Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

* LEA Superintendent's Name:
Dr. David M. Sutton

* LEA AIG Contact Name:
Garland, Ritchie - rgarland@rcsnc.org

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

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

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

* Mission and/or Vision Statement(s)

Mission: 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.

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

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* $ 427,608.00	* $ 0.00	* $ 0.00	* $ 0.00

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - 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, including universal screening, for every student to show their strengths and talents.

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) is committed to implementing a clear, comprehensive, and equitable process for the screening, referral, and identification of students for the Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program across all grade levels.

AIG staff utilize multiple criteria—including student, parent, and teacher nominations; aptitude and standardized achievement assessments; academic performance; and other relevant data—to identify students who may demonstrate giftedness.

To ensure equity, the district has developed formal and informal screening and referral procedures accessible to all students.

Grades K–2

In grades K–2, universal screening practices are used to identify a broad range of student abilities. Screening tools may include summative and aptitude assessments, teacher and parent nominations, and behavioral checklists. Based on the data collected, further evaluation may be requested by RCS, which could include a cognitive assessment and/or psychological testing.

Grades 3–8

Each school year, RCS conducts a broad screening of students in grades 3–8 to determine eligibility for further AIG evaluation. Students may enter the screening pool by meeting any one of the following criteria:

Beginning of 3rd Grade Screening Pool:

- CoGAT screener: ~70th percentile or higher and/or top 20% of the student's school
- 3rd Grade Beginning-of-Grade (BOG) assessment: Level 5
- NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress): 85th percentile or higher in reading and/or math (based on two of the most recent three testing cycles)
- Participation in the 2nd-grade talent development (G.E.A.R.) program
- Student or parent nomination
- Teacher recommendation

Grades 4–8 Screening Pool:

- End-of-Grade (EOG) assessment: Level 5 in reading and/or math
- NWEA MAP: 85th percentile or higher in reading and/or math (based on two of the most recent three testing cycles)

- Student or parent nomination
- Teacher recommendation

Grades 9–12

At the start of each school year, RCS also conducts a broad screening of students in grades 9–12. Students may be included in the screening pool by meeting any one of the following indicators:

- 8th-grade EOG assessment: Level 5
- End-of-Course (EOC) assessment: Level 5
- PreACT, PSAT, ACT, or SAT: 92nd percentile or higher
- Advanced Placement (AP) exam: Score of 5
- Class rank: Top 10% of current class
- Student, parent, or teacher nomination

Notification and Parent/Guardian Rights

Once screening pools have been established, parents/guardians are notified and provided with the opportunity to opt their child out of the screening 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.

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) employs multiple research-based screening instruments, referral pathways, and identification procedures that are aligned with North Carolina's definition of AIG learners and meet the updated legislative expectations outlined in Article 9B. These practices are designed to reveal each student's aptitude, achievement, or potential to achieve, and ensure equitable access to services for gifted learners at all grade levels, K–12. Rutherford County Schools is committed to recognizing and nurturing the individual potential of every student. Accordingly, we use a comprehensive learner profile approach that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure multiple pathways for gifted identification.

Identification: Grades K–2

Formal AIG identification in grades K–2 is rare and reserved for students who demonstrate an extreme need for services significantly above grade level. These situations may lead to grade acceleration, guided by the Iowa Acceleration Scale to ensure informed decision-making. Students may be screened based on classroom performance, teacher/parent referrals, and observations of advanced aptitude or achievement. All relevant data is reviewed by the School Review Team (SRT).

Identification: Grades 3–12

Pathway 1: Automatic Identification via CogAT

Students who meet specific criteria on the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) are automatically identified for AIG services:

- Verbal battery = 90th percentile ? Academically & Intellectually Gifted in Reading (AR)
- Quantitative battery = 90th percentile ? Academically & Intellectually Gifted in Math (AM)
- Both Verbal & Quantitative = 90th percentile ? Academically Gifted (AG)
- Total Composite = 97th percentile ? Intellectually Gifted (IG)
- Total Composite = 97th percentile + additional achievement = 87th percentile (on grade-level EOG, EOC, or MAP) ? Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI)

Students identified as IG or AI receive an Individualized Differentiation Education Plan (IDEP) tailored to their academic strengths.

Pathway 2: Multiple Criteria Profile Analysis

For students not meeting Pathway 1 thresholds but demonstrating high academic performance, RCS uses a multi-criteria point system:

Students may be identified as Academically Gifted (AG, AR, AM) by meeting two out of three criteria in either reading and/or math:

1. Content Aptitude (CogAT): = 87th percentile
2. Achievement Testing: = 87th percentile on EOG/EOC or MAP
3. Grades/Nominations: Teacher or parent nomination, AIG specialist recommendation, strong ELA/Math course grades

Identified students in Pathway 2 receive a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) that emphasizes individualized strategies for enrichment and acceleration.

Review Process and Holistic Evaluation

At all grade levels, identification decisions are made by the School Review Team (SRT). The SRT holistically evaluates each student's quantitative and qualitative data, including formal assessments, teacher observations, nominations, and academic records. No single criterion will exclude a student from consideration; however, superior performance in any area may warrant immediate AIG identification.

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

* **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.

To ensure equitable access to the AIG program, referrals may be initiated by students, parents, teachers, administrators, or through the enrollment of in-state and out-of-state transfer students.

As part of a universal screening process, all third-grade students participate in the Cognitive Abilities Test (CoGAT) at the beginning of the school year. Currently, the AIG department is exploring the option to move this testing window to the end of the second grade to ensure a more accurate assessment of

ability. CoGAT results are used to identify a testing pool for further AIG screening. Any student scoring at or above the 70th percentile on any subtest or composite score is added to this screening pool. To account for school-specific demographics, the district may adjust the 70th percentile baseline at individual sites to better reflect local student populations. Regardless of adjustments, the testing pool will represent no less than 5% of the total grade level student population.

During the 2025–2026 identification cycle, the AIG team will pilot alternative aptitude and achievement assessments to determine the most appropriate and equitable tools for identifying gifted potential in our diverse student population. The results of this pilot will help shape future identification protocols to better meet district needs.

District-level data indicates a noticeable underrepresentation of Hispanic and Black students in AIG identification compared to overall enrollment. Rutherford County Schools is committed to improving both equity and access by expanding professional development for educators on recognizing gifted potential across diverse student groups. Ongoing training will focus on identifying and nurturing exceptional abilities in students from all backgrounds.

