIG topics, where material is available to families and the community, thus creating a culture of information sharing.
- Use the MTSS structure to disseminate information about equitable screening, referral, and identification practices and build awareness of twice-exceptional students.

* **Practice F**
Documents the evidence gathered and analyzed to support an AIG identification decision. This documentation is reviewed with parents/guardians and maintained in student records.

A member of the AIGT from the student's school creates an AIG file for each newly identified student.

- This file contains all evidence that led to an AIG identification decision and any other AIG documentation.
- Files are currently paper files that are transferred with the student as the student transitions between grade spans.
- Parents/guardians are provided with copies of all documentation that led to an identification decision, including signatures of all associated parties, and are strongly encouraged to attend a meeting/call to review the data.

Growth area: collaborate and align with other district programs to develop local procedures and practices around maintaining student documentation.

* **Practice G**
Develops and documents a student plan that articulates the differentiated curriculum and instruction services that match the identified needs of the K-12 AIG student, such as a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). This document is developed and reviewed annually with parents/ guardians to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

The AIGT coordinates the development and use of Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs), to clearly outline the services each AIG student will receive. In Individualized Differentiated Education Plans (IDEP), this will include the desired outcomes of these services.

- A member of the AIGT from the student's school works with teachers, counselors and/or administrators, and ML/EC colleagues to clearly outline the services AIG-identified students will receive in a DEP, IDEP, or other service plan. They use data from EOG testing, grades, student interest surveys and behavior/learning style observations.
- This service plan, as well as student products and curricular activities, is reviewed and updated as necessary each year.
- Parents/guardians are provided with copies of all documentation and invited to meet/call to add input and review how these services will meet the student's needs and achieve the desired outcome.
- At Polk County High School (PCHS), students' Differentiated Education Plans (or IDEPs) are part of their 4-year academic plan designed to help the student meet their high school and post-secondary goals. Course options within their subject of identified strength are discussed. Opportunities for parents and students to revisit their schedule are provided each semester.
- For students with AIG pull-out services (3rd-5th grades), an "AIG Program Progress Report" is provided each semester with the regular report card to provide additional communication regarding the student's progress.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

1. Develop a district-wide committee to work on representation in high school honors and AP classes.
2. Partner with EC, ML, Title I, and MTSS teams to further discuss how evidence from their program assessments can be used for AIG identification.
3. Collaborate and align with other district programs to develop local procedures and practices around maintaining student documentation.
4. Develop consistent forms across the district.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	The AIG plan, flyers, website; DEP/IDEPs; screening, referral and Identification data; files and spreadsheets with student data, agendas/notes from AIGT and Advisory Group meetings
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Documents		
Type	**Document Template**	**Document/Link**
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	Glossary and Acronyms

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Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

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

Polk County Schools provides a K-12 AIG program to meet the diverse needs of gifted learners. A range of services and settings is provided, allowing students opportunities to experience enrichment, extension, and acceleration. Services are adjusted to appropriately meet the needs of students (including their advanced learning needs in their identification areas (AR, AM, AG, IG or AIG) and to develop their academic interests, talents, and strengths. AIG staff collaborate with others who serve twice-exceptional AIG students, ML learners and those students with 504s, ensuring all accommodations and modifications are provided and that the curriculum is delivered in an appropriately differentiated manner.

K-2 (Comprehensive Services)

The K-2 AIG services are provided by classroom teachers with consultation, coaching, resource development, and support and professional development from the curriculum and instruction staff and the AIGT.

- The AIG specialist assists classroom teachers in strategies to compact, differentiate and front-load both skill work and new content, extend reading instruction, and facilitate independent study by academically advanced students, appropriate to their area of strength.
- The AIG specialist provides Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) curriculum resources and support for teachers to help identify and develop intellectual talent in all students.
- Teachers use a variety of models that allow them to provide enrichment and differentiation, including flexible groups, learning centers, cooperative learning groups, choice boards, station rotation and Socratic seminar experiences.
- In addition to district and state-approved testing, teachers use formative/summative assessments to decide on the programming they will offer to talent development and/or identified students. These might include teacher-designed tests, exit tickets, journaling, and classroom climate activities.
- Schools may elect to cluster group advanced students, where groups of high ability students are intentionally placed as a cluster in a mixed ability classroom.
- The AIG specialist consults with teachers about any student who needs subject or grade acceleration and guides the process.

3-5 (Comprehensive Services)

The Polk County AIG program for grades 3-5 includes and builds on the same strategies as in K-2. In addition, students who have been identified for talent development and formal AIG identification may be provided with pull-out services from the AIG specialist (3 schools) and/or AIG teacher (1 school). Students

complete interest inventories and writing samples to supplement observations, teacher recommendations and assessment data, which the AIG specialist/other teachers use to design learning experiences for both academic and intellectual growth. Pull-out times may be part of a regular academic block or take place during intervention or advocate times. Services might include the following, based on student identification area and strengths:

- Extension of the ELA curriculum (currently Arts and Letters) content/skills using PROBES, ZIGZAGS, Book Clubs, Depth and Complexity strategies, and projects.
- Project-based learning activities (past projects involved hiking trail development, installation of food and pollinator gardens, school campus signage, Arbor Day events, board-game development)
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) activities, for example Engineering is Elementary curriculum, Lego Robotics, Stock Market Game, etc.
- Game-based learning (card and board games) as well as logic activities
- BeastAcademy Math accounts
- PETS (Primary Education Thinking Skills) curriculum materials
- “Portrait of a Graduate” skill development including communication, conflict resolution, reasonable goal-setting, executive functioning skills, leadership development, problem-solving, and creative thinking.
- All teachers, specialists, and school counselors are provided access to their students' Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) or Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs).

6-8 (Comprehensive Services)

In grades 6-8, advanced classes are available to students performing at high academic levels. Students who are not showing potential to perform at high academic levels are actively encouraged to participate in opportunities to develop their leadership and talents and to explore their interests.

- Math: Following SESSION LAW 2019-120 (SENATE BILL 500), any student scoring at the highest level on the end-of-grade or end-of-course test for the mathematics course in which the student was most recently enrolled shall be auto-enrolled in the advanced course for the next mathematics course in which the student is enrolled. A student in seventh grade scoring a level five at the highest level on the seventh grade mathematics end-of-grade test shall be auto-enrolled in a high school level mathematics course in eighth grade.
- ELA: Advanced ELA offered at each grade level based on students identification and previous academic performance
- Wheel Classes: May include band/choral, STEAM, life skills, foreign language, etc.
- Clubs and organizations: Afterschool, Athletics, Band, Bridge Building, FCA, Flag Corp, New Century Scholars, Recycling, Science Olympiad, Trailblazers, Unified Champions, Yearbook

9-12 (Comprehensive Services)

In grades 9-12 the AIG program is facilitated by the PCHS academic specialist advisor for AIG students. The DEP is a 4-year academic plan designed to help students meet their high school and post-secondary goals. Course options within students’ subject of identified strength are discussed. Opportunities for parents and students to revisit the schedule are provided each semester. Students are encouraged to participate in opportunities to develop their leadership and talents and to explore their interests. Grades 9-12 service options include:

- Heterogeneous grouping in regular classroom
- Technology supported learning
- Honors classes
- Advanced Placement classes
- Dual-Enrollment Career and College Promise classes
- NCVPS (North Carolina Virtual Public Schools)
- Enrichment programs offered through multiple summer learning opportunities (NCSSM, Summer Ventures, Governor's School, etc.)
- Academic competitions (FFA, HOSA, SkillsUSA, etc.)
- Visits to colleges and universities - UNC College Advising Corp; Gear-Up
- Service Learning/leadership opportunities (FFA, HOSA, SkillsUSA, Key Club, Interact Club, Student Council, UNITY Club, SAGA Club, etc.)
- College awareness, preparation, and application assistance (UNC College Advising Corp, Gear-Up and Student Services)
- Information and assistance with applications to specialized online/residential programs, for example NCSSM

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*** Practice B**
Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the social and emotional needs of AIG students, across all grade levels, K-12, and learning environments, through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.

The Polk County Schools motto, "Doing What's Right for Students" is expected of all staff in all school situations. School counselors (K-12) respond to referrals (e.g. by staff or family members) of students who may be in need of counseling services. The AIGT provides teachers/counselors with information/training on how to identify and assist with needs common to AIG students. Teachers/counselors are informed of DEP/IDEP goals and service information and collaborate with the AIGT to discuss/meet the holistic needs of AIG students. Services might include the following:

K-12

- Monthly counselor-led programs for an entire class, including Second Step and/or counselor-designed classes (K-5).
- Students consult with school counselors to address needs and concerns through the Continuing School Improvement Team (CSI) and Advocate time (9-12).
- The AIGT provides consultation and professional development for classroom and AIG teachers about common needs of gifted/highly gifted students, including executive functioning skills, realistic goal-setting, interpersonal communication, perfectionism, imposter syndrome and underachievement. Research-based strategies to address these needs are shared with counselors/teachers.

- School counselors may provide individual and small group sessions. Therapists who meet with students during/outside of school hours are available. Polk County utilizes the Student Services Team to problem-solve issues, including the holistic development of gifted learners. The most serious needs are addressed through BlueRidge Health.
- Classroom teachers and AIG teachers incorporate durable skills into their instruction including greetings at the door, group-building activities, discussions of growth mindset and resilience, humor, and celebration.
- MTSS teams and PLCs discuss academic performance, observed behavior, and quantitative data. The AIGT shares tools and resources that support the character development of AIG students.
- Information is shared with students, families and other stakeholders during transitions from year to year and school to school about specific needs that require support.
- School counselors for the district evaluate, update and improve support services annually, including AIG services.

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* **Practice C**
Integrates and connects the AIG program and services with the district's priorities and resources through policy and practice.

The Polk County AIG program and services are integrated and connected with the district's priorities and resources. The AIGT is focused on the district mission: The mission of Polk County Schools, in partnership with parents and the community, is to prepare and inspire each student to be a literate, responsible, productive member of a diverse society who believes learning is a lifelong process.

