

Overview: Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

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Rutherford County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2021). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide Public School Units (PSUs) to develop, implement, and monitor thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs. The NC AIG Program Standards encompass six principle standards with accompanying practices. These standards articulate the expectations for quality, comprehensive, and effective local AIG programs aligned to NC's AIG legislation, Article 9B (N. C. G. S. 115C150.5). These best practices help to clarify the standard, describe what a PSU should have in place, and guide PSUs to improve their programs. In an effort to continue to transform AIG programs and align to the NC AIG Program Standards, each PSU has participated in a self-assessment process of their local AIG program, involving multiple stakeholders. The data gathered during this process has guided PSUs in their development of this local AIG plan for 2022-2025. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's local board of education or charter school's board of directors and sent to NC DPI for comment.

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

* Mission and/or Vision Statement(s)

OUR VISION: All Rutherford County students will graduate prepared for college and career success.

OUR MISSION: Rutherford County Schools will prepare all students for lifelong learning in a global community by partnering with families and communities to promote a safe, nurturing school environment and provide rigorous academic and career preparation experiences.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2022)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* \$ 412,163.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 21,450.00	* \$ 0.00

Standard 1: Student Identification

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 1: Student Identification

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

*** Practice A**

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

It is current practice in Rutherford County Schools (RCS) to use a clear, comprehensive, and equitable screening, referral, and identification process for all grade levels. The Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) staff uses student nominations, parent nominations, teacher recommendations, aptitude assessments, standardized achievement assessments, grades and other pertinent data to locate all students who may potentially be identified as AIG.

SCREENING AND REFERRALS The AIG program conducts a broad sweep of the general population grades 3-8 during each school year to determine a pool of students for AIG screening. Below are the data points used to determine screening pools:

3rd Grade Screening Pool Nomination Data (Evidence only needed from one indicator below to enter pool):

- * CoGAT screener ~ 70th percentile or higher and/or top 20% of individual schools
- * 3rd grade Pretest (Beginning of Grade ~ BOG) ~ Level 5
- * NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) ~ 85 percentile or higher on the reading and/or math portion (two out of the most recent three testing cycles)
- * Talent development (G.E.A.R. program) participation during the 2nd grade year
- * Student or parent nomination
- * Teacher recommendation

4th-8th Grades Screening Pool Nomination Data (Evidence only needed from one indicator below to enter pool):

- * End of Grade (EOG) ~ Level 5 in Reading and/or Math
- * NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) ~ 85 percentile or higher on the reading and/or math portion (two out of the most recent three testing cycles)
- * Student or parent nomination
- * Teacher recommendation

9th- 12th Grades Screening Pool Nomination Data

Rutherford County Schools conducts a broad sweep of the general population at the beginning of each school year for students in grades 9-12. Evidence will only be needed from one indicator listed below in order to enter the screening pool.

- * 8th grade EOG test ~ Level 5
- * End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment ~ Level 5
- * PreACT, PSAT, ACT, or SAT ~ at or above the 92nd percentile
- * Advanced Placement Exam ~ Level 5
- * Rank ~ top 10% of current class
- * Student or parent nomination
- * Teacher recommendation

Once screening pools have been determined, parents/guardians are informed and given the opportunity to opt out of the screening process.

*** Practice B**

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

Rutherford County Schools employs the use of multiple qualitative and quantitative research-based screening instruments, referral and identification procedures to align practices that support the state definition of AIG students.

These measures help reveal student aptitude, achievement, or potential achievement. RCS is devoted to recognizing the individual potential of each child. Therefore, we have developed multiple pathways for gifted student identification, analyzing each student's comprehensive learning profile to determine needs beyond the regular classroom.

Identification: K-2 Students in kindergarten through second grade may be formally identified for academically or intellectually gifted services when there is a demonstration of extreme need for differentiated service above the current grade level that results in grade acceleration. The district uses the *Iowa Acceleration Scale* to help guide and determine the possible need for grade acceleration.

Identification: Grades 3-12

Pathway #1: Specific levels of achievement on the *Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)* automatically qualifies students for identification in the AIG program.

- * Verbal battery achievement of 90th percentile or higher = Academically & Intellectually Gifted in Reading (AR)
- * Quantitative battery achievement of 90th percentile or higher = Academically & Intellectually Gifted in Math (AM)
- * Verbal & Quantitative battery achievement of 90th percentile or higher = Academically Gifted (AG)
- * Total composite achievement of 97th percentile or higher results in a student being identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG).
- * Total composite achievement of 97th percentile or higher AND supporting academic evidence above the 87th percentile on accepted grade level relevant ability/aptitude measures such as *EOG*, *EOC*, and *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)* results in a student being identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI).

Students who are identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG) or Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) receive an Individualized Differentiation Education Plan (IDEP) to best support their academic needs.

Pathway #2: An alternative pathway for students with achievement below the 90th percentile on the *Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)* who show high achievement in the areas of reading and/or math are considered for Academically Gifted identification. This second pathway utilizes a point system to analyze the students' comprehensive profile. Students who meet two out of the three criteria in reading and math will be identified as Academically Gifted in Reading and Math (AG). Students who meet two out of the three criteria in reading and/or math will be identified as Academically Gifted in reading and/or math (AG, AR, AM). Students will have a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) that will focus on personalized learning to meet their academic needs.

Pathway #2 Criteria:

- * Content Aptitude of 87th percentile or higher: *Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)*

* Achievement Testing of 87th percentile or higher: End of Grade(EOG)/End of Course(EOC) tests in Reading and/or Math, *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)* in Reading and/or Math
* Grades/Recommendations: Teacher Nomination, Parent Nomination, AIG Specialist recommendation, ELA and/or Math course grades

Additionally, a student who scores a Level 5 on the End of Grade reading or math test in the same subject for two consecutive years, is automatically identified as Academically Gifted (AR or AM) in that subject area.

In the identification process at all levels, all student quantitative and qualitative data is reviewed by the School Review Team (SRT). No one criterion will automatically keep a student from being considered. However, any single criterion, if superior, may indicate a need for gifted identification and services.

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*** Practice C**

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

In order to ensure equal access to AIG, referrals may come from students, parents, teachers, or administrators, as well as in and out of state student transfers. The CoGAT is used as a universal aptitude screening given to all third-grade students at the beginning of the year. The CoGAT data will be used to compile a testing pool for AIG screening. Any student scoring at or above the 70% on any subtest or composite score will be added to the screening list. School demographics and student populations will be used to determine if the district's 70% baseline needs to be adjusted for an individual site. The testing pool shall consist of no less than 5% of the third-grade student population.