To support early talent development, the district has implemented the K–2 G.E.A.R. (Gifted Enrichment and Acceleration Readiness) program, which is designed to recognize and cultivate gifted characteristics—particularly in underrepresented populations. G.E.A.R. provides whole-class lessons that ensure consistent exposure and equal access for all students. Through mass data sweeps, teacher recommendations, and classroom observations, students exhibiting potential are continuously monitored and may be grouped for further enrichment. Academic performance, behavioral indicators, and observational data all contribute to this ongoing evaluation.

Rutherford County Schools also offers multiple pathways to AIG identification that include both quantitative (such as aptitude and achievement testing) and qualitative (such as teacher and parent input) measures, ensuring a well-rounded and inclusive identification process.

Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
Female	---			---		---	
Male	---			---		---	
Total	---			---		---	

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

---

* **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 ensure equitable opportunity and access for all students, including those from underrepresented populations. The AIG program coordinator regularly attends district leadership meetings to communicate important updates and reinforce consistent implementation of identification processes across the district.

Each school establishes a School Review Team (SRT) composed of key personnel, including (but not limited to) the principal or administrative designee, school counselor, AIG Specialist, and classroom teachers. The Student Review Team is responsible for the following:

- Implementing the district's referral, screening, identification, and instructional placement processes
- Making decisions based on the strength-based needs of each student
- Ensuring equitable access for students from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds
- Providing parents/guardians with information regarding aptitude or achievement testing not administered as part of the general education program, along with the option to decline such testing
- Documenting the data and information used in decision-making
- Determining appropriate program options and services to support identified students

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

Information about the definition of giftedness, eligibility criteria, nomination procedures, and AIG contacts is readily accessible to students, parents, faculty, administrators, and community members through multiple formats, including:

- A dedicated AIG Program webpage housed within the district website, with direct links available on each elementary, middle, and high school site
- AIG brochures distributed at the district office and all school sites, available to staff, parents, students, and community members
- AIG representation at district events, such as Kinderpalooza, AIG Family Nights, Freshman Big Deal and AP Academy events
- Annual staff presentations at each school outlining AIG identification procedures and service options
- All AIG materials provided in both English and Spanish to support multilingual access
- AIG newsletters highlighting updates, resources, and program highlights

* **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.

The AIG Program for Rutherford County Schools maintains individual documentation for each identified student in alignment with state expectations and best practices. Historically, these records have been managed through PowerSchool; however, as a pilot district for North Carolina's transition to Infinite Campus, Rutherford County Schools is currently in the process of migrating all AIG records to the new platform. Staff across the district are being trained to ensure consistent and accurate documentation in Infinite Campus moving forward.

Each AIG student's electronic file includes identification and placement records, a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP), pathway data forms, nomination forms (teacher/parent/student), and signed permission-to-serve documentation. While electronic records are maintained in the student information system, paper documentation is also housed securely at the district AIG office.

Based on the comprehensive assessment data for each student, the School Review Team (SRT) recommends service options that align with the student's demonstrated academic and intellectual needs. Service matching is structured as follows:

- Differentiated Education Plan (DEP): A DEP in reading and/or math is developed for each AIG-identified student who demonstrates a need for differentiation beyond the general education curriculum. The DEP outlines appropriate service options based on the student's grade level and individual strengths.

- Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP): An IDEP is created for students identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) or Intellectually Gifted (IG) who may require additional enrichment, acceleration, or alternative service options beyond traditional differentiation.

DEPs and IDEPs are reviewed and revised annually in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the plans remain aligned to each student's evolving needs. Updates to these plans, including any changes in direct services, are documented within the student information system and supported through formal SRT meetings.

* **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 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 Infinite Campus 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**

During the 2025–2026 identification cycle, the AIG team will pilot alternative aptitude and achievement assessments to determine the most appropriate and equitable tools for identifying gifted potential in our diverse student population. The results of this pilot will help shape future identification protocols to better meet district needs.

The AIG department is exploring the option to move this testing window to the end of the second grade to ensure a more accurate assessment of ability.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Referral & results forms for AIG students
*	Identification Flow Chart

*	Individual Differentiated Education Plans
*	Attendance rosters from screening trainings
*	AIG Headcount
*	survey and group feedback from stakeholders

Documents

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

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

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.

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) delivers a comprehensive, equitable AIG program aligned with Article 9B legislation and the NC AIG Program Standards. We are committed to serving students identified as academically and/or intellectually gifted (AIG) in all areas of identification—intellectual, reading, and/or math—and across all grade levels (K-12) and learning environments. Our goal is to develop potential, meet academic needs, and nurture talent through aligned services, a continuum of support, and intentional collaboration.

K-2 Talent Development (Nurturing Services):

RCS recognizes that early identification and exposure are critical for talent development. K-2 services focus on nurturing potential through the G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program. This ensures equitable access to high-level thinking and enrichment activities, regardless of formal identification. Programming includes:

- PETS, Project M², Jacob's Ladder, Junior Great Books, U-STARS~PLUS
- Robotics, coding, logic puzzles, and critical thinking tasks
- Ongoing teacher support and PD to extend talent development in core instruction
- Small-group sessions to support emerging high-performing students and address their social-emotional needs

Grades 3-5 (Formal AIG Services):

All formally identified AIG students in grades 3-5 receive direct, differentiated services from AIG Specialists in both academic and intellectual domains:

- Blended Service Model: pull-out, push-in, and co-teaching
- Reading/Math Enrichment Units: Based on grade-level standards, designed with gifted strategies
- STEAM-Based Logic & Exploration Lessons: All students receive intellectual enrichment regardless of single or dual identification
- Use of Project M³, Project A³, Junior Great Books, hexagonal thinking, SCAMPER, and instructional technology
- Camp Innovate: Summer enrichment for all identified students

Grades 6-8 (Middle School):

AIG services at the middle school level include both direct and indirect support:

- Accelerated Learning: Middle school PLUS classes, high school credit courses, and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
- Mentoring & Social-Emotional Support: AIG Specialists meet individually with AIG students for advanced learning opportunities, enrichment opportunities, and social emotional support systems
- Regular collaboration with school level administration, curriculum staff and teachers to advocate for advanced students in MTSS
- Camp Innovate: Summer enrichment for all identified students

Grades 9-12 (High School):

RCS provides high school AIG students with flexible, rigorous academic pathways that support advanced learning, talent development, and post-secondary readiness:

- Self-Selection of Advanced Courses: Honors, AP, Dual Enrollment (Career & College Promise), and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
- REaCH Early College High School: AIG-eligible students access college courses alongside high school credits
- AP Academy: Designed for advanced students seeking structured, high-rigor coursework
- AIG Specialists and Facilitators at each High School: Provides mentoring, guidance and advocacy
- High School Instructional Coach: Added in 2022 to promote advanced learning pathways
- Ongoing DEP Review: AIG students' DEPs are reviewed annually to align with evolving goals'
- Camp Innovate: Summer leadership opportunities for all identified students

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

* **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.