Policies and practices which support this integration include the following:

- Members of the district and school AIG teams work with school and district administrative teams to ensure that the needs of AIG students are addressed by
  - Participating in teacher leadership cohorts
  - Participating in the district strategic planning process to explore ways to integrate the AIG program
  - Reviewing school, district and board policies and plans that relate to AIG, including school improvement plans, to ensure those policies are effective, adequately funded and based on current best practices
  - Making recommendations at the school and district level for new policies and funding priorities as needed
  - Ensuring adequate AIG resources for each school
  - Participating in regular leadership meetings and/or special committees to address AIG needs
  - Inviting administration and school board members to attend AIG Advisory group meetings.
- Regular AIG meetings with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to ensure integration of effective AIG services

- Growth area: develop partnerships and design flowcharts showing how the AIG program is aligned with other departments, for example literacy, exceptional children (EC), multilingual (ML) and afterschool programs.

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

Polk County supports intentional, flexible grouping practices to support learning for students with advanced needs and potential.

- Principals review student data to determine placement in classes (elementary school) and on teams (middle school)
- Teachers are supported by the AIGT, the testing coordinator and principals to use assessment data to implement flexible grouping practices within their classes and across the grade level. These include math stations and groups, reading and writing groups, technology-based learning, and interest-based projects.
- Academic data is synthesized with data related to attendance and behavior to consider each student holistically.
- The AIGT works with the MTSS team to help plan configurations of flexible groups within the classroom and during any intervention/enrichment time.

With regard to accelerating students (content/subject/grade), vertical planning sessions led by curriculum and instruction staff include opportunities for teachers to

- Become aware of the skills and content at the next levels
- Communicate with colleagues at other levels to share resources and insights
- Consider grouping advanced students across grade levels

Various enrichment activities are open to all students, extending their learning regardless of identification or potential

- within the classroom
- within the school day
- during selected after-school programs (e.g. Science Olympiad, Bridge Building, Lego Robotics)

Growth Area: During this planning cycle, the AIGT will review state, district, and school grouping practices/procedures based on evidence-based best practices and current research in gifted education to determine where support for grouping already exists and where changes can be made to further develop mindsets that support grouping practices which facilitate student growth and achievement.

* **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.

Polk County Schools informs all teachers, school administrators, and support staff about the AIG program and policies in the following ways:

- The internal Polk County AIG website contains links to
  - The board-approved local AIG plan
  - Services offered
  - Identification pathways
  - State laws: Article 9B, NCGS 115C-150.5-.8 (AIG) and SB 500 (Advanced Math Course Enrollment legislation)
  - A description of the differentiated services and instruction for AIG students
  - Overview presentation about AIG (Google Slides)
  - Overview flyer: District AIG Plan 101
- Beginning-of-year common presentation by the AIGT at faculty meetings and on the AIG website; District AIG Plan 101 (flyer)
- AIGT coaching, consultation, resource development and differentiated lesson planning during PLCs, MTSS meetings and on an as-needed basis
- Integration of AIG program standards and strategic plan

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

The AIGT strives to provide communication between and among teachers and schools (K-12) regarding the effective continuation of AIG services. Strategies include the following:

K-5

- At the beginning and/or end of each school year, the AIG specialist/teacher meets with previous/upcoming teachers (involving school counselors and administrators as needed) to discuss AIG and talent development students, including
  - Assessment and achievement data
  - Gifted behavior characteristics/interests/advanced learning needs
  - How the student is identified
  - Current services and any recommendation for change in service
  - Development of DEPs/IDEPs
- The AIG specialist maintains student data in paper format and online spreadsheets

Transition to 6th grade

- The AIG specialist shares student folders/spreadsheet data with middle school AIG teachers and other school staff. This information includes:

- How the student was identified
- How the student has been served
- Information regarding the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of the student to ensure a supportive transition
- Recommendations for any changes to services

- AIG teachers partner with the Multi-Lingual (ML) and Exceptional Children (EC) departments to establish collaborative transition meetings for twice-exceptional and ML AIG students

6-8

- The advanced ELA teacher currently works with students for all three years of middle school, ensuring continuity of ELA services and consistency of DEPs
- The advanced math teachers (2 per grade level) meet at the beginning of the year to share information about AIG student progress and curriculum needs and to develop DEPS for students.

Transition to 9th grade

- The middle school AIG staff transfer student folders and assessment data to the high school, participating in transition meetings as needed.

9-12

- The Differentiated Education Plan is a 4-year academic plan (developed in 9th grade) and is designed to help the student meet their high school and post-secondary goals. Course options within their subject of identified strength are discussed. Opportunities for parents and students to revisit their schedule are provided each semester.
- Advisors and teachers encourage students to pursue their interests and build on strengths in both academic and extracurricular environments
- Dual enrollment, NCSSM and NCVPS are available to qualified PCHS students.
-

* **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.

Polk County Schools supports the acceleration of students as follows:

- Early admission to Kindergarten according to North Carolina legislation: 16 NCAC 06E .0105 (BH 1099). Information and application can be found on the district AIG website.
- Advanced math instruction (elementary)
  - In compliance with Session Law 2019-120 (Senate Bill 500), any student scoring at the highest level on the 3-5th grade math EOGs receives advanced math services in the classroom and/or through pull out programs. These might include flexible grouping, subject acceleration, compacting, enrichment, applied math, and/or use of vertical alignment standards.

- Highly advanced math students are considered for advancement to the next grade level for math instruction and/or online learning platforms for advanced math instruction.

- Advanced ELA Instruction (elementary):
  - Students scoring at the highest level on the 3-5th grade ELA EOG receive advanced ELA services in the classroom and/or through pull out programs. These might include flexible grouping, subject acceleration, compacting, enrichment and/or use of vertical alignment standards.
  - Highly advanced ELA students are considered for advancement to the next grade level and/or online learning platforms for advanced ELA instruction.
- Subject and/or whole grade acceleration
  - Teachers and/or families contact the AIG coordinator to review data supporting acceleration
  - Input is solicited from the curriculum director, principal, teachers, students and parents
  - The school and/or district AIG teams decide whether subject or whole grade acceleration is implemented
  - Development of a personalized plan, such as an IDEP, based on student needs, to support subject and/or grade acceleration, possibly including:
    - content replacement as a strategy to accelerate advanced and/or highly gifted learners.
    - opportunities for distance or virtual learning beyond grade level.
    - a long-term plan for future coursework and programming.
  - Growth Area: Develop a common district process for subject and/or whole grade acceleration
- Advanced math instruction (middle and high school):
  - Math instruction in Polk County focuses on the development of conceptual learning for all students to provide a foundation for success in abstract/discrete math in middle school and high school.
  - In compliance with Session Law 2019-120 (Senate Bill 500), options for advanced mathematics learning within the class or in a separate setting are offered to all students scoring level 5.
    - Students scoring Level 5 at the end of 5th or 6th grade are auto-enrolled in honors math classes in the next year
    - Students scoring Level 5 at the end of 7th grade are auto-enrolled in Math 1 in Grade 8;
    - Students scoring Level 5 at the end of grade 8 are auto-enrolled in Honors Math 1 in Grade 9;
    - Students scoring level 5 in Math 1 or subsequent high school math courses are enrolled in the next advanced math course.
- Advanced ELA instruction (middle and high school)
  - AIG students in middle school participate in advanced ELA or honors ELA

- Advanced students in high school attend advanced/AP/Honors classes/online courses/classes at community college and/or earn college credits through Polk County Early College.

- For students with advanced learning needs in a particular interest area, PCHS provides opportunities for learning outside the typical classroom environment, such as mentoring, interning, job-shadowing or one-on-one time with an expert. Students work with their academic advisor to enroll in appropriate coursework including the following:
  - Honors
  - AP/CIE
  - Dual enrollment
  - Accelerated Pathway for Early Graduation in Three Years
- The AIG web page provides a list of these options and the procedure for inquiring/applying for these acceleration options. The AIG contact at each school is available to help administrators, school counselors, teachers, parents/guardians and students to better understand the opportunities and to make informed acceleration decisions.
- Growth area: Polk County Schools is removing barriers that may hinder the implementation of these opportunities, including changing mindsets, having quality accelerated instruction available, and any environmental or social/emotional barriers.
- Growth Area: Develop unbiased tools based on evidence or research to support acceleration decisions.

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

Polk County Schools strives to cultivate and develop the potential of all young (K-3) students with purposeful and intentional programming. This programming is primarily integrated into the regular classroom, which provides teachers and assistants with the opportunity to observe, recognize potential, respond to student needs and opportunity gaps, and support the strengths of all students in their classrooms. Resources and strategies, supported by the AIG specialist/teacher through coaching, consultation, resources, and professional development, include the following:

- PETS (Primary Education Thinking Skills) curriculum is available for grades K-3 with AIG Specialist support.
- ELA: Small group instruction and core differentiation are used through the ELA curriculum following the state required Literacy Intervention Plan
- Math: Small group instruction and core differentiation are used through the mathematics curriculum
- In 3rd grade, the AIG specialist pulls students for talent development based on BOG and Check-In scores and teacher recommendations
- K-3 teachers are encouraged and assisted to foster creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking in students in all subjects, and especially in social studies and science topics, with access to curriculum including Smithsonian Science for Education, Geodes and STEAM opportunities. These curriculum and problem/project-based learning opportunities strengthen students' communication, collaboration, and leadership skills.
- The AIGT supports and develops partnerships with community organizations to enrich the curriculum for all learners. Examples include arts-integrated activities with Champions for Wildlife, Muddy Sneakers, music and arts programs with the Tryon Fine Arts Center, programs at the Tryon Equestrian Center, etc. Given the rural yet high-end-retirement nature of our district, informal networking often results in rich learning experiences for our students.

Growth Areas:

- Collaborate with the Polk County High School Early Educator CTE Program to consider the possibility of these future educators teaching a series of lessons targeting gifted K-2 students. This program would be designed to work with young students identified by their teachers as having high potential, to encourage and teach advanced thinking skills and content.
- Building on the community partnerships (above) the AIGT is working to acquire funding for afterschool programs in the arts at the K-2 level.

* **Practice I**
Develops mindsets, policies, and practices to promote equity and excellence by broadening access to advanced learning opportunities through a variety of talent development efforts, including frontloading, in grades 4-12.

Polk County Schools strives to broaden access to advanced learning opportunities in grades 4-12.

- Staff participate in book studies, presentations, and other professional development to ensure that all teachers provide high quality Tier 1 instruction to all students. Teachers receive feedback on their instruction from NCEES observations and EVAAS data sessions.
- The AIGT participates in conversations at every level of the district to inform and broaden the mindsets of stakeholders involved in talent development and to shape future policy.
- The AIGT communicates talent development options to ML, EC, Title1 and other staff to synergize efforts for effective programming.