District data shows a clear disparity between the total number of Hispanic and Black students enrolled district-wide, and the number identified as AIG. RCS is committed to improve both equity and access for all students and will continue to offer professional development and support for teachers in the recognition of outstanding potential in students from all populations and share opportunities for nurturing these students K-12. The comprehensive K-2

G.E.A.R. (Gifted Enrichment and Acceleration Readiness) talent development program is in place to identify gifted characteristics and potential from underrepresented populations in the elementary setting. The whole class lessons in this program offer equal access and consistency. Mass data sweeps, teacher recommendations, and classroom observations allow for continuous monitoring of all students demonstrating potential for talent development programming. Academic and observational data aid in developing small groups for further talent development in the G.E.A.R. program. Additionally, multiple pathways to identification are available and include qualitative and quantitative measures. During this plan cycle, the AIG department will

*** Practice D**

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

Rutherford County Schools provides screening, referral, and identification procedures that focus on equal opportunity and access for all students, including students from under-represented populations. The program coordinator attends district principals' meetings to share important AIG information and identification processes. In addition, a School Review Team (SRT) is established at each school. Student Review Teams include, but are not limited to, the principal or administrative designee, school counselor, AIG Specialist, and classroom teachers at each school. Student Review Team responsibilities include:

- * Implementing the district's referral, screening, identification, and instructional placement processes
- * Making decisions on the strength-based needs of the student
- * Providing equitable access for students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds
- * Providing parents/guardians with testing information for any aptitude or achievement testing not generally administered in the regular education program with an option to decline testing
- * Recording information used in decision-making
- * Determining program options for students

*** Practice E**

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

Information on the definition of giftedness, eligibility criteria, nomination procedures and AIG contact persons is available to students, parents, faculty, administrators, and community members through a variety of different formats which include:

- * AIG Program website that is housed as a part of the district website, but is also linked to each elementary, middle, and high school sites
- * AIG brochures are made available for staff, parents, students, and community members at the district office and each school
- * AIG presence at district informational events including Kinderpalooza, AIG family nights, and AP Academy Events
- * Yearly presentations to school staff regarding AIG identification and service
- * All AIG publications are available in both English and Spanish
- * Quarterly AIG newsletters

*** Practice F**

Documents a student's AIG identification process and evidence which leads to an identification decision. This documentation is reviewed with parents/families and maintained in student records.

The AIG Program for Rutherford County Schools maintains individual documentation for each identified student through PowerSchool. These electronic files each contain student placement and identification and a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP). In addition, pathway data forms, any teacher/parent/student nomination forms, and signed permission to serve forms are housed at the district AIG office.

Based on the data from each AIG student's assessment, the SRT initially recommends service matching to a program option of differentiated instruction that is equivalent to the student's academic and intellectual needs. Service matching options are addressed in the following manner:

- * Differentiated Education Plan (DEP): A DEP for math and/or reading is written for each identified AIG student demonstrating a need for differentiation beyond that which is normally provided by regular education. The DEP outlines the program service options appropriate for an individual student at each grade level.
- * Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP): An IDEP is developed for students who are identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) and Intellectually Gifted (IG) and may need alternate enrichment and acceleration options beyond services provided.

During annual reviews, DEPs and IDEPs will be reviewed and modified with all stakeholders to meet the individual


needs of all gifted students. DEPs and IDEPs will be documented in PowerSchool for all AIG students. In the event that a student's direct gifted services needs to be altered, a SRT meeting will take place to update the student's DEP or IDEP and will be noted in PowerSchool.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Continue to explore portfolio based pathway
- Continue to focus on equity in the identification process and explore local norms

Planned Sources of Evidence

* flowchart
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Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	 AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

*** Practice A**

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

Rutherford County Schools aligns all AIG programming and services with the North Carolina Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Program standards. We offer a full continuum of services to address the needs of gifted learners across all grade levels and identification areas. Our goal is to provide curriculum, coaching, professional development, as well as Multi-Tiered Support Systems (MTSS) and individual classroom support on how to best meet the academic needs of gifted and advanced learners.

Acceleration Programs:

- * Early entrance to Kindergarten
- * Grade Acceleration
- * Middle School PLUS classes
- * Credit By Demonstrated Mastery
- * Honors and Advanced Placement courses
- * Dual Enrollment/ Career and College Promise
- * North Carolina School of Science and Math (NCSSM)

- * Rutherford Early College High School (REaCH)
- * North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS)

Enrichment Programs: Elementary:

At the elementary level, AIG Specialists serve AIG identified students and potentially gifted students through a blended service model to include classroom learning environments, pull-out service, push-in service, and an expanded nurturing component.

* K-2: The G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program fosters the development of critical thinking skills among all students. The program is taught by AIG specialists to ensure equal access and provide exposure to unlock potential in all students. As potential ability is noted, additional opportunities will be provided to allow gifts and talents to emerge. Professional development and resources will be provided to classroom teachers to continue in the development of these gifts and talents. Programs may include, but are not limited to: U-STARS Plus, Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS), Project M2 Mentoring Young Mathematicians, Jacob's Ladder, Junior Great Books, critical thinking tasks, programming and robotics, and logic puzzles. Additional opportunities for support are provided for high performing K-2 students in a small group setting to enhance further development of critical thinking skills, as well as targeting the social and emotional needs of students.

* Grades 3-5: All identified third, fourth, and fifth grade students receive service matched enrichment from an AIG Specialist. AIG Specialists implement a series of units that are designed using gifted strategies and research based practices. These units incorporate reading and math lessons that enrich grade level standards for students through experiential learning. Accompanying reading and math lessons for each unit are logic and exploration lessons that all identified students attend regardless of reading or math single subject identification. Logic and exploration lessons are designed to extend thematic units and focus on creativity, problem solving, and collaboration through S.T.E.A.M. processes and instructional technology. Research based curriculum and strategies utilized include but are not limited to: Project M3: Mentoring Mathematical Minds, Project A3: Awesome Advanced Activities, Junior Great Books, robotics and coding skills, hexagonal thinking skills, and SCAMPER techniques.

All identified students in grades 3-5 are eligible to attend a one-week summer enrichment camp. Camp Innovate will challenge and develop each child's creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills through engaging and exciting activities. Rutherford County Schools' goal is to enrich each child's gifted education, inspire future innovation, and build confidence through collaborative communication.

RCS Elementary Curriculum and Instruction has developed and implemented instructional frameworks, aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, for the regular classroom in Mathematics and Literacy. In the 2021-22 school year, RCS adopted Benchmark Advance as the district wide K-5 comprehensive ELA program. District AIG specialists collaborate with elementary instructional coaches and classroom teachers to provide additional resources for core instruction and MTSS support. AIG specialists serve as an advocate for gifted and potentially gifted students' instructional needs during school-based data meetings throughout the year.

Middle School:

AIG identified students in grades 6-8 are served in the general education setting. Rigorous curriculum is available for all students including accelerated PLUS courses, high school courses, and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery. The AIG Specialists advocate and support AIG students' social and emotional needs through mentoring. This will begin by meeting individually with all 6th and 7th grade students. During the 8th grade year students will create a high school course plan using a 4-year DEP for backward mapping. The AIG Specialists will communicate on a regular basis with the school counselor, regular classroom teachers, and administrative staff to share any concerns, thoughts or ideas in regards to meeting the needs of students. He/She will provide additional resources to classroom teachers, as well as serve as an additional advocate for high level Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) groups.

Services will be extended to include a one-week summer enrichment camp for all identified students in grades 6-7. Camp Innovate will challenge and develop each child's creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills through engaging and exciting activities. Rutherford County Schools' goal is to enrich each child's gifted education, inspire future innovation, and build confidence through collaborative communication. Identified students in grade 8 have the opportunity to volunteer as a Camp Innovate leader for the elementary school level.