Rutherford County Schools delivers a comprehensive continuum of services that support the social and emotional needs of AIG learners across all grade levels (K–12) and learning environments. These services are designed through intentional collaboration between AIG Specialists, school counselors, instructional support teams, and community-based partners.

- K–8 Support: All K–8 students, including those identified as AIG, receive instruction in the evidence-based Second Step program, which addresses skills such as empathy, emotion management, and decision-making. These lessons help build the social-emotional foundation for academic success, resilience, and positive peer relationships.
- Grades 9–12 Support: High school students engage with the Naviance College and Career Readiness Curriculum, which includes goal setting, career exploration, and emotional well-being strategies tailored to the developmental needs of adolescents and high-achieving students navigating postsecondary planning.
- Embedded SEL in AIG Units: AIG instructional units, particularly in elementary grades, incorporate themes such as Growth Mindset and GRIT, which directly support the social and emotional development of gifted learners, encouraging perseverance and reflective thinking.
- Instructional Support Teams (IST): AIG Specialists serve as core members of each school's IST, alongside Instructional Coaches and Technology Facilitators. This team-based approach allows for comprehensive, student-centered planning that considers social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs within a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).
- Camp Innovate: Offered annually, Camp Innovate is a district enrichment program that provides opportunities for gifted students to engage in leadership, collaboration, and creative problem-solving—skills critical for social-emotional growth.
- Community Mentorship & College Readiness: Through partnerships with GEAR UP and the Robert and Janice McNair Educational Foundation, students receive early exposure to college readiness programming. These initiatives include classroom visits, leadership events, and one-on-one

mentoring. McNair mentors—community members assigned to students at each traditional middle and high school—build long-term relationships with students, providing consistent emotional and academic encouragement throughout high school. High school students also have the opportunity to mentor younger students, building confidence and leadership.

Together, these supports reflect Rutherford County Schools' commitment to a whole-child approach for gifted learners, ensuring that their social and emotional well-being is prioritized alongside academic growth at every grade level.

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

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

Rutherford County Schools' AIG Program aligns closely with district instructional priorities and leverages existing resources and personnel to support advanced learners. The AIG Program uses Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) and Individualized Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs) to ensure that services and goals are matched to students' areas of identification. A team consisting of the AIG Coordinator, AIG Specialists, and AIG Facilitators collaborates to implement and monitor services and support across schools.

The AIG Department is vertically aligned across grade spans, with three district-based AIG Specialists strategically positioned at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. This structure ensures continuity of services, consistent communication, and a coordinated approach to supporting students from K–12.

The AIG team holds a seat at all district-level tables for instructional decision-making, policy development, and strategic planning, ensuring that the needs of advanced learners are consistently represented in the broader vision of the district.

Transition Support & Classroom Integration:

The AIG Department prioritizes smooth transitions between elementary, middle, and high school, with increased attention to performance tracking and early interventions when gifted learners experience academic, behavioral, or engagement challenges. AIG Specialists build strong partnerships with general education teachers, who remain essential in delivering differentiated instruction. Administrators are encouraged to cluster AIG students as part of ongoing grouping strategies to better support targeted instruction.

Professional Development Integration:

The AIG Program delivers targeted professional development aligned with district instructional goals, making training accessible and relevant. Topics include:

- Honors Level Best Practices
- Differentiating Instruction with Layered Curriculum and Tiered Lessons
- Depth and Complexity Framework
- Understanding the Gifted Child
- Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Students
- Twice-Exceptional Students

Middle school teachers of all PLUS (advanced) courses are encouraged to complete district-level professional development to ensure high-quality instruction for advanced learners. At the high school level, honors teachers are now required to complete professional development in differentiation strategies to support the completion of Honors Course Portfolios, a district priority designed to ensure rigor and instructional fidelity.

Advanced Placement (AP) teachers continue to be supported through participation in College Board-endorsed AP Summer Institutes and One-Day Workshops, ensuring they stay abreast of national best practices.

Resource Integration:

The AIG Program is further supported by a wide range of instructional personnel aligned with district initiatives:

- Elementary Instructional Coaches (3)
- Middle School Instructional Coaches (3)
- High School Instructional Coaches (2)
- Instructional Technology Facilitators (5)
- District MTSS Coach (1)

These personnel collaborate with the AIG Department to ensure that advanced learners are served through an integrated, data-informed, and system-wide approach that reflects the district's strategic vision for academic growth, equity, and excellence.

* **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 supports intentional, flexible grouping practices that promote achievement and growth for AIG and other advanced learners. Grouping procedures are informed by current student data, collaboration with teachers and administrators, and are aligned with both best practices in gifted education and local board policy.

Beginning-of-Year Grouping Procedures:

At the end of each school year, the AIG Department provides each school with projected AIG student rosters to support class placements for the upcoming year. These lists are shared with principals, counselors, and classroom teachers to guide intentional cluster grouping decisions. This process is data-informed, drawing from achievement scores, identification records, and teacher recommendations. Schools are encouraged to use this information to build balanced rosters that support enrichment opportunities and appropriate academic challenges for identified and potentially gifted students.

Grouping practices are aligned with Board Policy 3130: Grouping for Instruction, which supports heterogeneous grouping as the standard approach but allows for temporary homogeneous grouping where appropriate. The policy requires that grouping decisions consider a student's instructional needs, maturity, and classroom climate to ensure optimal learning environments.

Ongoing Flexible Grouping Practices:

Throughout the school year, AIG specialists partner with grade-level teams, subject-area PLCs, and MTSS teams to analyze student data and adjust groupings as needed. Instructional strategies include ongoing flexible grouping within the regular classroom and during dedicated enrichment blocks such as WIN (What I Need) or MTSS Time. These groupings are informed by real-time academic, behavioral, and social-emotional data.