Talent development opportunities based on district-level conversations and data include the following:

Grades 4-5

- Teachers are encouraged and assisted to foster creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking in students in all subjects, including social studies and science topics, with access to curriculum including Smithsonian Science for Education and STEAM programs. These hands-on curriculum and project-based learning opportunities strengthen student communication, collaboration, and leadership skills.
- Collaboration with outside partners to enrich the curriculum for all learners.
- Summer camp opportunities
- The AIG specialist pulls students for talent development based on evidence of potential BOG/EOG/Check-in scores, grades and teacher recommendations
- Students progress in online individualized learning platforms (e.g. IXL) allowing them to advance beyond grade level material. This frontloading effort also identifies students for additional advanced learning opportunities.
- Growth area: Consider providing advanced learning options for elementary students, such as advanced math groups, enrichment clubs, book clubs, and other opportunities for enhancing learning experiences.

Grade 6-12

- PCMS provides the one week JumpStart summer program to all students transitioning from 5th to 6th grade

- In Fall 2025, PCHS will begin College Board Pre-AP English 1 and 2 classes for all students. This program exposes all high school students to rigor as they begin high school. Students learn the skills they need to succeed in college and careers: reading for evidence, crafting sentences that support claims, interpreting data, and making sense of the world with quantitative information.
- PCS is implementing a seven-year Gear-Up program beginning in Fall 2025. The program, which includes surveys and data collection, is designed to increase the numbers of students (especially from low income backgrounds) who progress into higher education and to equip them with college and career readiness skills to help them succeed in the baccalaureate and beyond. This program will begin in 6th grade and expand every year through the high school grades.
- Middle and high school students have the opportunity to participate in programs including mentorship, peer counseling and job shadowing for interest-based exploration.

* **Practice J**

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

PCS provides multiple opportunities for AIG students to develop talents and interests. These are listed on the AIG website and updated regularly. Families are kept informed of these opportunities through classroom and AIG-specific communication (communication apps, Infinite Campus, and student handouts). Opportunities include the following:

- AIG Summer Camps for AIG 3-8th graders
- Wheel Classes at the middle school
- Art, Music, and CTE Classes at the high school
- At multiple schools and grade levels: Community Partnership opportunities including PACJam, Tryon Fine Arts Center/Tryon Arts and Crafts School (Arts in the Schools) programs, Tryon Equestrian Center Programs, FENCE (Foothills Equestrian Nature Center), Polk County Public Library, Polk County Extension services/4-H, Polk County Health and Human Services
- Information shared about NCSSM, NCVPS, and local college programs with high school students.

In addition, AIG students participate in the development of their Differentiated Education Plan (DEP/IDEP) through in-person discussions and/or surveys. This enables teachers and the Grants and Community Partnerships coordinator to develop/match students with programming based on the variety of local options available. This is an ongoing effort to establish partnerships that lead to extra-curricular activities.

Teachers and club advisors are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the interests they have explored and the knowledge that they have gained. Schools hold a variety of showcasing opportunities including art shows, parent and grandparent events, commemoration activities (e.g. Veteran's Day), musical and drama performances, etc.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Build an understanding of best practices for grouping.
- Develop strategies for front-loading and filling in gaps.

- Develop partnerships and design flowcharts showing how the AIG program is aligned with other departments, for example literacy, exceptional children (EC), multilingual (ML) and afterschool programs.
- Explore a partnership with the PCHS Early Educator CTE Program, considering the possibility of these future educators teaching a series of lessons targeting gifted/talented K-2 students.
- Consider providing advanced learning options for elementary students, such as advanced math groups, enrichment clubs, book clubs, and other opportunities for enhancing learning experiences.
- Develop unbiased tools, based on evidence or research, to support acceleration decisions. Remove barriers that may hinder the implementation of these opportunities, for example changing mindsets, having quality accelerated instruction available, and any environmental or social/emotional barriers.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	AIG data spreadsheets; attendance data from AIG Summer Seminars and other AIG-related programs; DEP/IDEP documentation
*	-
*	-

Documents

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

Polk County Schools (750) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

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

Curriculum and instruction in Polk County is based on the NC Standard Course of Study (SCOS) at all levels K-12. Using the SCOS (Standard Course of Study) as the entry point for differentiation, AIG programming seeks opportunities to enrich, extend and/or accelerate the standards. Students are provided opportunities to work together with a variety of their peers, including students of similar needs, abilities and interests. The following strategies are used:

Grades K-5

- Elementary ELA instruction is content-rich for all students, providing enriching activities throughout the units. The ELA curriculum (currently Arts and Letters) teaches social studies and science content using grade level complex texts in grades 1-5. In addition, all K-2 classrooms in the district have the Geodes program, which provides content knowledge and builds vocabulary skills while reinforcing phonetic knowledge. Teachers can access off-grade material in order to differentiate instruction. The district seeks ways to add even more enrichment to the curriculum. For example, funding was obtained for field trips related to Arts and Letters units for grades 2-5 in 2024-25.
- All ELA teachers have received training in the Science of Reading and are expected to assess using the Science of Reading tools as well as Amplify assessment data. Based on assessments, teachers differentiate in all areas of the language arts curriculum, providing students with reading, writing, grammar, phonics, speaking and listening activities that both remediate for gaps and challenge students to excel. Examples of this differentiation include classroom libraries and media center access to trade books for students at all levels, skill-development groups based on assessment data, technology tools, station rotation that allows teachers to group students based on need, writing assignments with rubrics, and opportunities to design and present projects (for example, holidays around the world, global weather phenomena, scientist and animal research).
- Elementary math instruction in Polk County is based on a supplemented Envision Mathematics curriculum. All elementary math teachers attended the Math Foundations training to learn how to apply math foundational concepts at their grade level. Using station rotation models and other flexible grouping methods, teachers create and teach skill-development groups based on assessment data. Technology tools (e.g. IXL) are used to differentiate math instruction. Project/problem-based learning is implemented by several teachers.
- The district has participated in the Smithsonian Science for Education Field Test program to bring bring materials, instructional strategies and professional development into the schools to address the new SCOS in science, with a focus on the three strands of science learning:
    - Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs): The content of the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) and SCOS, organized in a hierarchy that develops key ideas from kindergarten through high school
    - Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs): The practices that scientists and engineers use in their field
    - Crosscutting Concepts (CCCs): Exploring connections across the four domains of science

- In addition to the district mandated curriculum and strategies, students in grades K-5 receive differentiated core instruction within the classroom through a blend of teacher-designed interventions for remediation, enrichment, extension, and acceleration. Examples include project-based learning, guest speakers, hands-on experiences, station rotation, small group instruction, and technology-enhanced instruction.
- Instructional groups within and among the classrooms and the grade levels are based on district approved formative and summative assessment results.The classroom groupings are flexible throughout the year. See Standard 3e for details of formative and summative assessment practices.
- In some cases, students receive subject acceleration (participating in reading/math instruction with a higher grade level). For students who need advanced curriculum not provided in their current school (e.g. elementary student needing middle school curriculum, or middle school student needing high school curriculum), the NC Virtual Academy and/or other online programs can bridge the grade spans.
- Digital tools and programs provide individualized work assignments based on the students' level of skill acquisition for accelerated pacing and differentiation, for example Beast Academy and IXL.
- 5th graders participate in 4-6 full-day outdoor interdisciplinary learning expeditions through Muddy Sneakers
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) of teachers in similar subject areas or grade levels work to engage students in interdisciplinary units through standards-based enrichment activities. Past examples include the following:
    - Project-based learning experiences around creating and maintaining pollinator gardens through collaboration with community gardening and conservation organizations including Gardening for Life, Conserving Carolina, Muddy Sneakers and Champions for Wildlife,
    - Tree planting collaborative projects in collaboration with Unity in the Community,
    - Project Based Learning around designing and installing nature trails and outdoor classrooms in collaboration with community partners,
    - Holidays around the World projects that span ELA, mathematics, and social studies and that include school-wide presentations,
    - Coding and science experiences that include student voice and choice and public products,
- Growth area: Implement a consistent plan for concept-based units for each grade level, including extension and enrichment opportunities
- The elementary AIG specialist/teacher provides enrichment, extension and acceleration for students in the four elementary schools.
    - K-2 students are served in their classrooms, with classroom consultation, differentiation assistance and push-in observation provided by the AIG specialist. Students are provided with high quality teacher interactions including
        - enrichment, extension and acceleration,
        - development of logical thinking skills (e.g. PETS curriculum),
        - support for student interests (e.g. science, coding, mathematics),
        - instruction which develops durable skills, including communication, critical thinking and adaptability.
    - Growth area: consider the Thursday Thinking Day model where simple thinking activities are set up to engage students as they enter the lower elementary area.

- In Grades 4-5, the AIG teacher/specialist will engage in the following activities. Schedules will vary depending on individual student, classroom, or school needs.
    - Classroom consultation, co-teaching and lesson modeling to provide support for AIG students.
    - PLC differentiation assistance during common planning times, including coaching and instructional resources for the three levels of differentiation (enrich, extend, accelerate) and flexible grouping strategies for AIG students and other advanced learners..
    - Up to 90 minutes of pull-out time per week (usually 45+45) to participate in learning and projects that are aligned with the SCOS, that extend, expand, or enrich the content, and that promote the development of 21st Century Skills (Portrait of a Graduate Skills) such as collaboration and problem-solving. Examples include units on

        Word roots and content-specific vocabulary,

        Pollinator garden PBL experiences,

        Book clubs that connect to the classroom curriculum and result in a service project (starting a club) or expressions of creativity (student writing or art projects),

        Mathematics-related engineering challenges, data science activities and projects,

        Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) curriculum,

        Games to develop logical thinking and strategy skills (e.g. SET), global awareness, vocabulary, mathematics (The Stock Market Game, estimation activities, etc.),

        Engineering is Elementary/YES selected activities to solve global issues including conservation, sustainable energy use and medical challenges,

        Other STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics)-related opportunities.
- Growth Area: the AIGT is building relationships with community organizations and funding sources to provide after school elementary clubs for enrichment. Promising opportunities include the following:
    - Chorus - students perform at school and community events and competitions
    - PACJAM - students learn traditional instruments (fiddle, banjo, etc.)
    - Tryon Fine Arts Center - drama club leading to a performance
    - Tryon Arts and Crafts classes
    - Library programs
    - Chess and/or Bridge clubs
    - 4-H cooking and/or nutritional classes 6-8

Grades 6-8

- Students in middle school are cluster grouped in English/Language Arts and Math classrooms. Placement is based on achievement scores from the previous year, including EOG results and report card grades. ELA classrooms offer enrichment opportunities such as project-based learning assignments and service projects.
- Advanced learning math classes are offered in 6-8th grade. Math instruction is compacted for the highest-performing group to allow for students to take Math I for high school credit during the 8th grade year.
- The middle school advanced learning teachers serve as a resource for academic advisement for students identified in the AIG program.
- Wheel classes are not designated as AIG only, but are designed to address interests of AIG students, including STEM, Life Skills, Band/Choral Music and Art.
- Teachers share with students and parents about opportunities for enrichment, including clubs, summer enrichment and Gear Up activities.
- Growth area: During this plan cycle, the AIGT plans to increase support to middle school staff for differentiation, providing coaching and instructional resources.