High School:

At the secondary level, AIG students self-select their own individual courses and have an array of rigorous and advanced options. Options may include, but are not limited to:

- * Honors courses
- * Advanced Placement Courses
- * Dual enrollment/ Career and College Promise
- * Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
- * Advanced Placement Academy (AP Academy provides rigorous, relevant, and challenging Advanced Placement Curriculum and supportive framework.)

- * Rutherford Early College High School (REaCH provides advanced and accelerated curriculum and dual-enrolled college courses)
- * AIG facilitators (utilized at each traditional high school to assist with all AIG initiatives)
- * High School Instructional Coach (Fall of 2022, RCS will add a new Instructional Coach that will assist in advocating for advanced learning opportunities for all students)



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*** Practice B**

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners, across all grade levels and learning environments through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.

RCS addresses the social and emotional needs of AIG students through a multi-tiered collaboration among stakeholders in the follow ways:

- * Rutherford County Schools has adopted the comprehensive social and emotional program *Second Step* for all K-8 students and the Naviance *College and Career Readiness Curriculum* for students in grades 9-12.
- * AIG elementary instructional units embed topics of Growth Mindset and GRIT which are relevant to the social and emotional needs of gifted students.
- * AIG specialists serve on the Instructional Support Team (IST) along with Instructional Coaches and Technology Facilitators. Team members meet to collaborate on the holistic needs of all students.
- * Camp Innovate provides students the opportunity to foster team building and leadership skills.
- * All RCS students have access to social and emotional support by way of two vital programs in the district ~ Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and the Robert and Janice McNair Educational Foundation. These two programs have several initiatives including providing early college awareness to students across the district beginning in elementary school. One key aspect of the McNair program is to assign students at each traditional high school and middle school an adult mentor (from within the community) who meets with them on a regular basis throughout each year during high school. High school students have the opportunity to serve as mentors to elementary school classes.

*** Practice C**

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

The AIG Program uses Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) and Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs) to align programs and services with areas of identification, goals, and resources. A team consisting of the AIG Coordinator, AIG specialists, and AIG Facilitators works collaboratively to develop a comprehensive plan of implementation. The AIG department focuses on transitions from elementary to secondary education and processes to better track the performance of identified students so that appropriate interventions can be made to increase student success. AIG Specialists work to build relationships with general education classroom teachers, who continue to have an integral responsibility to provide differentiated curriculum to AIG students. RCS will continue to encourage administrators to cluster AIG students.

In an effort to make professional development easily accessible, AIG Specialists deliver professional development in the area of differentiated instructional strategies. Professional development topics include, but are not limited to:

- * Differentiating Instruction with Layered Curriculum and Tiered Lessons
- * Depth and Complexity
- * Understanding the Gifted Child
- * Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Students
- * Twice-Exceptional Gifted Students

During this plan cycle, the AIG department will also develop and implement a local AIG endorsement program.

Middle schools offer accelerated classes which provide services, but not all classes are taught by teachers with AIG certification or locally-required professional development. Over the next plan cycle, middle school teachers of all PLUS courses will be encouraged to meet the local professional development requirements to receive a local certificate so they may better serve their students.

High schools offer honors, dual enrollment, and Advanced Placement courses and an array of services which students self-select. Teachers of honors courses will be encouraged to participate in professional development in the area of differentiation strategies to assist with the completion of mandatory portfolios. Teachers of Advanced Placement courses will continue to be informed of opportunities to attend Advanced Placement Summer Institutes and One-Day Workshops sponsored by the College Board. Numerous personnel are in place who strategically work to benefit all students. These include but certainly are not limited to:

- * Elementary Instructional Coaches (3)
- * Middle School Instructional Coaches (4)
- * High School Instructional Coaches (2)
- * Instructional Technology Facilitators (11+)
- * District MTSS coach (1)

*** Practice D**

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

- Rutherford County Schools adheres to an integral and connected instructional approach between AIG programs/services and LEA policy and practice. RCS constantly analyzes current student achievement and growth data on the school and district level. The AIG staff works in tandem with administrators and classroom teachers to analyze data, evaluate procedures, and develop practices based on the comprehensive needs of all students.
- * AIG specialists serve on the district MTSS team as an advocate for gifted and potentially gifted students in all grades to be placed in appropriate high tiered MTSS groups and clusters
 - * K-2 students are served in small groups through our G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program based on qualifying data
 - * 3-5 students are served through innovation days that are service-matched by appropriate subjects
 - * RCS encourages cluster grouping of gifted and potentially gifted students
 - * 6-8 students are cluster grouped in MTSS and through PLUS course offerings

This plan articulates the ways AIG programs and services are intended to be integral and connected to the LEA's total instructional practice. The AIG coordinator will continue working in tandem with the district's curriculum teams to ensure the needs for AIG students are met. The AIG Program supports the LEA's Strategic Plan for achieving academic excellence for all students. A variety of service models are utilized throughout the district K-12 depending on the unique needs of each school. Each school in the district has afforded a set time each day to facilitate effective instruction and support the growth of all students. AIG specialists will continue to assist classroom teachers in the development and creation of curriculum to use during this time for high achievers.

*** 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.

There is extensive information regarding differentiated services and instruction for AIG students and regulations relating to gifted education. The AIG program consistently looks for ways to better ensure that this information is shared with teachers, school administrators, and support staff. The AIG department adequately informs all teachers, administrators, and instructional staff on differentiated services and instruction, regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program plan through:

- * Beginning of the year staff meetings at each school
- * Collaborative planning meetings among all stakeholders
- * Parent, student, teacher, and administrator surveys
- * District and school websites
- * Program brochures
- * District Leadership Team meetings
- * Professional development
- * AIG Family Nights

*** Practice F**

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

The AIG Department ensures that all RCS teachers and schools are aware of student identification and service needs at all levels by:

- * Providing AIG student projected lists to administrators for each school at the end of each school year to help guide class and course placements.
 - * Providing information to parents about the AIG program at the district KinderPALOOZA event for rising kindergarten students.
 - * Presenting general information sessions available to all teachers and schools by AIG specialists and AIG Facilitators. All teachers are informed of AIG students, their identification, and IDEP/DEP at the beginning of each school year. *
- Organizing AIG middle school tours for all rising 6th graders at each middle school during AIG family nights to ensure successful secondary school transition.
- * Meeting with teachers at key transitional grade-levels (i.e. 5th/6th grade and 8th/9th grade) to ensure service

continuation.

* Working with the McNair and GEAR UP programs to ensure that mentors receive valuable information regarding the academic and social/emotional needs of gifted learners to better assist them in their work with assigned students 6-12.

*** 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.

Rutherford County Schools sees the need to have consistent policies and procedures for the varied acceleration opportunities available for our students. Procedures have been established for the following:

- * North Carolina's policy for early entrance to kindergarten (NCgs 115c-364)
- * Grade Acceleration using the *Iowa Acceleration Scale*
- * Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
- * Compacted content through middle school PLUS courses
- * Dual Enrollment
- * Career and College Promise
- * AP Academy
- * Rutherford Early College High School (REaCH)

All procedures for the acceleration options are included in the AIG parent handbook as well as the district AIG website

*** Practice H**

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

RCS has been committed to consistently working to increase the screening, referral, and identification of traditionally underrepresented populations including culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted and twice-exceptional. The AIG department focuses on the following initiatives:

- * K-2 G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program is designed to capture under-represented populations by nurturing the potential in all students.
- * Yearly review of district demographic data to ensure we are consistently identifying the populations most under-represented so efforts to improve access to advanced programming can be targeted.