K–2 students participate in small-group talent development services through the G.E.A.R. program. Grades 3–5 receive service-matched support during Innovation Days. Middle school students benefit from PLUS course offerings and intentional cluster groupings through MTSS. High school students are served through AP Academy cohorts, honors courses, and advanced pathways designed to foster continued academic growth.

These dynamic, data-driven grouping practices ensure that all advanced learners are consistently challenged and supported across their K–12 journey.

* **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.

Rutherford County Schools ensures that all teachers, administrators, and support staff are well-informed about differentiated services for AIG students, state and federal regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program and plan. The AIG department remains committed to strengthening communication and outreach efforts to build awareness and capacity across all levels of the school system.

Key strategies include:

- Beginning-of-Year Staff Meetings: AIG specialists present at school-based staff meetings at the start of each academic year to provide an overview of the AIG program, including service delivery models, student identification, and responsibilities related to the implementation of Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) and Individual DEPs (IDEPs).
- Collaborative Planning Meetings: AIG staff actively participate in collaborative planning sessions with classroom teachers, instructional coaches, and school leaders to support effective implementation of differentiation strategies and address the needs of gifted learners.
- District Leadership Team Meetings: The AIG Department regularly shares updates and resources during District Leadership Team meetings to ensure that district and school administrators remain informed about current practices, student data, and AIG program implementation.
- Professional Development: A wide range of professional development opportunities are offered to instructional staff, including sessions focused on increasing depth and complexity, supporting honors-level instruction, and enhancing differentiation strategies within the regular classroom. Additional professional development is also tailored at the school level based on identified needs.
- Digital and Print Communication: AIG resources are accessible on both the district and school websites, and program brochures are distributed to help stakeholders better understand identification processes, service delivery, and program goals.
- Stakeholder Feedback and Input: Parent, student, teacher, and administrator surveys are conducted to gather feedback and assess awareness and satisfaction with AIG services, ensuring ongoing program refinement and transparency.
- AIG Family Nights: These events provide opportunities for parents, students, and educators to engage in dialogue about gifted education, program offerings, and student support structures.

Through these ongoing communication efforts, Rutherford County Schools ensures that all educational stakeholders are informed, supported, and equipped to meet the unique needs of gifted learners throughout the district.

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

Rutherford County Schools ensures effective and consistent communication across grade levels and schools to support the continuation of AIG services, particularly during key transition points, through the following strategies:

- Middle School Transition Events: In partnership with middle schools, the AIG Department hosts transitional events for rising 6th-grade students and their families during AIG Family Nights. These events provide vital information on secondary AIG services, support structures, and expectations, ensuring a smooth transition from elementary to middle school.
- End-of-Year AIG Projections: The AIG Department provides projected AIG student lists to school administrators at the end of each academic year. These lists help guide class and course placements for the upcoming year and ensure that service continuity is considered in the master schedule planning process. These updates are also presented during District Leadership Team meetings, Local AIG Advisory Board meetings, and District Parent Advisory Board meetings to reinforce alignment and shared understanding.

- Kindergarten Transition Support: AIG specialists provide information about AIG identification and services to families at the district-wide KinderPALOOZA event for rising kindergarten students. This ensures early awareness and access to services from the beginning of the educational journey.
- Staff Awareness and Training: General AIG information sessions are provided by AIG specialists and AIG Facilitators throughout the year. At the beginning of each school year, all teachers receive information on AIG student identification, including their Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) or Differentiated Education Plan (DEP), to ensure tailored instruction and consistent support.
- Grade-Level Transition Meetings: AIG specialists meet with teachers at pivotal transition points, particularly at 5th to 6th grade and 8th to 9th grade, to review student needs, service options, and academic planning to maintain a seamless continuation of services.
- Mentorship through McNair Scholars Program: The AIG Department collaborates with the McNair Scholars mentorship program to equip mentors with knowledge about the academic and social-emotional needs of gifted learners in grades 6–12. This partnership enhances individualized student support during critical adolescent years.

Through these intentional communication practices, Rutherford County Schools ensures that gifted learners experience consistent, informed support throughout their K–12 educational experience.

* **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:

* Early Entrance to kindergarten.

- Rutherford County Schools follows North Carolina's policy for early entrance to kindergarten (NCgs 115c-364)

* Grade Acceleration using the Iowa Acceleration Scale

- Data/evidence collected by AIG Specialist is shared with the grade acceleration team consisting of, but not limited to: school principal, classroom teacher (current & receiving), parent/guardian, AIG Coordinator, and AIG Specialist.
- Collected data/evidence includes, but is not limited to aptitude and achievement test data, observational data, work samples, social-emotional indicators, and a completed Iowa Acceleration Scale.
- Final decision rests with the school principal following a team review of evidence.

* Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

* Compacted content through middle school PLUS courses

* Dual Enrollment

* Career and College Promise

* AP Academy

- Enrollment in at least two honors courses during the 9th and/or 10th grade year

- Weighted GPA of 3.75 (falling below results in probationary status - ineligible for enrichment field trips during the school day)
- Attendance requirements for bi-annual AP Expo
- Continuous progress towards completion of AP Academy Honors by graduation (Silver Level = completion of 4 AP courses, Gold Level = completion of 6 AP courses

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

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) formally identifies academically and/or intellectually gifted (AIG) students beginning at the start of 3rd grade. However, our commitment to cultivating potential begins well before formal identification. Through intentional early talent development practices, we ensure that students in grades K–2 receive high-quality enrichment experiences that support the early recognition of gifted behaviors and needs.

The G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program serves as our official K–2 initiative, designed and implemented by AIG Specialists in collaboration with regular classroom teachers. This program provides access to enriched, hands-on, and high-level thinking experiences that nurture emerging potential across all K–2 students.

AIG Specialists lead lessons using researched-based curriculum and strategies such as PETS, Jacob's Ladder, and U-STARS~PLUS while also modeling differentiation for classroom teachers. Throughout these lessons, ongoing student observations and checklists are used to gather formative data and identify students demonstrating characteristics of high performance.