Grades 9-12

- The Polk County High School and Early College offer honors, dual-enrollment and AP classes. Teachers in these classes are provided with coaching and instructional resources to enrich, extend and/or accelerate the SCOS for AIG and advanced students.

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

Polk County instructional staff use information gathered about students' abilities, readiness and interests to determine instructional strategies.

Gathering information:

- During instruction, teachers observe student behavior and accomplishments and track district-approved test scores and other measures of performance
- During the referral process, teachers/staff/families submit information about student strengths, readiness and interests
- During the identification process, students complete interest inventories, learning styles inventories and writing samples

Matching needs to services

- During the annual writing/review of DEPs/IDEPs (Individualized Differentiated Education Plans), families, students and members of the school AIGT collaborate to determine instructional strategies that will be used in school settings.
    - Strategies are selected to provide rigor, depth, complexity and sophistication
    - The team considers student strengths and areas of identification when selecting instructional strategies and approaches
    - Strategies may be used in the regular classroom, in AIG cluster groups, independent study and/or additional settings including clubs, after-school, summer, or mentorship programs.
    - Examples of strategies might include thinking skills activities, lego robotics, coding, engineering projects, advanced reading/writing, etc.

- Throughout the year, the AIGT consults and collaborates with classroom teachers and scheduling staff to assist with meeting AIG student needs. This might include pull-out or in-class assistance.

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

Polk County uses a variety of evidence-based (and locally-developed) strategies and resources to meet the needs of AIG students. Resources are implemented in the regular classroom, during activity classes, and in extracurricular settings so that the school is supporting students' holistic growth and development. Resources and strategies include the following:

- Durable skills and character development
    - Communication between AIG staff and school counselors/administrator
    - Implementation of the evidence-based Second Step program at the elementary level
    - Student recognition for appropriate/excellent behavior
    - Elementary school counselors conduct monthly programs based on Second Step and support classroom teachers to meet the needs of AIG students
    - School counselors (K-12) meet with students and small groups as needed and consult with teachers to meet the needs of AIG students
    - Professional therapists work in collaboration with the school system (K-12) based on student need, identified through observations and discussions with students and families
    - High quality professional development for staff that addresses a variety of SEL needs (past examples include information about new forms of drug use, how to get help for students with trauma identity, ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) training, Amie Dean Behavior workshops, etc.)
    - Collaboration with other agencies to hold Community Resource Fairs at schools and at other events (past examples include Do Not Lose Hope and Making Strides Against Breast Cancer events at a local park, Resource Fairs combined with Holiday Craft, Game Nights and hurricane resource distributions at individual schools, etc.)
    - In collaboration with state and federal agencies, Polk County Schools has served as a Disaster Preparedness Site (especially after Hurricane Helene and during COVID)
    - Members of the AIGT participate in providing data, discussing interventions and decision-making during MTSS and PLC discussions about AIG students.
    - The AIGT provides teachers and families with resources to support AIG students, including twice-exceptional and multilingual learners. These are available on the AIG website, at in-person meetings, through links in emails and as requested.
    - The AIGT provides newly-identified students and families with resources on "What it Means to be Gifted".
    - Transitions to the next school are discussed with AIG students and resources for support and decision making are provided to students in transition-year meetings.

- AIG teachers integrate character development with academic standards through bibliotherapy reading assignments, board/card games, and discussions of how to thrive as a gifted student, including gifted traits, behavior and needs.

- Academic and intellectual
  - The AIGT works to provide teachers with evidence-based strategies including Socratic seminar, hands-on and project-based learning, bibliotherapy resources and resilience-focused lessons.
  - Elementary curriculum includes Arts and Letters, Reading Foundations, Geodes, and IXL.
  - Elementary student access to the Beast Academy curriculum to enrich and accelerate students.
  - Elementary pull-out programs with high quality instruction based on student needs. For example, Engineering is Elementary curriculum for students interested in engineering, computer science and coding, enrichment and extension of ELA into science and social studies curriculum areas.
  - Middle school advanced math and ELA instruction, including project/problem-based learning, Socratic seminar, and depth and complexity lessons.
  - Participation in the Gear-up program to prepare students for college and career (middle and high school)
  - Implementation of the PreAP English 1 and 2 program to provide rigor to all high school students.
  - Clubs, summer and afterschool activities related to student interests. Past examples include, robotics, nature-based activities, art-related activities, and Science Olympiad and Bridge-Building.
  - Acceleration options as needed including single subject and whole grade.

* **Practice D**
Fosters the development of durable skills and mindsets which support post-secondary success. These skills include adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical and creative thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility.

Polk County has programs to help all students develop durable skills and mindsets which support post-secondary success. These skills include adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical and creative thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility. The district has begun professional development for staff on how to access and use the Portrait of a Graduate resources. The skills and mindsets are implemented in grade spans as follows:

- Units integrating ELA, science and social studies. These include seminar discussions about critical local, national and global issues.
- Smithsonian Science for Education elementary units integrating science with math, social studies/global education, and ELA. Students learn collaboration, communication and critical thinking skills in these lessons.
- Project-based learning (PBL), including encouraging teachers to get involved in the Kenan Fellows Program, Constructive Learning Design programs, and the PBL Project. This has led to PBLs including nature trail projects, outdoor learning classrooms, student game design and food/pollinator gardens. Students learn to think with empathy in critical and creative ways during PBL units. These projects lead to learning personal responsibility skills.
- Clubs and wheel classes apply learning in real-world contexts, such as Bridge-building, Coding, Robotics and Science Olympiad.
- Growth Area: The AIGT is exploring grants for increasing the availability of clubs which could include (based on student, staff and community interest/availability) coding, robotics, book clubs, cooking clubs, drama and music, nature and art. Such clubs would help students apply learning in real-world contexts.

- The advanced learning classes at the middle and high school levels embed critical thinking skills within advanced programming options, including PreAP English 1 and 2, Honors, AP and other advanced courses.
- CTE classes at the high school involve students in activities including agriculture, health sciences, building trades, and drafting. Students learn that these real-world activities involve being adaptable, working well with others, being responsible and life-long learning.
- Performance opportunities in music and drama (all grade spans) teach students about adaptability, communication, empathy and personal responsibility.
- Continue to actively work in partnership with community organizations to develop
  - real-world scenarios (PBL projects, debate lessons, Stock Market Game)
  - community service learning projects (e.g. blood drive, food drive, garden projects)
  - mentoring, job shadowing, internships, and/or apprenticeships with local businesses
- Current partnerships include the following: YMCA, Kennedy Center for the Arts, Skills USA, Advent Polk Hospital, Sheriff's Office, Special Olympics, Tryon Fine Arts Center, PacJam, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, ComMotion, Muddy Sneakers, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Thermal Belt Outreach Ministries, FENCE, Chamber of Commerce, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Red Cross and Polk Vocational Services.
- Grantmaking agencies that PCS has worked with include the Polk County Community Foundation, Western NC Community Foundation, Dogwood Foundation, Gateway Wellness Foundation, WNC Bridge Foundation, Turner-Tennant Foundation, Forbes Foundation, Duke Energy Foundation, NC Electric Cooperative and the Meta Foundation.
- In all areas above, PCS strives to integrate opportunities for students to have critical discussions and dialogue with like-minded peers, for example clubs/teams that participate in competitions, community service projects and CTE classes.

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

Polk County Schools strives to use a balanced assessment approach to measure a range of student needs and abilities. Teachers receive professional development on analyzing and using assessments, including Amplify, IXL placement, and North Carolina Check-ins, EOG and EOC tests. School-based committees (including school improvement teams, professional learning communities, MTSS meetings and vertical planning committees) and district wide committees (Early Literacy Program, district MTSS Team, principals' meetings) analyze the results of assessment and plan for differentiation.

The AIGT joins these meetings as a collaborative partner. At the elementary level, the AIG specialist meets with PLCs to develop plans to support the growth of gifted students and advise on using research-based tools to differentiate instruction. Differentiation strategies include the following:

- Flexible groups
- Station rotation
- Assignment of technology assisted programs including IXL
- Differentiated vocabulary/spelling lists
- Differentiated Accelerated Reader and other reading goals

- Project and Problem-Based Learning that incorporates student voice and choice
- The AIG specialist analyzes academic data to determine how to support students during pullout
- In middle school, students in advanced classes (ELA and math) are enriched and accelerated by participating in project/problem-based learning, student discussion forums, and critical thinking strategies.
- In high school, students are counseled to take a variety of differentiated classes, including honors and Advanced Placement (AP), NCVPS, NCSSM and CTE classes. Teachers of advanced students receive professional development in their focus areas.

Growth Area: Collaborate with the EC and Curriculum and Instruction departments to provide professional development/consultation to teachers about how to develop pre assessments as well as strategies to enrich/accelerate based on pre assessment data.