- * Work closely with the ESL faculty to further develop strategies and practices that meet the unique academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of our ESL/AIG students
- * Work closely with our Director of Exceptional Children and program specialists to further develop strategies and practices that meet the unique needs of our twice-exceptional and highly gifted students
- * Continue to promote awareness of resources available for economically disadvantaged gifted learners
- * Advocate for higher representation of underserved populations in advanced courses at the middle and high schools

*** Practice I**

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

Rutherford County Schools offers a wide array of extra-curricular programs and events that enhance and further develop the needs and interests of AIG students. The opportunities are highlighted on each student's DEP or IDEP.

At the elementary level, AIG students have the opportunity to participate in:

- * Elementary Book Challenge at each school with a combined district competition
- * School and district Spelling Bee competitions
- * Robotics teams at all elementary schools
- * Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) competitions
- * Family Resource Advocacy Program * National Elementary Beta Club at participating schools
- * AIG Family Nights
- * Camp Innovate

At the middle school level, AIG students have the opportunity to participate in:

- * Battle of the Books with a local, regional, and state competition
- * District Quiz Bowl
- * Isothermal Community College Junior Challenge
- * Robotics teams at all middle schools
- * School and district Spelling Bee competitions
- * National Junior Beta Club
- * Math Competitions
- * Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP)
- * Camp Innovate

At the high school level, AIG students have the opportunity to participate in:

- * Service learning projects
- * Math Competitions
- * District Quiz Bowl
- * Isothermal Community College Senior Challenge
- * Governor's School
- * Summer Ventures
- * AP Academy
- * Gen{}us Incentive Program (ACT/SAT preparation)
- * National Beta Club
- * National Honors Society
- * National Technical Honors Society
- * Speech and Debate Competitions
- * Robotics Team
- * Camp Innovate student leader program
- * Inquiry Based Projects

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- continue to monitor programs and resources to ensure quality of programming
- seek opportunities to increase access to advanced learning for AIG students
- restructure of AP Academy program
- Continue to promote awareness of resources available for economically disadvantaged gifted learners
- Advocate for higher representation of underserved populations in advanced courses at the middle and high schools

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * agendas and programs
- * gear curriculum
- *

Documents

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

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

*** Practice A**

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

The RCS AIG program recognizes the need to adapt the North Carolina Standard Course of Study in all grade levels and subject areas to address the range of advanced ability levels in our AIG students. Instruction is differentiated and provided to gifted learners through extension, enrichment, and/or acceleration. It is the expectation that every AIG student will receive instruction in identified content areas by a locally endorsed or state certified AIG teacher. AIG specialists will meet regularly to explore new research in differentiating for gifted learners in order to plan and create resources and strategies to be used by regular classroom teachers. In addition to offering resources, AIG specialists will co-teach and provide model lessons to support classroom teachers as they enrich and extend the NCSCOS. Additionally, RCS ensures differentiation through instruction is standards-based, data-driven, and grounded in research-supported best practices in gifted education.

RCS has a 1:1 technology initiative where K-8 students have iPads and 9-12 students have MacBooks. This allows for teachers to create a personalized learning experience through accelerated pacing and differentiation. Various programs are available to teachers and students to ensure differentiation takes place daily (i.e. Zearn, Freckle, Khan Academy, MyOn Reading, Starfall, etc.).

Elementary:

Students in elementary school are provided differentiated education through a variety of opportunities:

- * Benchmark Advance (district ELA program) contains leveled components and resources for classroom teachers
- * Early entry Kindergarten (in accordance with State Board of Education policy GCS-J-001 G.S.115C-364d)
- * MTSS differentiation support
- * Daily leveled group instruction in reading and math through MTSS
- * K-2 G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program lessons aligned to the district's framework for reading and math
- * Primary Education Thinking Skills * Inclusion/demonstration lessons by K-12 AIG specialists
- * Reading and Math Innovation Days led by K-12 AIG specialists
- * Subject acceleration
- * Grade acceleration
- * Summer Enrichment through Camp Innovate

Middle School:

Students in middle school are offered courses that are differentiated through our "rigor in the middle" initiative. In grades 6-8, RCS provides accelerated and enriched opportunities for subject grouping in math and English language arts as well as high school courses offerings.

- * The 6th grade PLUS math program compacts the curriculum for 6th and half of 7th grade math NCSCOS.
- * The 7th grade PLUS math program compacts the curriculum for half of 7th and all of the 8th grade math NCSCOS.
- * The 8th grade PLUS math program offers NC Math 1 and NC Math 2 depending on student performance.
- * The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade PLUS English Language Arts program is an accelerated and enriched study of the ELA NCSCOS at each grade level.
- * The 8th grade program offers high school English I depending on student performance.
- * The 8th grade program also offers high school Earth/Environmental Science depending on student performance.
- * Credit By Demonstrated Mastery is offered for all students for high school courses taught in middle school.
- * Camp Innovate Summer Enrichment Camp

High School:

Students in high school work collaboratively with guidance, administration, and AIG specialists to self-select rigorous coursework and take advantage of the following:

- * Honors courses
- * Dual Enrollment courses to include NC Career and College Promise ~ Isothermal Community College online and face-to-face courses

- * Advanced Placement courses
- * Advanced Placement Academy
- * North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS ~ online high school courses)
- * North Carolina School of Science and Math (NCSSM ~ Interactive Video Conference courses & NCSSM Online)
- * Rutherford Early College High School (REaCH)
- * Accelerated high school scheduling leading to early graduation
- * Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

*** Practice B**

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

Rutherford County Schools defines gifted students as "students who require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program." Our district provides differentiated services involving extended, applied, and conceptual thinking that build upon and extend beyond the NCSCOS in core subject areas.

AIG Specialists and classroom teachers utilize current evidence-based instructional practices that differentiate content, process and product. These practices include, but are not limited to:

- * Socratic Seminar
- * Problem Based Learning
- * Genius Hour
- * Maker Space
- * Student Led Conferencing
- * Compacting
- * Blended Learning
- * Flipped Classroom
- * Subject Integration
- * Pre- and post- assessments
- * Tiered assignments
- * Flexible Seating
- * Interest Inventories/Learning styles
- * Learning Contracts
- * Student Choice Boards

RCS recognizes best practices for all AIG learners:

- * Instruction with development and refinement of embedded critical thinking skills
- * Opportunities to explore and extend knowledge, based on individual student interests and aptitude
- * Offer content in greater complexity, novelty, acceleration, and pacing
- * Provide multiple opportunities for students to take greater responsibility for their learning
- * Distinguish a difference in the quality of work expected rather than the quantity of work desired
- * Provide students with problem-seeking and problem-solving opportunities

* **Practice C**

Incorporates a variety of evidence-based resources that enhance student learning.