Communication and collaboration between AIG Specialists and general education teachers is a critical component of this work. Specialists meet regularly with classroom teachers during planning times to discuss students exhibiting outstanding potential. These collaborative discussions, supported by observation data, help inform targeted talent development interventions and ensure students are appropriately supported as they move toward formal identification in third grade.

RCS remains committed to providing equitable access to talent development opportunities at all early grade levels, recognizing the importance of nurturing potential before eligibility decisions are made.

* **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.

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) is deeply committed to advancing equity and excellence by increasing access to advanced learning opportunities in grades 4–12 through intentional talent development and frontloading strategies. Recognizing the importance of identifying and supporting potential in all learners, RCS works to dismantle barriers that have historically limited the participation of traditionally underrepresented populations—including culturally and ethnically diverse students, economically disadvantaged students, English language learners (ELLs), highly gifted, and twice-exceptional learners.

The AIG department supports this commitment through the following mindsets, policies, and practices:

- Frontloading opportunities are embedded throughout grades 4–12, ensuring that all students—especially those from underrepresented groups—have early exposure to advanced content, skill-building, and enrichment experiences. This proactive approach is grounded in gifted education research and serves as a natural extension of our K–2 G.E.A.R. Talent Development model.
- Ongoing demographic data analysis ensures equitable identification practices and helps guide targeted outreach and support where gaps in access exist.
- Middle School Step-Up Nights provide students and families with a structured introduction to the academic and extracurricular expectations at the secondary level. These nights include focused discussions on advanced course pathways, AIG services, and strategies for success—setting the stage for early engagement in rigorous learning.
- Collaboration with ESL faculty promotes culturally responsive strategies and ensures that the academic, social, and emotional needs of ELL/AIG students are intentionally addressed.
- Partnership with the Director of Exceptional Children and program specialists supports the development of inclusive practices and individualized support for twice-exceptional and highly gifted students.
- Awareness-building around available resources ensures that economically disadvantaged gifted learners and their families are informed and empowered to access advanced learning pathways.
- Strategic advocacy and counselor collaboration encourages increased enrollment of underrepresented students in middle and high school advanced courses, including honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and dual-enrollment programs.
- Partnership with the Robert and Janis McNair Educational Foundation supports students in grades 7–12 through targeted mentoring, leadership development, and college-readiness programming, ensuring sustained engagement in advanced pathways and postsecondary success.
- The JumpStart Summer Program provides rising 9th grade students with the opportunity to preview and front load core freshman content, helping ease the transition to high school and increasing early access to advanced academic opportunities.

Through these comprehensive and equity-driven efforts, RCS is broadening participation in advanced learning and affirming the potential in every learner, while intentionally aligning with statewide and national talent development priorities.

* **Practice J**

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

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) offers a robust variety of extra-curricular programs and enrichment opportunities designed to enhance and further develop the talents and interests of AIG students beyond the regular classroom experience. These programs take place during and outside of the school day and are documented within each student's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP).

These opportunities support the whole child by nurturing academic interests, leadership potential, creative expression, service learning, and college and career readiness.

At the elementary level, AIG students may participate in:

- Elementary Book Challenge (school-level and district competitions)
- 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 (evening events to extend learning and family engagement)
- Camp Innovate (summer enrichment program)

At the middle school level, AIG students may participate in:

- Battle of the Books (local, regional, and state levels)
- 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
- Camp Innovate (summer enrichment program)

At the high school level, AIG students may participate in:

- Service learning projects
- Math competitions
- District Quiz Bowl
- Isothermal Community College Senior Challenge
- Governor's School of North Carolina
- Summer Ventures in Science and Mathematics
- AP Academy
- Gen{i}us Incentive Program (ACT/SAT preparation)
- National Beta Club
- National Honor Society
- National Technical Honor Society
- Speech and Debate competitions
- Robotics teams
- FFA Competitions
- Camp Innovate Student Leadership Program
- Inquiry-based independent projects

These enrichment experiences provide meaningful outlets for gifted learners to extend their learning, collaborate with peers, and explore areas of passion and potential in flexible settings beyond the core curriculum.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Expanding Services for Middle and High School AIG Students

To strengthen our implementation of Standard 2, we recognize the need to provide more intentional and sustained services to our AIG-identified students at the middle and high school levels. While these students often have access to honors, AP, or advanced coursework, we believe additional structures are needed to meet their unique cognitive, academic, and affective needs.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	professional development archives

*	AIG brochure
*	District data and data analysis reports

Documents

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

Rutherford County Schools (810) 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.

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) AIG program recognizes the critical importance of adapting the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) across all grade levels and content areas to effectively meet the diverse advanced ability levels of gifted learners. Differentiation through enrichment, extension, and acceleration is an essential component of our instruction for gifted students.

Our AIG specialists meet regularly to review current research and best practices in gifted education to develop and provide innovative resources and instructional strategies that support general classroom teachers. Specialists actively co-teach and model lessons that enrich and extend the NCSCOS curriculum, ensuring a collaborative approach to differentiation.

Differentiation in RCS is standards-based, data-driven, and grounded in evidence-based practices designed specifically for gifted learners. We embrace new instructional methodologies to meet the academic, intellectual, and social-emotional needs of AIG students.

A critical resource supporting this differentiation is our district-wide 1:1 technology initiative, where K-8 students are equipped with iPads and grades 9-12 have MacBooks. This technology integration facilitates personalized learning experiences, allowing for flexible pacing and varied instructional approaches.

Elementary School:
Elementary students benefit from a variety of differentiated learning opportunities including:

- Early Entry Kindergarten, following State Board of Education Policy GCS-J-001 (G.S.115C-364d)
- Benchmark Advance (our district ELA program) which includes leveled components and resources
- K-2 G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program aligned to the district's reading and math frameworks
- Primary Education Thinking Skills (P.E.T.S.)
- Inclusion and demonstration lessons by K-12 AIG specialists
- Reading and Math Innovation lessons led by K-12 AIG specialists
- Subject and grade acceleration opportunities
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for targeted differentiation and intervention
- Summer enrichment through Camp Innovate

Middle School:
Our "Rigor in the Middle" initiative provides accelerated and enriched options in grades 6-8, including:

- 7th Grade PLUS Math, compacting half of 7th and all of 8th grade NCSCOS math
- 6th Grade PLUS Math, compacting 6th and half of 7th grade NCSCOS math
- 6th-8th Grade PLUS English Language Arts program, delivering accelerated and enriched ELA curriculum
- 8th Grade High School courses such as English I and Earth/Environmental Science, depending on performance

- Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) for high school courses taken in middle school
- 8th Grade PLUS Math, offering NC Math 1 and/or NC Math 2 based on student performance
- Camp Innovate Summer Enrichment Camp

High School:
High school students collaborate with guidance counselors, administrators, and AIG specialists to select rigorous coursework aligned with their goals. Options include:

- Honors courses
- Dual Enrollment through NC Career and College Promise (Isothermal Community College, both online and face-to-face)
- Advanced Placement (AP) courses and participation in the AP Academy
- Online course offerings through North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS)
- Interactive video and online courses from the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM)
- Rutherford Early College High School (REaCH) program
- Accelerated scheduling options enabling early graduation
- Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)

Science Standards and Enrichment:
With the recent adoption of new K-12 North Carolina Science Standards, the RCS AIG department is committed to playing a leading role in providing enrichment resources and strategies aligned with these updated standards. These resources ensure gifted learners are challenged and engaged in science through inquiry-based, hands-on learning that fosters deeper understanding and critical thinking.

Professional Development Leadership:
The AIG department is also spearheading professional development initiatives related to the implementation of the Honors Course Policy. This leadership role includes providing training, resources, and ongoing support to educators to ensure equitable access and rigor in honors-level coursework across the district.

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

Rutherford County Schools defines gifted students as those who require differentiated educational services beyond those typically provided in the general education setting. In response, the district offers services that extend and enrich learning through applied, conceptual, and higher-order thinking opportunities that go beyond the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in core academic areas.

Instruction for AIG students is intentionally designed to align with their identified strengths, interests, and learning profiles. AIG Specialists and classroom teachers collaborate to select and implement evidence-based strategies that meet these unique needs. Rather than applying a fixed set of instructional practices, educators consider which methods are most appropriate for fostering student growth in a given context.

Key considerations in matching instructional strategies to student needs include:

- Ensuring that learning tasks promote critical and creative thinking
- Creating opportunities for depth, complexity, acceleration, and appropriate pacing
- Allowing for student voice, choice, and autonomy in the learning process
- Prioritizing the quality and sophistication of student work over the quantity
- Encouraging exploration, inquiry, and problem-solving through real-world connections
- Addressing individual learning preferences and readiness through flexible grouping and scaffolding

Instructional strategies may include tools such as Socratic Seminars, Problem-Based Learning, curriculum compacting, learning contracts, and technology-enhanced models like blended or flipped learning. However, the focus remains on intentional instructional design—ensuring that selected practices are purposefully matched to students' cognitive, academic, and affective needs.

In addition to academic support, Rutherford County Schools recognizes the importance of meeting the social and emotional needs of gifted students. Through initiatives such as AP Academy, students are provided with a nurturing and intellectually stimulating peer community that encourages academic risk-taking, collaboration, and identity development. Programs like Camp Innovate offer enrichment experiences designed to build creativity, self-confidence, leadership, and resilience in a supportive and engaging environment. These opportunities allow gifted students to connect with like-minded peers, explore new interests, and develop the social-emotional competencies essential for success in school and life.

Rutherford County Schools is committed to providing responsive and rigorous instruction that challenges and supports gifted learners in meaningful and engaging ways.

* **Practice C**

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

The 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 and strive to ensure district-wide equity and access. District teachers have access to the RCS AIG Educator Portal, which links a variety of evidence-based academic and social-emotional learning (SEL) resources curated and supported by the AIG department.

To further support the whole child, RCS integrates social and emotional learning resources into advanced learner programming. A key district initiative includes the implementation of the Second Step SEL program, which equips students with skills in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship-building, and responsible decision-making. The AIG department collaborates with school counselors and classroom teachers to ensure that the unique social and emotional needs of gifted learners are addressed within this framework.

Supplemental research-based academic and SEL resources used to augment curriculum and instruction include, but are not limited to:

- Jacob's Ladder
- Junior Great Books
- Beast Academy
- 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
- Second Step SEL Curriculum

These comprehensive resources reflect RCS's commitment to nurturing both the academic potential and emotional development of our gifted learners in an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

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

The North Carolina State Board of Education's top priority is that every public school student graduates from high school prepared to be globally competitive in the workforce and postsecondary education, equipped for success in a rapidly evolving world. Students are expected to excel in a rigorous, relevant core curriculum that reflects the knowledge and skills essential for thriving in a global environment. Their achievement is measured through an assessment system designed not only to evaluate knowledge and skills but also to inform instruction and develop the dispositions needed for lifelong learning and adaptability.

Students will follow a course of study that positions them to stay ahead of international competition, leveraging technology to access and demonstrate new knowledge and skills. Additionally, students have opportunities to graduate with college transfer credits or even an associate's degree, providing them a head start in higher education.

Rutherford County Schools fully embraces this vision and has been a state leader in technology integration. Through its Going G.L.O.B.A.L. (Growing Learning Opportunities Beyond All Limits) initiative, now in its twelfth year, the district has established a 1:1 learning environment where every teacher (K-12) and student has access to an individual device. Every classroom is equipped with advanced learning tools—such as interactive whiteboards and document cameras—that enable inquiry-based, authentic learning experiences emphasizing critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and innovation.

This technological foundation has enhanced vertical alignment and fostered greater collaboration across grade levels and schools. Recognizing the dynamic nature of technology and the global landscape, RCS is committed to ongoing evaluation and adaptation to ensure students develop future-ready skills and content knowledge.