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

All personnel are taught and expected to use strategies for differentiated curriculum and instruction. Collaboration to implement this differentiation remains flexible depending on the needs and resources of schools and staff. Examples of the ways that personnel collaborate to support differentiation include the following:

- Principal-mandated differentiation course in NCEES
- Discussion of data and differentiation strategies during PLCs and vertical planning meetings, attended by various combinations of teachers, administrators, AIG. EC and ML staff. The AIG coordinator advocates for AIG students in staff and PLC meetings, using the following questions to promote a discussion of differentiation:
    - Are AIG students able to accelerate when needed?
    - Do AIG students have regular opportunities to expand upon their areas of interest and strengths?
    - Are AIG students encouraged to extend learning beyond the basic level of understanding?
    - Do AIG students have an opportunity to NOT “succeed with ease” in order to develop their talent and potential?
- PBL (Project Based Learning) resources shared by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Opportunities to participate in PBL projects supported by community organizations (past supporters include Kiwanis, foundations, private donors)Muddy Sneakers (5th grade enrichment involving learning in the woods) supported by private donors
- Champions for Wildlife projects at the middle and elementary levels supported by grants and private donors
- The AIG coordinator meets regularly with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, who participates in and advocates for the needs of gifted students throughout the district. The Director invites the AIG coordinator to district meetings as appropriate (e.g. principal’s meetings, school board meetings, MTSS meetings, STEM committee meetings).
- Growth Area: At the middle school level, the ELA and Math advanced learning teachers meet to explore strategies and resources for increasing depth, complexity, rigor and sophistication.

- At the high school level, the principal and academic support specialist advocate for AIG programming by using student input and the Honors Level Coursework Development and Evaluation Tool to support planning for differentiated instruction.
- Teachers are provided with resources for differentiation through the AIGT web page, articles in the Curriculum and Instruction newsletter, professional development opportunities, and in-person and online workshops through such organizations as NCAAT, WRESA, Kenan Fellows Programs, professional associations, and online resources.
- Growth area: providing faculty with time for collaboration to plan instruction and problem-solve around areas of advanced content, refine implementation of differentiated units and classes, and evaluate units for appropriate differentiation.
- Growth area: obtain funding for more teachers of AIG students to attend North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented events and other conferences that teach advanced content.
- The AIGT works with the Exceptional Children, Multi-Lingual and Title One programs to ensure that twice exceptional children receive support and instruction in their areas of strength
- Polk County administrators and the AIGT monitor that this differentiation is occurring through the following tools:
- Principal observation in NCEES (Standard IV: Teachers facilitate learning for their students)
- Informal observations by administrators and the AIGT.
- Analysis of growth on district/state approved tests including Amplify, Check ins, EOG and EOCs, APs, and final course tests.
- The Polk County Early Literacy Specialist uses monitoring tools to support ELA differentiation.
- The AIGT participates in discussions of the data collected with teachers and administrators.
- Results of these discussions are brought to the school and district AIG Teams and the AIG Advisory Group to discuss strategies for strengthening differentiation.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Plan concept-based units for each K-5 grade level, including extension and enrichment opportunities.
- Build relationships with community organizations and funding sources to provide grants/partnerships for clubs (during school and/or extracurricular) which could include (based on student, staff and community interest/availability) coding, robotics, book clubs, cooking clubs, drama and music, nature and art.
- During this plan cycle, the AIGT plans to increase support to middle school staff for differentiation, beginning with meetings of ELA and Math advanced learning teachers to explore strategies and resources for increasing depth, complexity, rigor and sophistication.
- Collaborate with the EC and Curriculum and Instruction departments to provide professional development/consultation to teachers about how to develop pre assessments as well as strategies to enrich/accelerate based on pre assessment data.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	DEP/IDEP forms; folders kept for all AIG and Talent Development students; funding for enrichment activities; list of school/district enrichment opportunities
*	-
*	-

Documents

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

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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.

Polk County Schools employs an AIG-licenced educator as lead AIG coordinator. The AIG coordinator is responsible for AIG program development, improvement and advocacy. The coordinator works in close collaboration with the PCS Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Together, the two staff members work with district leadership to synergize efforts on behalf of AIG students. The AIG coordinator plans and facilitates meetings of the AIGT and the AIG advisory group.

The AIG coordinator is responsible for the following duties:

- Overseeing the screening, referral, and identification processes at the district level;
- Maintaining documentation of student identification evidence and services provided (files stored at schools);
- Providing leadership and advocacy for the needs of AIG students at all levels;
- Monitoring implementation of program services and staff;
- Participating in professional development opportunities, including regional and other statewide meetings to support gifted programs;
- Developing, monitoring, revising, and evaluating the Local AIG Plan and program;
- Providing professional development and resources to engage AIG teachers in continued adult learning regarding gifted and advanced students;
- Developing partnerships with and communication strategies for families, parents/guardians, and the community to support the AIG program;
- Ensuring that communication tools are up-to-date and that the AIG Local Plan is accessible;
- Sharing information with stakeholders about current research, new resources and DPI updates;
- Periodically reviewing the AIG program with the AIGT and AIG advisory group, at least 2 times a year;
- As a small district, the Polk County AIG Coordinator also works as an AIG Specialist in three of the elementary schools, serving primarily third through fifth graders, consulting with teachers and providing professional development and resources to elementary teachers.

The Director of Curriculum and Instruction is on the district MTSS team and represents AIG within the MTSS context, informed by the AIG coordinator.

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

As a small school district, the Polk County Schools AIG coordinator works as an AIG specialist for the elementary schools. The coordinator engages a variety of lead teachers to support implementation of the AIG program and plan. The information below reflects the status of AIG programming as of Spring 2025.

At all levels, the AIG coordinator/specialist and teachers

- recognize and nurture the unique needs of gifted learners in collaboration with counselors, social workers, parents and other teachers to ensure the integration of academic, intellectual and social/emotional factors necessary for high performance in gifted students.
- consult with the MTSS team as needed in each school.
- encourage professional development through newsletters, emails, meetings and personal contact.
- review current professional articles, books, NCDPI resources, as well as participating in regional and state-wide conferences and promoting these with instructional and other staff.
- ensure that AIG communication tools are up-to-date.

Grades K-5

There is one full-time, licensed AIG coordinator/specialist and one teacher serving AIG students at the 4 elementary schools. These staff have the following responsibilities:

- provide indirect support to classroom teachers and other staff through consultation, observations, team planning, and providing resources.
- pull out students in grades 3-5 for lessons based on student strengths, interests and needs, including math, ELA, STEM, global/social studies, and durable skills and mindsets (Portrait of a Graduate, see Standard 3d).
- advocate for AIG students and provide resources for families and the community about meeting the needs of AIG students at their schools.

Grades 6-8

The following staff are directly involved in Polk County Middle School AIG programming:

- The advanced ELA teacher teaches classes for advanced 6th, 7th and 8th graders, manages AIG student information and placement at the middle school, coordinates development of student DEP/IDEPs and holds parent meetings as needed.
- Middle school math teachers teach advanced math sections, and advise and advocate for AIG math students. These teachers prepare AIG/advanced students to take Math 1 in 8th grade.
- 8th grade science teachers teach high school Earth Science to all 8th graders. Those students who pass can move to advanced science classes in 9th grade.
- “Wheel” teachers provide enrichment and acceleration through courses including STEM, life skills, band/choral music and art.

- Club advisors nurture the talents of students through clubs which may include hiking/nature/conservation, Science Olympiad, Bridge-Building and Lego Robotics.

Grades 9-12

The PCHS Academic Support Specialist is responsible for AIG tasks including

- advocacy
- coordination of services
- managing files
- assisting students and counselors to ensure AIG students are enrolling in appropriate courses through the 4-year academic plan (high school version of the Differentiated Education Plan)
- AIG students, families and teachers/staff of advanced learning courses consult with the academic advisor on matters related to course selection, performance, and the college/career planning process.
- Growth area: At all grade spans, we will consider ways to strengthen services which enhance the academic, intellectual and durable skills of gifted and advanced learners. In particular, we plan to increase attendance at professional AIG-related conferences and hold follow-up implementation meetings.

* **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.

Polk County Schools has identified professional development needs for those involved in AIG programming for the following stakeholders:

- Classroom teachers
  - Identifying potential AIG students
  - Screening and referral procedures
  - Academic and intellectual strategies for differentiation
  - Developing durable skills to meet the unique needs of AIG students
- Instructional specialists
  - An in-depth understanding and ability to support classroom teachers in the areas mentioned above
- Student services personnel
  - An understanding and ability to specifically address the needs of AIG students in their field of expertise
- School Administrators

- An understanding of the academic, intellectual and durable skills needs of AIG students and the ability to enact policy and lead the staff under their supervision to meet those needs

To meet these expectations, the AIGT provides

- Annual educator, student, and family surveys to determine topics for AIG focused professional development
- Identification of staff to lead AIG focused professional development at all levels; identification of outside resources for areas with gaps
- Beginning of the year professional development (through faculty meetings, Google Classroom modules, PLCs and/or individual conferences) to ensure that all staff understand the screening, referral and identification processes
- Ongoing resource sharing (through emails, the Curriculum and Instruction newsletter, the AIG website, professional development days and PLCs) of strategies for meeting the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of AIG students.
- The AIG coordinator meets with instructional specialists, student support services staff and administrators in all schools. The conversations focus on strategies and policy development to support AIG students and strengthen AIG programming.
- Focus areas integrated with other district programs:
    - Professional learning on the role of gifted education within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in collaboration with the Exceptional Children department
    - Professional learning on gifted multilingual learners and twice exceptional students in collaboration with ML and EC staff
    - Coaching and professional development in collaboration with the Polk County Early Learning Specialist about differentiating reading instruction for AIG students

To guide the implementation and content of professional development, the AIGT is exploring the following resources:

- NCDPI Advanced Learning and Gifted Education resources and tools to inform professional development including the AIG “Booster Shots”
- Collaboration with neighboring school districts/regional partnerships and IHEs for professional development
- NCEES training modules
- ByrdseedTV subscriptions
- Opportunities for AIG teachers/staff to model and coach teachers to support differentiation
- Ways to provide funding for teachers to earn add-on licensure and participate in professional development activities, for example through grants or donations

* **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.

When available, administrators place AIG students with general education teachers who have obtained (or are pursuing) AIG licensure, demonstrate high growth, maintain distinguished performance ratings and express interest and curiosity about meeting the needs of gifted students. In all elementary schools,

AIG and high achieving students are placed in small groups with their gifted peers for focused instruction using above grade level material with highly qualified instructors. In middle and high school, AIG students are homogeneously grouped for core instruction in their strength area with highly qualified teachers.