The AIG program has introduced several research-based supplemental resources that augment curriculum and instruction in the regular classroom. We will continue to consistently support classroom teachers in the use of these resources. We will also continue to strive to ensure district-wide equity and access to these materials. District teachers have access to the RCS AIG Educator Portal that links evidence-based resources available through the AIG department. Supplemental research-based resources that are being used to augment curriculum and instruction include, but are not limited to:

- * Jacob's Ladder
- * Junior Great Books
- * Creative Problem Solving
- * Primary Education Thinking Skills (P.E.T.S.)
- * Hands-On Equations
- * U-STARS~PLUS
- * Challenging Common Core Language Arts Lessons
- * The College of William and Mary's Center for Gifted Education
- * Challenging Common Core Math Lessons
- * Project M2: Mentoring Young Mathematicians
- * Project M3: Mentoring Young Mathematical Minds *Differentiated Instruction with Menus (K-8) * Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies)
- * Differentiated Instruction with Menus for the Inclusive Classroom (K-8 ~ Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies)
- * Word Within a Word (Michael Thompson series) * Magic Lens (Michael Thompson series)
- * Vocabulary Workshop (Sadlier-Oxford Series)

- * Vocabulary from Classical Roots (Norma Fifer and Nancy Flowers Series)
- * Advanced Placement Insight

*** Practice D**

Fosters the development of future-ready skills including critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, curiosity, and leadership.

The priority of the North Carolina State Board of Education is every public school student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the globally competitive world. Students will excel in rigorous and relevant core curriculum that reflects what they need to know and demonstrate in a global environment. Student achievement will be measured with an assessment system that informs instruction and evaluates knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions needed in the globally competitive environment. Students will enroll in a course of study designed to prepare them to stay ahead of international competition. Students will use technology to access and demonstrate new knowledge and skills that they will need as lifelong learners. Students will have the opportunity to graduate from high school with an associate's degree or college transfer credit.

Rutherford County Schools acknowledges this priority and has been a leading school system within the state in regards to technology access. The district's Going G.L.O.B.A.L. (Growing Learning Opportunities Beyond All Limits) initiative, now in its twelfth year, has created a 1:1 learning environment where teachers K-12 and students in all grades have been provided with an individual device. Every instructional classroom in the district is equipped with cutting edge learning tools such as interactive whiteboards and document cameras. Using these tools, teachers and students are participating in inquiry-based, authentic learning experiences promoting critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and innovation. This technological movement has created more avenues for both vertical alignment and collaboration. RCS acknowledges that both our global environment and technology are ever changing and is committed to constantly evaluate and assess what is occurring to ensure the continued development of future-ready content and skills.

RCS is committed to:

- * Infusing high-level content through curriculum writing and unit development which includes global awareness, civic and economic liberties, and health awareness
- * Providing specific opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving through questioning techniques embedded in

curriculum and participation in competitions

- * Offering project-based and open-ended assignments which allow for exploration of creativity and innovation

*** Practice E**

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

Rutherford County Schools uses a variety of assessments to determine individual student strengths and needs. Data is assessed and disaggregated on an on-going basis by district and site-based leaders to drive instructional decisions at the district and school levels.

AIG specialists in collaboration with other district leadership will continually evaluate new data as it becomes available.

Data sources include, but are not limited to:

- * EVAAS
- * Benchmark testing
- * NC Check-Ins
- * MClass
- * NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
- * Teacher-made formative and summative assessments (quizzes, tests, etc.)
- * District Benchmarks
- * EOGs and EOCs

These assessments guide educators in differentiating classroom curriculum and instruction. All schools K-12 use data from a variety of assessments to create leveled groups of students who range in academic ability through the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS). The district employs a District MTSS coach who supports the implementation of MTSS at all levels and encourages use of research based protocols. AIG is represented in district and school-based MTSS teams to ensure that gifted and potentially gifted students receive effective research-based curriculum and instruction in appropriate groupings.

RCS encourages differentiation based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile:

- * Content – what the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information
- * Process – activities in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content

* Product – culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit

* Learning environment – the way the classroom works and feels

*** Practice F**

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

Rutherford County Schools recognizes the necessity of providing services that directly and indirectly address the social and emotional needs of all students. During the 2021-2022 school year, RCS adopted and implemented the Second Step Program to address the social and emotional needs of K-8 students. As a part of this program, morning meetings are a standard practice in the general education classroom. RCS ensures district accountability for staff completion of state-mandated social-emotional professional development. The Naviance *College and Career Readiness Curriculum* is used for students in grades 9-12.

RCS has established K-12 AIG specialists to create strong connections with AIG students and their families to be a liaison between key transitional phases during the student's educational journey. This partnership allows individual AIG student's social and emotional needs to be met through collaborative student services efforts.

When students are initially identified in the AIG program, students complete a unit of study on what it means to be gifted.

Camp Innovate, an RCS summer enrichment camp, helps meet the needs of gifted students' social and emotional needs for rising 4-8 grade students. High school AIG students mentor younger AIG students, and help foster leadership skills, while working collaboratively around a specific high interest instructional concept.

*** Practice G**

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

Talent development in (K-3) students needs to be cultivated through purposeful and intentional strategies offered through differentiated curriculum and instruction. This requires communication and collaboration between regular

classroom teachers and AIG specialists. AIG specialists implement the G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program, as well as, assist regular classroom teachers with planning and creating differentiated curriculum and instruction. As a part of the program, AIG Specialists continually gather data through student observations during enriched, hands-on lessons. During this time RCS will continue the implementation of researched-based curriculum and strategies to strengthen the nurturing of talent development for the early recognition of high student performance. During the delivery of inclusion lessons, data will be gathered through student observations and checklists. The results of this nurture and recognition will continue to lead to targeted intervention services for students exhibiting the need for targeted talent development.

AIG specialists will meet with teachers during their planning times to discuss students of outstanding potential. Student Portfolios will be used in Grades K-2 to create a body of evidence for potentially gifted students and can assist in the placement process.

*** Practice H**

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

Rutherford County Schools ensures collaboration among AIG personnel and other professional staff by continuing the integration of this practice into ongoing initiatives within the LEA.

Collaboration among AIG staff and other related instructional staff include, but are not limited to:

- * School level PLCs to develop resources for regular education teachers to extend and enrich the curriculum for advanced learners
- * Guidance counselors to address the social and emotional needs unique to gifted learners.
- * District Leadership Team
- * Instructional Services Team
- * MTSS curriculum support team
- * Instructional technology facilitators to increase the rigor using digital resources
- * ELL and EC teachers to meet the needs of ELL and twice-exceptional gifted students
- * Camp Innovate curriculum development and implementation

*** Practice I**

Develops and documents a student plan that articulates the differentiated curriculum and instruction services that match

the identified needs of the K-12 AIG student, such as a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). This document is reviewed annually with parents/guardians to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

The RCS AIG program includes clear expectations for documentation articulating the differentiated curriculum and instruction services of every gifted child to match their identified needs. As a district, RCS understands this is necessary to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions. Every AIG student will have a DEP or IDEP initiated, reviewed, and finalized each academic year and should reflect the services that best align with the student's needs at that time. Communication of these plans are annually shared with parents, teachers, and administrators to ensure effective programming. DEPs and IDEPs are developed digitally through the PowerSchool platform to ensure proper documentation is in place as students transfer from school to school or to another school system in North Carolina. Signatures are required of all stakeholders to signify information has been communicated and agreed upon.