RCS is dedicated to:

- Integrating high-level content into curriculum development that promotes global awareness, civic responsibility, economic literacy, and health education
- Embedding critical thinking and problem-solving opportunities through strategic questioning and participation in academic competitions
- Providing project-based and open-ended learning experiences that encourage creativity, innovation, and deeper exploration

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

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**

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

Rutherford County Schools actively fosters collaboration among educators, specialists, administrators, and support staff to tailor curriculum and instruction that meets the diverse academic, social, and emotional needs of all students. This team-based approach ensures that differentiated learning strategies are effectively implemented, allowing for personalized pathways that challenge and support learners at every level. Regular communication and data sharing among general education teachers, gifted education specialists, special education staff, counselors, and other relevant personnel guide the design and delivery of instruction, promoting equity and maximizing student growth.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Targeted Support for Middle School AIG Learners and Differentiation for Honors/Advanced Course Readiness

We believe that in order to effectively strengthen Standard 3, our district must prioritize intentional isupport for advanced learners—especially in middle school—so that they are fully equipped for the rigor and expectations of honors, AP, dual enrollment, and other advanced coursework in high school. Equitable access begins with proactive scaffolding.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Curriculum inventory at school and district level

*	slide deck from PD sessions
*	DEPs to document strategy and resource usage

Documents

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

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

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

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

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) employs a dedicated and collaborative team to ensure the effective leadership, implementation, and continuous improvement of its AIG program. Oversight is provided by the Director of Marketing, Community Relations and AIG who serves at the district level. While the AIG Director holds multiple roles within the district, a strong support system is in place through a team of three district-level AIG Coordinator/Specialists, each of whom holds current AIG licensure. These specialists represent each of the district's three school zones and provide direct support to all elementary, middle, and high schools.

Additionally, three high school AIG Facilitators further support advanced programming and services for secondary students.

AIG Director Responsibilities:

- Oversees the coordination and strategic direction of the AIG program across the district
- Collaborates with district-level leadership to advocate for the academic, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners
- Develops and monitors the implementation of the local AIG plan
- Participates in district MTSS teams to represent and align AIG programming within a broader instructional framework
- Develops partnerships and communication strategies to engage families and the community in supporting gifted education
- Seeks out grant opportunities and partnerships to expand AIG services and programs
- Shares leadership with the certified District AIG Coordinators/Specialists to ensure program fidelity and equity across all school levels

AIG Coordinator/Specialists' Responsibilities:

- Lead screening, referral, and identification processes to ensure equitable access to AIG services
- Provide direct instructional support to schools and serve as the primary point of contact for AIG services within their zones
- Maintain documentation and monitor service delivery to meet individual student needs
- Facilitate AIG PLCs and provide ongoing professional development for school-based educators
- Participate in regional and statewide professional learning to support growth in gifted education
- Collaborate with stakeholders to implement evidence-based practices and innovative enrichment opportunities
- Advocate for gifted learners and support the social and emotional development of AIG-identified students

This distributed leadership model ensures that Rutherford County Schools maintains a strong, cohesive, and expert-led AIG program. The structure supports consistent service delivery across all schools and fosters equitable access and opportunity for advanced learners throughout the district.

* **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.

AIG Specialists (District Based Coordinator/Specialists) Roles and Responsibilities (K–12)

Rutherford County Schools employs three certified K–12 AIG Specialists, each assigned to one of the district's three districts. These specialists are trained and equipped to support the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners across all grade levels. While their responsibilities vary based on school-level needs and student populations, all AIG Specialists provide targeted services and leadership in alignment with the district's local AIG plan.

General Responsibilities:

- Implement the local AIG Plan in all assigned schools and provide regular updates to the AIG Coordinator
- Participate in ongoing professional learning and development related to gifted education
- Attend and collaborate during grade-level meetings at assigned schools each fall and spring
- Serve in a coaching capacity by modeling best practices, supporting instructional planning, and providing gifted education resources to teachers

AIG Screening and Identification:

- Coordinate and manage screening, referral, and identification processes at assigned schools
- Lead School-Based Review Teams for AIG placement decisions
- Develop and maintain Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) and Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs) for all identified students

Grade-Specific Responsibilities:

Grades K–2: Talent Development (G.E.A.R. Program)

- Monitor student data to identify students for potential AIG identification
- Provides enrichment, support, and service to students demonstrating high potential
- Collaborate with K–2 teachers to support talent development practices
- Maintain student portfolios for participants in the G.E.A.R. Talent Development Program

Grades 3–5: Direct AIG Services

- Deliver direct services with a focus on math, logic, reading, and exploration
- Monitor student performance data and collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure gifted and high-potential learners' needs are met
- Serve as lead teacher for Camp Innovate Summer Enrichment for Grades 3–5

Grades 6–8: Rigor in the Middle

- Serve as a liaison between AIG students, families, and school personnel to support both academic growth and social-emotional well-being
- Assist with key student transitions, including 5th–6th and 8th–9th grade years
- Lead Camp Innovate Summer Enrichment for Grades 6–8
- Monitor and analyze academic performance and enrichment participation for middle school gifted learners

Grades 9–12: Advanced Programming

- Serve as a mentor and liaison for students and families navigating high school pathways

- Promote advanced academic opportunities, including:
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Dual Enrollment
- Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)
- Career & College Promise (CCP)
- Oversee and communicate updates for the AP Academy program

K–12 Enrichment & Community Engagement:

- AIG Specialists serve as primary facilitators for district-wide enrichment opportunities and special events. These include:
- Camp Innovate (Elementary and Middle School)
- Science Expo & Mobile Planetarium
- Spelling Bee
- Kinderpalooza
- Middle School & High School Quiz Bowls
- Middle School Battle of the Books
- Elementary Book Challenge
- AIG Family Night (one per district zone)
- AP Academy Expo Events (Fall and Spring)

Additional Duties:

- Perform other duties as assigned by the AIG Director or district leadership to support the continuous growth and development of the AIG program

* **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

* **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), and other stakeholder input 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 with 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, including equitable lesson design and resource selection
- Continue districtwide high school honors-level professional development.

During the 2025–2026 school year, this work will focus on differentiation, depth and complexity, tiered lesson planning, and course curriculum development to enhance rigor and ensure alignment with gifted best practices. In addition, the AIG department will lead middle school PD sessions at each 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.

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
- Ongoing Advanced learning (honors) PD for all high school teachers in partnership with secondary instructional coaches

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

To strengthen this standard, your district can focus on increasing both the **capacity and consistency** of AIG-related professional development, especially for general education teachers at the middle and high school levels, who are often the primary instructors for AIG learners.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	professional development calendars
*	Honors PD evaluations and slide deck
*	AIG resource website

Documents

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

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 (RCS) is committed to building intentional, two-way partnerships with parents and guardians to support the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of AIG students. Ongoing, responsive communication between families and schools is prioritized at both the district and school levels to ensure families are informed, engaged, and empowered as collaborative partners in their child's learning journey.