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

Polk County develops strategies for the recruitment and retention of AIG-licensed professionals, including those of diverse backgrounds. Strategies include the following:

- The human resources department partners with principals to determine staffing needs for AIG service delivery as outlined in this Local Plan.
- The human resources department works to recruit and hire teachers with AIG licensure by embedding questions into the application and interview process related to the needs of gifted and advanced learners.
- District administrators and high school staff work to encourage promising graduates of diverse backgrounds and interests to return as educators to Polk County Schools. This informal mentoring includes giving graduates an overview of types of positions available, including AIG.
- The AIGT helps teachers get foundation/donor funding to complete AIG add-on licensure, regional professional development and/or other staff development in AIG best practices.
- The AIGT assists staff to prepare for the AIG Praxis exam.
- PCS recognizes staff who earn AIG add-on licensure through district acknowledgement

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

Polk County Schools supports the educational practice of “AIG All Day, Every Day” for any student who needs advanced opportunity. We strive to provide focused professional learning opportunities for educators that help to change mindsets, policies and practices to expand excellence in gifted education.

To accomplish this goal, the AIGT and the AIG Advisory Group implement the following practices:

- Determine professional development needs with regard to expanding excellence in AIG education
  - Use the annual surveys of staff, students and families to determine need
  - Partner with district leadership to identify needs and opportunities
- Offer professional development to provide multiple perspectives of AIG programming and an expanded understanding of giftedness and student-centered learning.
  - The AIG Advisory Group receives embedded continuing education during meetings (at least twice a year)
  - Education is into embedded into reports to and meetings with district leadership
  - Teacher/staff book studies and professional development at faculty meetings, PLCs and other meetings using, among others, any of the following resources:

- Call to Action Guidebook
- Guidebook 2.0, Strategic Actions for Multilingual Learners
- Critical Actions to Reach & Teach Students Who are Twice Exceptional (2e)
- Integrating Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services in a Multi-Tiered System of Support
- Professional books provided by NCDPI or local district/school

* **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.

Polk County administrators and the AIGT ensure that professional development (PD) is aligned to local AIG program goals, best practices in gifted education and other district initiatives through the following strategies:

- Clear definitions of AIG perspectives in all AIG presentations and communication (staff meetings, PLCs, workshops, emails, online offerings, etc.)
- The AIG website posts the Local AIG Plan
- The Director of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) oversees the AIG program along with the other district curriculum and instruction programs and priorities. Through this oversight and communication, the director ensures that the AIG perspective is included and aligned with school and district priorities. This is reflected in the selection of instructional and assessment materials, staffing, grouping practices, professional development, and the C&I newsletter.
- The AIG coordinator is part of the district STEM committee, the Forbes Teacher Leadership Cohort, and facilitator of the elementary and district AIG Teams and the AIG Advisory Group, giving the coordinator access to instructional leaders in the county.
- The AIGT advocates that School Improvement Plans, school-based professional development, and the work of special instructors (art, music) are aligned with AIG needs.
- The AIGT will identify and/or develop an “AIG 101” professional learning opportunity, based on current research and models, that covers the following topics:
  - characteristics of gifted students
  - instructional practices to support gifted education
  - social and academic support for AIG students
  - how to access district and other resources
- Growth Area: The AIGT will explore other opportunities to offer intentional professional development including the following:
  - Supporting professional development (PD) opportunities for teachers/administrators within the region and outside the district
  - Facilitation of best practice sharing sessions to follow up on PD, through such vehicles as

- Technology tools (LMS, shared digital folders)
- Coaching, implementation, and reflection on PD experiences
- Sharing of exemplar lessons
- PD structures that already exist (professional learning days, PLCs, etc.)

- MTSS related PD with a focus on differentiated instruction

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Explore ways to increase the attractiveness of Polk County Schools to AIG teachers, leading to better recruitment;
- Obtain funding to increase attendance at professional AIG-related conferences and hold follow-up implementation meetings;
- Encourage teachers to earn gifted endorsement/certification;
- Develop a protocol for AIG local certification.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Track the number of teachers with AIG endorsement/certification; Menu of professional development options that support differentiation and enrichment	
*	-	
*	-	

Documents

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

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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.

Polk County Schools AIG programs leverage the opportunities and potential available in the district. Parents/families are invited to actively contribute to and benefit from the AIG program. The goals of these collaborative opportunities include the following:

- For the district to gain a variety of perspectives from families with different backgrounds and experiences
- To help parents/guardians be involved in their child's education and share their expertise both about their child and in other areas
- To develop strong relationships that benefit all stakeholders

The AIG program will provide the following collaborative opportunities with parents/guardians:

- AIG staff are present at selected Open House and family events K-12 and are available for brief individual conferences with families at these events.
- Parents at all levels are invited to share their expertise and interests in a variety of formats for enrichment, skill building, or pursuit of students' passion projects. Schools offer events where families may share their expertise, for example during Career Day, Dad's Read-aloud, Discovery Day, etc. In addition, teachers ask parents to share relevant experiences in classes.
- K-2
  - Parent meetings/conferences are offered annually with classroom teachers to discuss student strengths, differentiation, and student progress. The AIG coordinator reaches out to parents/guardians of advanced learners.
- 3-5:
  - Parent/guardian meetings/conferences are offered annually by the AIG specialist for review of student progress and DEP development, with a special focus on 4th grade after the universal screener.
  - Families served in AIG (talent development and identified) are invited to connect to an online communication platform, where families are informed of activities and invited to assist.

- All students served (talent development and identified) are given twice-yearly progress reports to keep parents informed of student progress. This serves as an opportunity for parents to contact the AIG specialist or classroom teacher with ideas, concerns, and/or questions.
- Growth Area: Our goal is to hold annual family AIG evenings to share information and two-way communication about AIG, topics/activities might include STEM learning activities, social/emotional needs of AIG, speaker or roundtable format, etc. These AIG meetings may be school-specific or district-wide depending on the content of the event.

- 6-12
  - At the middle school, families are invited to open house events, to participate in their children's extra-curricular activities and to schedule parent conferences as needed.
  - Families receive information about their child's academic, social, and emotional needs through direct communication with the teacher and through Infinite Campus.
  - Families of high school/Early College students are invited to participate in the academic planning of their students.
  - Families are invited to be part of the Bolt Mentorship program, and to participate as guest speakers and in career fairs.
- The AIG program also seeks further strategies to bring in parent and family engagement/involvement through collaboration with other district departments/programs including the following:
  - Community and Grants
  - Bolt Mentorship (See 5b below)
  - Exceptional Children and Multilingual (ML), for example, participation in a multilingual family support group led by the Department of Health and Human Services
  - Partnership with family-friendly community groups, for example Unity in the Community and the Roseland Community Center.

* **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.

In addition to reaching out to parents/guardians, Polk County Schools makes a concerted effort to cultivate and work with a wide variety of community stakeholders. The purpose of this outreach is to provide enrichment, skill-building, and investigation opportunities to students. Relevant opportunities/services are included in student DEPs.

- The AIG program collaborates with the district Grants and Community Partnerships staff to advocate for gifted programming. The Grants and Community Partnership program interacts regularly with the Chamber of Commerce and business development organizations, Rotary and Kiwanis Club chapters, the Polk County Community Foundation, and organizations related to the arts, athletics, health and wellness, outdoor and environmental organizations, etc. The district actively nurtures and promotes such community events as Go Fly a Kite Day, Walk of Remembrance (suicide prevention), Special Olympics, Super Saturday (arts festival), addiction/recovery/health information sessions, art and music programs, and sports/recreational programs. Students are organized to volunteer through service organizations. District-wide message systems promote these events.
- The AIG program partners with organizations including Big Brothers/Big Sisters program and the BOLT Mentors (Building Opportunities for Leadership and Trust) program which connects interested students to friends/mentors who can encourage students to maintain/build academic excellence and

pursue advanced interests.

- Polk County Schools received the Gear Up grant in partnership with Appalachian State University and Isothermal Community College to help students plan career and college decisions.
- Polk County High School partners with the UNC College Advising Corp and Polk County Community Foundation to offer college and university visits. This helps students visualize and work towards higher education.
- CTE (Career and Technical Education) works with local business leaders and the community college system to monitor trends for employment and postsecondary education. This information is then shared with students to help them make academic, internship, college, and career decisions.
- The AIG program encourages staff/teachers to partner with external organizations, including but not limited to Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs). For example, science teachers participate in a Community of Practice through Western Carolina University, teachers attend events led by university instructors at WRESA (local AIG certification) and NCAAT (eg. Math Circles) and participate in NCAGT, NAGC, and other virtual and in-person events. These partnerships both improve student instruction and help teachers explore the potential for district professional development.
- Growth Area: Partner with IHEs to create AIG opportunities for professional development for a wider audience of teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders. Work with Western Carolina University to provide creativity enrichment opportunities to students.
- The AIG program supports teachers in implementing Project-Based Learning (PLB) as a way of providing enrichment, skill building and the pursuit of interests. For example, several teachers joined RootEd to guide students in a variety of projects including the design/installation/improvement of nature trail signs, outdoor learning spaces, board game design and pollinator gardens. These projects involved working with community organizations including Conserving Carolina, Champions for Wildlife, Gardening for Life, and the NC Wildlife Commission. The AIG program believes in supporting teachers and students who want to learn in their areas of expertise and passion, and works to connect them with the resources and skills to make that happen.
- Three growth areas are the following:
  - obtain funding for elementary school clubs, for example, drama, art, gardening, hiking, cooking, chess
  - encourage community organizations to support middle and high school competitions and clubs, for example, supporting Lego Robotics, Science Olympiad, and coding clubs through attendance at events, mentorship, and funding
  - develop partnerships with IHEs (Institutions of Higher Education) to support grants, research opportunities, and professional development that can strengthen the AIG program.

* **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.

Polk County's AIG Advisory Group consists of local community members, parents and families, teachers, and instructional and support staff. This group meets at least twice a year, with the potential to arrange for translators, childcare, and/or virtual attendance. The advisory group assists the AIG program with developing, monitoring, evaluating, and revising the local AIG program and plan.

- Monitoring and evaluating: the group looks at data, stakeholder feedback, stories, and challenges to determine the effectiveness of the program and plan implementation.

- Developing and revising: the group works to develop and revise program practices. The group holds more frequent meetings as needed, especially during plan revision years, looking at current practices as well as new ideas and best practices. Meetings include the opportunity to learn more about the AIG program.
- Members bring concerns, questions, needs, interests, and ideas into meetings with the shared goal of benefiting our AIG population.
- Growth Area: To ensure representation of the district's sectors and demographics, during this plan cycle we will recruit representation from additional community organizations and businesses.