The DEP/IDEP articulates the following pieces of information:

- * areas of identification
- * differentiated instructional practices and strategies to be used in the classroom
- * measurable goals
- * notation of meeting type -record of consent through parent signature -indication of continuing services on year-end finalization of record

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

-continue to transition all AIG files to online platform

Planned Sources of Evidence

* DEP/IDEP

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

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

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

*** Practice A**

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

The Rutherford County Schools assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction holds AIG licensure and oversees advanced programs and advanced courses offered K-12. In addition, she works with the AIG coordinator to help guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program.

The responsibilities of the gifted education coordinator include, but are not limited to the following: *Plans and guides the implementation of a comprehensive district-wide program for K-12 AIG students *Participates in professional development opportunities, including regional and other statewide meetings to support gifted education

*Serves as district contact for the North Carolina Advanced Placement Partnership

*Writes and revises the local AIG plan

*Maintains accurate record keeping and reporting

*Monitors the implementation of all AIG services in accordance with the AIG plan and district strategic direction

*Oversees and makes decision for coordination of procedures, schedules, budget, documentation, and grants for AIG in compliance with federal, state and local requirements

*Oversees the referral, screening and identification processes to ensure equitable access for all students, including those who have historically been under-represented in AIG

*Coordinates all activities and events relating to AIG

*Collects and analyzes data necessary to measure program success in enhancing student achievement and monitor the program of individual students.

- *Collaborates with all stakeholders to design and implement best instructional practices and resolve problems and compliance issues associated with AIG
- *Provides professional development and coordinates AIG PLCs
- *Seeks opportunities to expand programs through grants and community partnerships
- * Performs other related duties as assigned

*** Practice B**

Engages AIG-licensed specialists in tasks that explicitly address the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of K-12 gifted learners.

Three K-12 AIG specialists are employed and trained to directly impact and support the services relative to the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of all gifted students in their district. Within each district, responsibilities and duties vary by grade span and site needs.

Their role includes, but is not limited to:

- * Oversees implementation of the AIG local plan in all assigned schools and provide ongoing progress of practices of the AIG plan to the AIG coordinator
- *Participates in appropriate professional development

Teacher Support/Professional Development K-12

- * Attends appropriate grade level meetings at all assigned school sites during both the fall and spring semesters to collaborate and advocate for gifted and potentially gifted students
- * Serves in a coaching capacity, often modeling best practices and/or helping the teacher access resources and utilizing gifted methodology

AIG Screening and Identification (processes)

- * Coordinates all screening and identification processes at each individual school
- * Oversees School Review Teams for AIG placement
- * Develops and maintains Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) and Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs) for identified students

Grades K-2 (Talent Development)

- * Provides direct services to students in grade K-2 that are showing potential to nurture and provide enrichment.

* Monitors student data for potentially gifted students

* Collaborates with classroom teachers to ensure potentially gifted students' needs are being met.

* Maintains a portfolio for K-2 students accessing the G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program

Grades 3-5 (Direct Service)

* Provides direct services to identified students in grades 3-5 through innovation days focusing on math, logic, reading, and exploration lessons

* Monitors student data for potentially gifted students and gifted students

* Collaborates with classroom teachers to ensure potentially gifted and gifted students' needs are being met

* Serves as lead teacher at the annual Camp Innovate Summer Enrichment(Grades 3-5)

Grades 6-8 (Rigor in the Middle)

* Serves as a mentor/ liaison between families and middle school staff and personnel to support academic, social, and emotional needs of AIG students

* Monitors student data for potentially gifted students and gifted students

* Serve as lead teacher at the annual Camp Innovate Summer Enrichment (Grades 6-7)

* Assists gifted students with key transitional years (i.e 5-6 and 8-9)

Grades 9-12 (Self- Selected Courses)

* Serves as a mentor/ liaison between families and middle school staff and personnel to support academic, social, and emotional needs of AIG students

* Promotes academic opportunities such as Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment courses, Credit By

Demonstrated Mastery (CDM), and Career and College Promise (CCP)

* Monitors AP Academy program and communicates information and opportunities to participants

Grades K-12 (Enrichment Opportunities) Serves as a contact person for special events/programs/competitions

* Elementary Camp Innovate

* Middle School Camp Innovate

Promotes and facilitates district wide academic and enrichment opportunities to students and families such as:

* Science Expo/Planetarium

* Spelling Bee

* Kinderpalooza

* Middle School Quiz Bowl

* High School Quiz Bowl * Middle School Battle of the Books

* Elementary Book Challenge

* AIG Family Night (One per 3 districts) * Leader of the Pack * AP Academy Expo Events (fall and spring) * Performs other related duties as assigned

*** 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.

Rutherford County Schools is committed to both embracing and implementing the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction theme of "AIG All Day, Everyday." The AIG program conducts professional development offerings to classroom teachers, exceptional children personnel, counselors, and school administrators. These offerings include general information sessions on gifted learners, differentiated instruction, and how to meet the social and emotional needs of students. Particular attention is spent on addressing the social and emotional needs of AIG learners at both the middle and high school level. This is a crucial component in our Advanced Placement Academy (high school programming). Rutherford County Schools continues to encourage school level leadership to place AIG students in classrooms with teachers who have met the LEA's professional development requirements for that position and/or have earned AIG certification. The AIG program and other Rutherford County Schools initiatives will continue to offer professional development opportunities, which lead toward local LEA requirements of specialized professionals to teach AIG students. These specialized professionals include all PLUS teachers at the middle schools, honors and Advanced Placement teachers at the high schools, school counselors, and interested K-5 regular classroom teachers.

Required professional development courses to earn a local AIG certificate from Rutherford County Schools include:

1. Introduction to Gifted Education: Characteristics, Nature, and Needs of Gifted Learners
2. Differentiation/Instructional Practices/Methods and Models
3. Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Students

These courses will be taught by certified AIG specialists, facilitators, coordinator, and/or outside experts in the field. Interested teachers in Rutherford County Schools may also affiliate with a number of UNC universities for online training programs, which provide AIG certification and/or advanced degrees in gifted education. Teachers of Advanced Placement courses will be encouraged to attend Advanced Placement Summer Institutes every 4-5 years to ensure

fidelity in teaching their assigned AP course. AP One-Day Workshops are made available to AP teachers as funds allow.

*** 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.

Rutherford County Schools places AIG students in classrooms with teachers who have met the LEA's professional development requirements for that position and/or have earned AIG certification. The district makes a concerted effort to meet the guidelines requiring teachers of AIG students to participate in local professional development so they may meet the district's requirements for a local certificate. Elementary principals are encouraged to utilize cluster grouping of AIG students in order to provide more direct service. Schools are encouraged to identify strategies relating to AIG students in their School Improvement Plans (SIP) where appropriate.