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

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

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

Polk County's AIG Program informs parents/families and the community of the following:

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

Methods of communication are available in multiple formats with the intent to respond to community accessibility needs.

1. Within the school community, the AIG program uses district, school, and the AIG websites and social media posts to share the AIG Plan and information about AIG activities. Information is kept current.
2. Families are informed/contacted in a manner accessible to them, via an online communication platform, email/letter, meetings and/or personal follow-up calls. New offerings or opportunities are communicated as soon as possible. School personnel ensure interpreters/translators are available at DEP and other AIG meetings and that materials are available in translation.
3. Teachers, support and administrative staff, and school board members are informed of AIG news (plans, successes, and opportunities) during existing events including staff, principal, departmental, and school board meetings, and via email.
4. To reach the broader community, articles and photos are submitted to the local newspaper and other community media.

Growth area: Share information with students and families about partnerships with civic and local agencies. These opportunities might include CTE, mentorships, community outreach/service learning opportunities, internships, job shadowing, events, speakers, information sessions, field experiences, gifted news articles and camps.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

During this plan cycle, Polk County Schools will work to maintain and expand current partnerships:

- develop a stronger engagement with local retirees as volunteers and mentors
- seek funding for elementary school clubs, for example, drama, art, gardening, hiking, cooking, chess
- encourage community organizations to support middle and high school competitions and clubs, for example, supporting Lego Robotics, Science Olympiad, and coding clubs through attendance at events, mentorship, and funding
- develop partnerships with IHEs (Institutions of Higher Education) to support grants, research opportunities, and professional development that can strengthen the AIG program.
- Expand advisory board representation from community organizations, funders, families and businesses to ensure representation of the district's sectors and demographics
- Enhance communication with families of AIG students

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Program partnerships list; Grant applications; Program budgets; Meeting agenda/notes from Advisory Group meetings, District AIGT meetings, AIG Community/Family Programs; Publicity
*	-
*	-

Documents

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

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Standard 6: Program Accountability

The LEA implements, monitors, and evaluates the local AIG program and plan to ensure that all programs and services are effective in meeting the diverse academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

* **Practice A**
Develops a written AIG plan to describe the local AIG program, in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy (N.C.G.S. §115C-150.5-.8 {Article 9B}), based on a comprehensive program evaluation. This Local AIG Plan has been approved by the local board of education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

Polk County Schools develops a written AIG plan in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy.

- The plan is produced by the AIG coordinator based on input and discussion from the AIG Advisory Group and other stakeholders.
- The AIG Advisory Group meets at least twice a year in non-plan-writing years and more frequently in plan-writing years. The discussion of data by the AIG Advisory Group guides program improvements.
- The AIG Advisory Group seeks a diverse representation that includes parents, the AIG coordinator, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Classroom/Exceptional Children/ML teachers at various grade levels, administrators, and community representatives.
- Data is gathered regularly from various stakeholder groups (students, parents, teachers, other instructional staff, and community groups), through annual surveys and face-to-face meetings, for example PLCs, community events, school events, parent nights, etc.
- To maintain consistency, the plan is aligned with the district's mission, vision, policies, practices and procedures.
- The plan is developed based on previous feedback from NCDPI, the Unpacking Documents, revised standards, and virtual and in-person support.
- The timeline for plan-writing years is as follows:
    - September: inform stakeholders of the plan revision process
    - September/October: distribute/collect surveys
    - Fall: meet with stakeholder groups (teachers, parents, community groups) while receiving NCDPI guidance
    - Beginning in December/January, the Advisory Group looks at the collected input and discusses the standards at monthly meetings with a final meeting in late March to review final drafts.
    - NCDPI input is solicited as needed throughout the process
    - April: the AIG plan is presented to the local board of education for review and approval
    - July: per legislation, the approved plan is submitted to SBE/NCDPI for review and feedback.

- This process has been implemented in 2024-25 to prepare the 25-28 Local Plan. A similar process will be repeated in 2028 for the next plan cycle.

* **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 Polk County AIG program is committed to implementing the local plan and state legislation and policies with fidelity. The implementation is monitored in several ways.

- The AIGT meets quarterly to monitor program implementation, provide oversight and development, and to review data at all levels. The topics covered throughout the year include the following:
  - identification
  - service provision
  - student performance and needs
  - information dissemination
- The AIG Advisory Group meets at least twice a year to develop leadership capacity, to review data and to design/ complete a progress monitoring tool that includes the following:
  - action steps
  - strategies
  - timelines
  - responsibilities
- Progress on initiatives and/or the need to make local plan revisions are reported to district administrators and the school board at their scheduled meetings and to the public through the AIG website.
- The AIG coordinator meets with principals and district administrative staff to address issues related to the AIG program, plan implementation at the school level and to share progress.
- The AIG coordinator attends AIG regional and statewide meetings (in-person and virtual) to receive updates on policies and best practices in gifted education. Information is shared with appropriate stakeholders.
- AIG staff attend the annual NCAGT Conference to learn about policies and practices that impact gifted education in North Carolina.

* **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.

Polk County Schools prepares the AIG program budget and allocates funds appropriately to meet the needs of the AIG population throughout the district. AIG funds are used to employ AIG licensed personnel (currently two people). Local funds are used to supplement state funds for teacher salary, materials, curriculum products, trip expenses, and afterhours activities. The district continues to work with community partners (Tryon Fine Arts Center, Polk County Community Foundation, corporate grants, private donors and others) for funding support and resources. All monies spent adhere to state policy and guidelines and are used for AIG programs to benefit our students and employ AIG personnel. The AIG coordinator reviews funding with the Finance Officer and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to assure alignment to the plan with budgeted resources.

* **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.

Polk County Schools collects and analyzes multiple sources of data about AIG students. This data informs mindsets, policies and practices by providing information about aggregate and subgroup trends and allowing the AIGT and AIG Advisory Board to devise strategies to improve practices relating to the following:

- expanding the opportunity for participation in advanced learning programs/courses
- dropout prevention
- recruiting and retaining teachers
- better serving students at all levels
- ensuring smooth transition between schools
- communication about AIG programming with stakeholders

PCS collects the following data:

- Student performance data (EOG/EOC/Check-ins/EVAAS), in order to follow student progress, plan for appropriate interventions and instruction, encourage student growth and maintain graduation rates. The AIGT engages appropriate stakeholders (including data managers, principals/counselors, and Title1/EC/ML specialists) for insight, clarification and suggestions for modification. Performance data is analyzed by the AIGT to address issues related to underserved populations and early warning for drop-out prevention.
- Annual dropout data for AIG students: each potential student dropout engages in an exit interview so that information can be reviewed and new strategies developed to provide a multi-tiered system of support for dropout prevention.
- Performance is compared longitudinally and across the district to determine if any school-based programming needs to be evaluated and adjusted.
- Data is collected on other indicators of student performance that speak to the success of AIG students:
    - acceptance in the NC School of Math and Science and Governor's School
    - state and national recognitions/achievements
    - number of internships or mentorships
    - college credits earned before high school graduation

- college acceptances
- scholarship information
- successful Honors and AP class completion rates
- earned credits and degrees through Dual Enrollment
- Pathway completion and credentials earned through CTE courses.

Growth Areas:

- Efficiently correlate the regular district collection of data with the performance of AIG students.
- Provide annual updates on the state of the AIG program, including analysis of data sources and corresponding recommendations to MTSS teams, the school board and other stakeholders.

* **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.

Polk County Schools strives to provide fair and just access to all students, ensuring that demographic factors, including exceptionalities and language differences, do not reduce the likelihood of access to and participation in gifted education.

The AIGT and the AIG Advisory Group monitor the identification, selection, services and retention of demographic populations in the AIG program.

- AIG coordinator/specialist shares information about expanding identification and access to advanced learning through written materials, professional development, and by building relationships with individual teachers and PLCs. Teachers are taught how to use gifted behavior checklists.
- Check-in meetings with special education instructors, ML and Title 1 teachers and other support personnel occur regularly.
- The AIGT, AIG Advisory Group and a committee on expanding excellence collect and analyze data to look for trends in referral, identification, services and retention.

* **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.

In order to provide quality AIG programming to schools and students, the PCS human resources department partners with administrators to determine the needs of each school’s AIG program and strives to hire AIG instructors who are working towards or already possess AIG licensure, PRAXIS certification and/or local AIG endorsement. When these qualifications are not met, district/school administrators provide professional development and support/mentorship to teachers serving AIG students and encourage formal certification.

The director of human resources documents which employees have or are working toward AIG licensure and/or participating in professional development geared toward AIG students.

Polk County encourages teachers to participate in state and regional gifted conferences and workshops through NCAGT, CEC, WRESA, NCCAT and other in-person and online professional development opportunities. When additional funding is needed, the Grants and Partnerships coordinator determines an appropriate funding source (Polk County Community Foundation, Rotary/Kiwanis Club, private donors, etc.) and requests funding. For example, science and math teachers attended the annual national conferences of their leading math/science organizations so that teachers could better enrich curriculum and accelerate advanced learners.

Polk County administrators make every effort to use teacher data to place AIG students with high performing teachers in each school.

* **Practice G**
Elicits regular feedback from students, parents/guardians, families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the ongoing implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program to support continuous program improvement.

Polk County Schools elicits regular feedback from students, families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the ongoing implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program to support continuous program improvement. Strategies to gather this feedback include the following:

- The AIG coordinator meets regularly with the director of curriculum and instruction, who gathers feedback and ensures equity and consistency of plan implementation through directives, information sharing and principal/faculty meetings.
- The AIG coordinator/specialist works with 3 elementary schools as well as maintaining contact with the remaining elementary school and the middle and high school AIG staff. The coordinator gathers feedback and works toward consistent, equitable and smooth transitions between schools.
- AIGT has two-way conversations with instructional and support staff at PLCs, staff meetings, professional development events and informally. The AIGT will work on documenting that feedback in a format that is easily accessible.
- The AIG coordinator gathers feedback annually through surveys that parallel the self-assessment tool used during the Local AIG Plan development process.
- The AIG Advisory Group meets at least 2 times a year to assist the AIGT in developing, implementing and evaluating the AIG Plan and AIG programming. The Advisory Group includes parents, administrators, teachers and community members who are representatives of the community-at-large. The Advisory Group meets as needed either as a full group or sub-groups to address specific aspects of the program. Other instructional and professional staff are included when their expertise is sought or they can benefit from conversations and analysis. The Advisory Group provides the AIGT with recommendations for improving services and programming.
- During the annual DEP/IDEP development and other school meetings and events, families are asked to provide feedback through in-person conversations and/or surveys. Families are specifically asked about how they would like to help enhance the AIG program.
- Growth Area: The AIGT will work on expanding the opportunity for feedback during this plan cycle.