*** Practice E**

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

Rutherford County Schools understands the significance for the recruitment and retention of AIG-licensed

professionals, including those of diverse backgrounds by:

- * Partner with Human Resources to identify personnel with an AIG add-on license as well as promote opportunities to interested individuals
- * Implement a local AIG certificate to encourage cluster grouping with an endorsed teacher
- * Promote the add-on licensure through IHE coursework or the Praxis exam (explore Praxis exam reimbursement opportunities during this plan cycle)

*** Practice F**

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

Rutherford County Schools prioritizes providing focused professional learning opportunities that match the needs of staff and align with district goals, especially promoting equity and excellence in gifted education. RCS frequently utilizes feedback from the Teacher Advisory Council (TAC), surveys, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), etc. to inform offerings for dedicated professional development days and ongoing professional development sessions throughout the school year. During this plan cycle, the AIG department will work to:

- * Identify needs of district personnel in regards to equity and excellence in gifted education
- * Educate and communicate district personnel about policies and procedures of the AIG department's equity and excellence initiatives
- * Integrate with existing efforts of the district to promote equity and excellence in professional development programming
- * Develop professional development sessions that focus on strategies for differentiation that includes equitable lesson design and resource selection

*** 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.

Rutherford County Schools partners with many district stakeholders to ensure appropriate professional development needs are aligned with the district's directional focus. District stakeholders include, but are not limited to, Title I, ELL, Exceptional Children, instructional coaches, school counselors, instructional technology facilitators, and AIG. Stakeholders collaborate to plan professional development offerings on district professional development days that ensure best practices in gifted education are considered. Specific professional development opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- * Beginning teacher orientation
- * District professional development planned days
- * Local Endorsement for AIG local certificate
- * AIG specialists supports gifted professional development initiatives by building time for coaching/mentoring opportunities
- * AIG specialists attend the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented conference yearly to learn new strategies and updated research to share with district stakeholders

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Implement local certificate for RCS
- Increase professional development opportunities across all disciplines and grade levels

Planned Sources of Evidence

* professional development

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Documents

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

Standard 5: Partnerships

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 5: Partnerships

The LEA ensures ongoing and meaningful participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the local AIG program to develop strong partnerships.

*** Practice A**

Develops intentional, two-way partnerships with parents/guardians to support the following needs of AIG students:

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional.

Rutherford County Schools AIG program includes intentional and meaningful partnerships with parents and families to ensure the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs are met for all AIG students. Two-way communication with parents/families is intentional, ongoing, and consistent and are prioritized at the district and school level through:

- * Each school's preferred communication channels (i.e. principal phone messages, letters/flyers in student communication folder, ClassDojo, Remind, Canvas, emails, and text messaging)
- * RCS district and school websites
- * Social media platforms
- * Parent conferences for initiating, reviewing, and finalizing AIG student DEP/IDEP
- * Parent information meetings
- * District wide AIG Family Nights
- * AIG Parent Advisory Committee
- * AP Academy Evening Events (i.e. Governor's School, NCSSM, and College Foundation of North Carolina)

In order to address both academic/intellectual and social-emotional development, AIG specialists highlight age appropriate and interest-driven extracurricular opportunities and capture these options on each student's DEP/IDEP.

*** 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.

Rutherford County Schools views partnerships as a powerful way to enhance and gain support for programs and services. Collaboration to share and promote a positive vision of the AIG program's purpose and goals continues to be a district-wide commitment.

Each year the AIG program reaches out to local businesses and other entities to secure donations and additional funding to support program needs. Since 2019, the program has been awarded at least \$20,000 each year from Facebook's Community Action Grant Program. These funds will help support the cost of Camp Innovate for elementary and middle school AIG students.

The partnership with the local community college, Isothermal Community College, affords middle and high school students boundless opportunities. These range from intentional programs that seek to work with students to secure college attendance to summer programming in STEAM.

In order to develop innovative high school curriculum concentration pathways, Rutherford County Schools continues its strategic planning initiative in collaboration with Isothermal Community College and local business/industry leaders through the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce. These pathways identify sequences of high school and community college courses that will enable students to earn community college certificates, diplomas, and degrees while in high school.

RCS will continue to leverage its partnership with the McNair Educational Foundation to personalize career and college readiness activities through individual, community-powered mentoring for every high school student.

*** 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.

The RCS AIG program is supported by the AIG Advisory Council which is made up of parents, teachers, district and school-based leadership. The task of this group is to advocate for gifted education and to offer continuity in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG program and plan. The duties and responsibilities of the AIG Advisory Council will include, but are not limited to the following:

- * Review annually the local plan for the education of gifted students, including revisions
- * Determine the extent to which the local plan for the previous year was implemented
- * Develop annual goals and priorities
- * Represent diversity in the community
- * Encourage a collaborative relationship between school personnel, central office personnel, and the community
- * Become knowledgeable about current programs, research, and best practices in gifted education and its relationship with general education
- * Focus attention on issues relative to improving the educational services for gifted students.

*** Practice D**

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

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

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

Rutherford County Schools prioritizes clear communication with families and stakeholders. The AIG program utilizes existing district resources and structures to communicate with families regarding the local AIG plan, program services, policies that impact gifted and advanced learners, and opportunities available for students throughout the year. These include:

*RCS implements a comprehensive language translation service to inform parents/families and the community of available opportunities for students. The AIG program uses this service for AIG forms, AIG brochures and AIG Plan

translations. All screening, identification, and placement documents are translated into Spanish.

- * Utilizes district interpretation services for phone calls and in person meetings
- * Uses consistent branding with AIG logo and other branded elements on all documents and communication including but not limited to: letters, brochures, identification paperwork, newsletter, AIG handbook
- * Sends automated calls and texts through district platform
- * AIG specialists prioritize communication with parents and students via the district Canvas platform, email, phone, and other communication tools
- * Holds in person and virtual information meetings, including annual AIG family nights
- * Collaborates with the director of marketing and community relations to share program news through district and local media outlets
- * Website with information about AIG policies and procedures is available to all stakeholders via district/school sites.
- * Important information and updates is routinely shared at meetings/events where stakeholders are present

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- continue to seek out opportunities to educate the community about the RCS AIG program and resources
- continue to seek out partnership opportunities to strengthen our programming

Planned Sources of Evidence

* meeting agendas
*
*

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

Standard 6: Program Accountability

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 6: Program Accountability

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

*** Practice A**

Develops a written AIG plan to describe the local AIG program, in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.5-8 [Article 9B]), which has been approved by the local board of education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

Rutherford County Schools has maintained a local AIG plan in accordance with state legislation and policy. The RCS AIG program forms and utilizes a committee of stakeholders to serve on the AIG Advisory Council to assist in the development of the AIG plan by using the North Carolina Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program Standards (State Board of Education Policy ACIG-000-June 2018 and N.C.G.S. 115C-150.5-8 {Article 9B}).

The local board of education reviews, provides recommendations, and approves the plan before submission to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

*** 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.

Rutherford County Schools employs a full-time AIG coordinator to guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program. The AIG coordinator prepares an annual report detailing progress toward successful implementation of the AIG Plan for review by the Board of Education, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, members of the Instructional Services Department, and all other stakeholders. The report articulates the status of

current programming and provides formative and summative evaluation reports. This report is derived from data and feedback received from a variety of resources at the school and district level including the district AIG specialists, and high school AIG facilitators.