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

AIG program evaluation data relevant to specific stakeholders is shared during parent meetings, Advisory Group meetings, faculty meetings, and local school board work sessions and meetings, in translation as needed. The district website links the public to a variety of state level sources of data and local program information. The district protects confidentiality of stakeholders and students, always adhering to the rules of FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) when sharing data.

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

Polk County Schools protects the rights of all students, including AIG students, through establishment and dissemination of policies, procedures, and practices related to its programs.

- Parents, guardians and teachers of academically and intellectually gifted students are encouraged to work together as partners to nurture the potential of children and to strengthen partnerships between school and families.
- AIG staff members communicate their contact information to parents through the district website, teacher websites, and various written documents sent home throughout the school year. They also participate in Open House, Parent Night, PTO meetings, and other special events in order to make themselves available to answer questions or schedule individual conferences with families.
- Screening, referral, identification and reassessment procedures are provided on the district webpage.
- Reassessment Procedure: If a student has not been identified and there is a need to reassess (based on parent/guardian complaint and a principal, coordinator, district or state-level directive), the District AIGT will review any previous or new aptitude and achievement data submitted by the family or school within 1 month of the directive to reassess, using Identification Criteria as listed in Standard 1b.
- Families have the right to informed consent for assessment leading to placement and for placement to receive services
- Parents are invited to attend meetings (held annually) or conferences to learn more about the nomination process, identification criteria, and placement decisions.
- Parents of referred students are informed in writing of the placement decisions of the district/school AIG Team. They are invited to the school to review the placement criteria and decisions and to participate in the development of DEPs, if placed. Documentation in the family's native language is provided, as well as translation services.
- All students who are identified in any North Carolina LEA before transferring to Polk County retain AIG identification. Out-of-state, private, and charter school AIG students are placed based on documentation from the previous schools based on matching aptitude and/or achievement data. The rights of military children are honored as outlined in the interstate compact. Because it may be harmful to remove the gifted label, Polk County will evaluate student data and determine appropriate placement and services within the local context.
- According to Chapter 115-C, Article 9B of the General Statue of North Carolina, a parent or guardian who disagrees with a school's AIG Team decision regarding referral, placement, or service options, are guaranteed the due process procedures following.

Polk County Schools AIG Grievance Process

Polk County Schools is committed to providing equitable treatment to all students. As part of this commitment, students identified as Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) receive a challenging curriculum along with the support needed for their academic and social-emotional growth. The rights of AIG students are protected through established policies and procedures outlined in the AIG plan. The Director of Curriculum & Instruction and the AIG Coordinator/Specialist, in collaboration with school administrators, oversee compliance with these policies and address concerns that may arise.

Complaints or concerns regarding AIG services, identification, or placement will be addressed in accordance with Polk County Board of Education Policy Code 1740/4010 – Student and Parent Grievance Procedure. This policy provides a structured process for resolving concerns fairly and efficiently. The Board

of Education encourages informal resolution whenever possible; however, when a resolution cannot be reached informally, a formal grievance process is available to ensure that students and parents are heard. Policy Code 1742/5060 – Responding to Complaints provides additional guidance on addressing concerns through informal means when a formal grievance is not necessary.

Parents and students who have concerns or complaints regarding AIG services should first attempt to resolve the issue at the school level by discussing the matter with the student's teacher or school administrator. If the concern is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction, a formal grievance may be filed following the procedures outlined in Policy Code 1740/4010.

To initiate a grievance, the student or parent must submit a written complaint to the school principal within 30 days of the event or decision that led to the concern. The written complaint must include the name of the school district employee or individual whose decision is being challenged, a description of the specific decision or action at issue, reference to any Board policy, state or federal law, or regulation that has allegedly been misapplied or violated, and the specific resolution desired. If there is no specific violation of law or policy, then the concern will be addressed following Policy Code 1742/5060 – Responding to Complaints, and the principal will handle the matter through that process.

Once a grievance is filed, the principal will schedule a meeting with the parent and/or student within five school days to discuss the concern and gather any necessary information. The principal will conduct an investigation as needed and provide a written response within 10 school days of the meeting. A copy of the grievance and the principal's response will be forwarded to the Superintendent's office.

If the parent or student is not satisfied with the principal's decision, they may appeal to the Superintendent within five school days of receiving the principal's response. The Superintendent may review the grievance documents or choose to meet with the parties involved. A written response from the Superintendent will be provided within 10 school days of receiving the appeal.

If the grievance involves an alleged violation of a federal or state law, state regulation, or Board policy, the parent or student has the right to appeal to the Board of Education within five school days of receiving the Superintendent's response. The Board will conduct a hearing pursuant to Policy Code 2500 – Hearings Before the Board, and a final written decision will be issued within 30 days, unless an extension is required for further investigation.

In cases where the grievance does not involve a legal or policy violation, the Board may choose whether to grant a hearing. If the full Board is meeting within two weeks of the request, the decision will be made at that time. Otherwise, a three-person panel will review the request and determine if a hearing should be granted.

Parents or students who have questions about the grievance process or need assistance in determining the appropriate course of action may contact the school principal or the Superintendent's office for guidance and copies of all relevant Board policies.

Polk County Schools is committed to ensuring that all students, including those identified as AIG, receive the support they need to succeed. The grievance process provides a fair and transparent way to address concerns and uphold the rights of students and families.

Legal and Policy References:

- Policy Code 1740/4010 – Student and Parent Grievance Procedure
- Policy Code 1742/5060 – Responding to Complaints
- Policy Code 2500 – Hearings Before the Board
- Policy Code 1710/4020/7230 – Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law
- Policy Code 1720/4030/7235 – Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex
- Policy Code 1730/4022/7231 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities

- Policy Code 4300 – Student Behavior Policies

Process for Addressing Grievances Related to AIG Services

Polk County Schools provides a structured process for addressing grievances related to Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) identification, placement, or services. The grievance process follows Policy Code 1740/4010 – Student and Parent Grievance Procedure and ensures that concerns are reviewed at multiple levels if necessary.

Informal Resolution Process

Concerns regarding AIG services are typically addressed first through informal discussions. Parents or guardians who have concerns about AIG placement or services generally begin by speaking with the student's teacher or the school's AIG Specialist. If the concern is not resolved at this level, a meeting with the school principal is scheduled to explore potential solutions. Policy Code 1742/5060 – Responding to Complaints provides guidance on resolving concerns through informal channels before initiating a formal grievance.

If the issue remains unresolved, a written request summarizing the concern and any proposed resolutions may be submitted to the principal. This written communication serves as a record of the concern and may be used if further steps are required.

Formal Grievance Filing

If an informal resolution is not achieved, a formal grievance may be filed under Policy Code 1740/4010. The grievance must be submitted in writing to the school principal within 30 calendar days of the decision or event that led to the concern. The written grievance must include:

- The name of the school district employee or individual whose decision is being challenged.
- A description of the specific decision or action at issue.
- A reference to any Board policy, state or federal law, or regulation that has allegedly been misapplied or violated.
- The specific resolution sought.

Once a formal grievance is submitted, the principal acknowledges receipt and schedules a meeting within five school days to discuss the matter.

Review and Decision by the Principal

Following the grievance meeting, the principal conducts any necessary investigation, gathers relevant information, and reviews applicable policies. A written response is provided within 10 school days of the meeting, detailing the decision and any actions taken. A copy of the grievance and the response is forwarded to the Superintendent's office for record-keeping.

If the parent or guardian is satisfied with the response, the process concludes at this stage. If the issue remains unresolved, an appeal may be filed.

Appeal to the Superintendent

If the grievance is not resolved at the school level, the parent or guardian may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent within five school days of receiving the principal's decision. The appeal should include:

- A copy of the original grievance.
- The principal's response.
- A statement explaining why the response is unsatisfactory.

Upon receiving the appeal, the Superintendent reviews the case and may schedule a conference with the involved parties. The Superintendent may also consider additional evidence or conduct further investigation. A written decision is issued within 10 school days of receiving the appeal, outlining the findings and any actions taken.

Appeal to the Board of Education

If the grievance involves an alleged violation of a federal or state law, state regulation, or Board policy, the parent or guardian has the right to appeal to the Polk County Board of Education under Policy Code 2500 – Hearings Before the Board.

The appeal must be submitted in writing within five school days of receiving the Superintendent's response. The Board will determine whether to grant a hearing based on the nature of the complaint:

- If the grievance alleges a violation of a specific law or policy, a hearing is granted (Mandatory Appeal).
- If the grievance does not involve a legal or policy violation, the Board may choose to review the case (Discretionary Appeal).

If a hearing is granted, the Board reviews the evidence, hears statements from the involved parties, and issues a final written decision within 30 days unless additional investigation is required.

Appeal to the State

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).)

Record-Keeping and Compliance

At each stage of the grievance process, records of written complaints, meeting notes, decisions, and responses are maintained. This ensures transparency and accountability in the resolution of concerns. If a grievance is resolved at any level, no further action is required. If not, the process continues to the next stage as outlined in the established policies.

Polk County Schools adheres to Policy Code 1740/4010, Policy Code 1742/5060, and Policy Code 2500 to ensure that all concerns are handled fairly and systematically.

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*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Revise and extend dissemination of surveys/meetings to gather responses from different stakeholders
- Develop regular reports to stakeholders including the MTSS teams and the school board

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	AIG survey results; Meeting agenda/notes from Advisory Group meetings, District AIGT meetings, AIG Community/Family Programs; records of personnel with AIG certification; AIG subgroup data
*	-
*	-

Documents

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

Local Board of Education Approval

Polk County Schools (750) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:
04/14/2025

AIG Related Documents

Polk County Schools (750) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

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

Optional Documents		
Type	**Document Template**	**Document/Link**
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	Glossary and Acronyms
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	

Polk County Schools (750) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Phrase	Definition