*** 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.

According to Article 9B (115C-150.5) of the North Carolina General Assembly, all funds allocated to local LEAs for gifted education must be used for the direct services of the local AIG program. Rutherford County Schools adheres to this allocation process. AIG Funding supports, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- * Personnel
- * Professional Development
- * Special/Innovative Programs
- * Instructional and Curricular Products
- * Academic Competitions

The AIG coordinator works with the district Finance Officer to develop a yearly budget that aligns to the current AIG plan. The AIG coordinator will continue to advocate for additional funding sources, donations, grants, and other partnerships in order to effectively meet the needs of AIG students at all levels.

*** 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.

Through collaboration with the Accountability and Information Technology departments, the AIG coordinator will collect data to track, monitor, and analyze AIG student progress at all schools. The following information for AIG students will be collected each year to drive and inform AIG programming district-wide:

- * CogAT Scores and Profile Abilities
- * EOG scores

- * EOC scores
- * AP scores
- * ACT and SAT scores
- * AIG student dropout data
- * AIG student data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, twice-exceptionality, socioeconomic status, English Language Learners (ELLs), etc.
- * Underachieving AIG students
- * School and individual teacher EVAAS data in regards to AIG student growth

The AIG coordinator will also gather, analyze, and share annual drop-out data for AIG students and work to create a systematic plan of interventions and support to help at-risk AIG students graduate successfully.

*** 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.

In order to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the district's AIG identification practices, it is important to maintain an awareness of the demographics of our AIG program. To promote continual improvement and equitable access to AIG programming, the district will continue to collect school-based AIG population data. In addition, the AIG coordinator will continue to maintain data representing the demographics of students served in the district AIG program.

In order to continue the pursuit of providing both equality and equity in AIG programming, RCS will use the upcoming plan cycle to investigate the use of individual school norms to identify potential gifted students. RCS recognizes that the district is vast and varied in terms of student access, opportunities and community needs. In order to provide more equitable AIG educational programming throughout the district, several factors will be explored in order to provide possible considerations at each individual school level.

  [Click here to remove the table and use only the narrative field.](#)

*** 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.

The Human Resources Department of Rutherford County Schools maintains licensure information for all employees. The department frequently updates files on the credentials of all Rutherford County personnel, including personnel serving AIG students.

The AIG program coordinator maintains documentation for teachers who have completed the AIG local certificate, honors portfolio submissions, and AP Summer Institute training.

*** Practice G**

Elicits regular feedback from students, parents/guardians, families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program.

The local AIG program encourages feedback from all students, parents, teachers and administrators regarding the quality of the AIG program. This is a crucial aspect of any program to ensure strength and fidelity.

Opportunities for students, parents/guardians, teachers, and other stakeholders to provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of the local AIG program include, but are not limited to the following:

- * Initial placement meeting
- * Annual DEP/IDEP meetings
- * Parent meetings and conferences
- * Student surveys
- * Annual survey that addresses program strengths and areas of improvement, as well as critical issues that might influence program standards
- * District AIG Advisory Council

*** Practice H**

Facilitates a comprehensive evaluation of the local AIG program utilizing multiple sources of data to revise the local AIG

plan every three years.

The AIG Department collects data from multiple sources as indicated in Standard 6, (Practice d), for use in reviewing and revising the local AIG plan and program for continuous improvement. In addition, the AIG program utilizes the following sources of data to review and revise AIG plan programming annually. Sources include but are not limited to:

- * Stakeholder surveys
- * Demographic data
- * District AIG Advisory Council
- * School data meeting findings

*** Practice I**

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

An AIG Annual Report is made available to all stakeholders and the community at large through multiple means of communication tools utilized, but not limited to:

- * District and school websites
- * Board of Education meeting
- * School staff/PLC meetings
- * District AIG Advisory Council Meetings

*** Practice J**

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

Rutherford County Schools has clearly established written policies that safeguard the rights of AIG students and their parents/families. These policies ensure that each student's AIG file contains a signed Permission to Evaluate form and a signed DEP or IDEP form. In addition, the AIG Program goals, objectives, and service delivery options of Rutherford County Schools are clearly communicated to parents and guardians.

RCS is committed to providing an effective means for parents/guardians to voice concerns and complaints as outlined in local board policies (1740/4010 and 1742/5060). In the event that a disagreement exists between parents/guardians and Rutherford County Schools when a child is not identified as an academically and/or intellectually gifted student or concerning the appropriateness of services offered to the AIG student, the following procedures to resolve the disagreement will be followed:

Step I.

The first attempt to reach an agreement will be with the School Review Team (SRT).

1. The parent/guardian may make a request in writing to the school principal for a conference with the SRT to discuss concerns about identification and/or implementation of the child's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP).
2. The SRT, including the school principal, reviews the student's AIG records. The committee may gather additional information about the student from teacher(s) and/or parents/guardians as needed.
3. The SRT grants the conference within ten school days of receipt of the request and responds to the parent/guardian in writing within five school days after the conference.

Step II.

If the disagreement is not resolved with the SRT, the parents may request an administrative review at the system level.

1. The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the SRT in writing to the Assistant Superintendent and/or the AIG Coordinator within ten days of receiving the written response from the SRT. The parent/guardian must explain in writing the concerns and specific points of disagreement with the SRT.
2. The Assistant Superintendent and/or the AIG Coordinator will convene a panel to review the disagreement within five school days of receipt of the appeal. The panel will include the Superintendent (or designee) and other members at the discretion of the Assistant Superintendent and/or Coordinator.
3. The Assistant Superintendent and/or the AIG Coordinator will respond in writing within five school days to the parent/guardian and principal concerning the outcome of the review.

Step III.

If agreement cannot be reached administratively, the parents/guardians may appeal to the Rutherford County Board of Education. The Board will offer a written decision to the parents within 20 school days.

Step IV.

In the event that the local grievance procedure fails to resolve the disagreement, the parents/guardians may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the North Carolina General Statutes. This

must be done within 20 calendar days after receipt of the written decision of the Board of Education. According to the law, "The scope of the hearing shall be limited to

1. whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an AIG student, or
2. whether the local plan developed under G.S. 115C-150.7 has been implemented properly 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 decisions 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. Legal fees are the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Transfer students are ensured rapid attention to their placement needs K-12. It is imperative that School Data Managers inform the AIG department when an identified AIG student enrolls or if they come across any paperwork indicating gifted programming. AIG records from any previous schools are requested by the AIG coordinator. Upon receipt of the records, the AIG coordinator or SRT reviews and makes appropriate recommendations. Rutherford County Schools accepts scores on assessment instruments used by other school districts or trained personnel outside the school district provided these instruments are reliably sound. Students are given the option to take the assessments used in the district should any questions arise. In Rutherford County Schools, students are not exited from the AIG program without due cause.



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*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

-continue to meet with all departments and maintain communication and collaboration

Planned Sources of Evidence

* AIG website

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Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
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AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	
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Local Board of Education Approval

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:

06/07/2022 





Original Application Submission Date: 07/19/2022

Documents

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

AIG Related Documents

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Required Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
Local Board of Education Approval Signatures [Upload at least 1 document(s)]	 Local Board of Education Approval Template	 RCS Local Board Approval
Optional Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Glossary [Upload up to 1 document(s)]	N/A	
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	 AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	 AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	

Glossary

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

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