Two-way communication is embedded in our AIG framework through multiple platforms and practices:

- Each school uses its preferred communication channels (e.g., principal phone messages, student take-home folders, ClassDojo, Remind, Canvas, email, and text messaging), enabling reciprocal, accessible dialogue between families and educators.
- The RCS district and school websites serve as hubs for up-to-date AIG program information, events, and resources.
- The RCS AIG Department maintains active social media accounts to share announcements and encourage interactive engagement.
- Parent-teacher conferences are available to review, and finalize student Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs/IDEPs), ensuring families have a voice in the academic planning process.
- District-wide AIG Family Nights provide forums for sharing resources and program updates, discussing student progress, and gathering family input.
- The AIG Parent Advisory Committee serves as a direct channel for family feedback to shape district AIG programming.
- AP Academy Expos highlight advanced learning opportunities (e.g., Governor’s School, NCSSM, and CFNC) and provide space for family Q&A.

AIG Specialist Communication Strategies:

AIG Specialists maintain consistent two-way communication with families using email, Canvas, and school-supported platforms. Each specialist is provided a district-issued work cell phone to promote timely and flexible communication across multiple school sites. Specialists proactively reach out to families not only for updates but to discuss enrichment opportunities, share student progress, and collaborate on supports.

As part of the DEP/IDEP process, specialists identify and recommend extracurricular and academic enrichment experiences that align with each student’s age, interests, and goals—ensuring that both intellectual growth and social-emotional well-being are addressed.

* **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 vital strategy to enhance and sustain programs and services. Collaborative efforts to promote a shared, positive vision for the AIG program's purpose and goals remain a district-wide priority.

Each year, the AIG program actively engages local businesses and community organizations to secure donations and additional funding in support of program needs. Since 2019, the program has received at least $20,000 annually through Facebook's Community Action Grant Program. These funds have been instrumental in supporting Camp Innovate, a summer enrichment experience for elementary and middle school AIG students.

A strong partnership with Isothermal Community College provides middle and high school AIG students with expanded opportunities, including intentional programming focused on college access and summer STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) enrichment.

In an effort to develop innovative high school curriculum concentration pathways, Rutherford County Schools continues its strategic planning collaboration with Isothermal Community College and local business and industry leaders through the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce. These efforts focus on identifying course sequences that allow students to earn community college certificates, diplomas, and degrees while still enrolled in high school.

Additionally, RCS continues to leverage its long-standing partnership with the McNair Educational Foundation to personalize college and career readiness activities. Through this collaboration, every high school student is paired with a mentor from the community, ensuring they receive individualized guidance and support throughout their high school journey.

* **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 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.

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) prioritizes clear, consistent, and accessible communication with families and stakeholders to support all students, including those engaged in advanced and enriched learning opportunities. The district utilizes a variety of established communication tools and resources to share information about programs, services, policies, and opportunities available throughout the school year.

Key communication practices include:

- Comprehensive Language Access: RCS implements a district-wide language translation service to ensure all families are informed about opportunities and services. This includes translation of program brochures, forms, and communication materials. For example, screening, identification, and placement documents are translated into Spanish to support multilingual families.
- Interpretation Services: The district provides interpretation support for phone calls and in-person meetings, ensuring meaningful two-way communication between families and school personnel.
- Consistent and Professional Branding: All communications—including letters, brochures, program materials, newsletters, and handbooks—use consistent branding to support clear messaging and program identity.
- District Communication Platforms: RCS uses automated messaging systems (phone, email, and text) to share timely updates and important information with families.
- Direct Communication from Specialists: Educators, including AIG specialists, maintain regular contact with students and families using the Canvas platform, email, phone calls, and other communication tools.
- Engagement Opportunities: Families are invited to attend in-person and virtual information sessions, including annual family nights and other program-specific events, to learn more and ask questions.
- Media and Marketing Collaboration: The district works with the Director of Marketing and Community Relations to share news and updates through district channels and local media outlets.
- Accessible Online Information: Program details, policies, and procedures are available on the RCS and individual school websites, making information easily accessible to all stakeholders.
- Consistent Outreach at Stakeholder Events: Important updates are shared regularly at school and district events where families, staff, and community members are present, ensuring widespread awareness and engagement.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

We believe that meaningful partnerships enhance the academic and affective growth of our AIG students. To strengthen Standard 5, we seek to intentionally grow connections with families, community partners, and colleges/universities to provide AIG learners with greater opportunities for real-world application, academic challenge, and personal growth.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	RCS AIG Advisory Group sessions and materials
*	Agendas from meetings

* Feedback forms and surveys

Documents

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

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 6: Program Accountability

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

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

Rutherford County Schools maintains a local AIG plan in full compliance with state legislation (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.5-.8, Article 9B) and State Board of Education policy (ACIG-000, June 2018). The plan is developed through a collaborative process involving a diverse group of stakeholders who serve on the District AIG Advisory Council. This council uses the North Carolina AIG Program Standards as a guiding framework to inform the development and ongoing improvement of the local AIG plan.

Prior to submission to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), the AIG plan is formally reviewed, revised as needed, and approved by the Rutherford County Board of Education.

The AIG Department engages in continuous program evaluation by collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources, as outlined in Standard 6, Practice (d). This data is used to guide decision-making and ensure the plan remains responsive to student needs and district priorities. Sources of data for review and revision of the AIG plan include, but are not limited to:

- Stakeholder surveys (students, families, educators, administrators)
- Student demographic and performance data
- Input and recommendations from the District AIG Advisory Council
- Findings from school-based data meetings and PLC discussions

This comprehensive and collaborative approach ensures that the AIG plan remains aligned with best practices and evolves to meet the needs of advanced learners across Rutherford County Schools.

* **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 an 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 personnel 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

AIG personnel 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.

Rutherford County Schools recognizes the importance of maintaining and analyzing comprehensive data to ensure equitable access to gifted education services for all students. To identify strengths and areas for improvement in referral, identification, services, and retention, the district regularly examines demographic data across the local education agency (LEA) and within the AIG program.

The AIG coordinator maintains disaggregated data that reflects the racial, ethnic, economic, linguistic, and exceptionalities-related makeup of the AIG population in comparison to overall district enrollment. This data is used to assess representation and access across all subgroups and to identify trends, gaps, and potential barriers to participation in the AIG program.

To monitor and improve AIG services, Rutherford County Schools will:

- Analyze demographic trends annually at the district and school levels to evaluate the extent to which AIG enrollment mirrors the broader student population.
- Collect and review school-based AIG data to assess the effectiveness of identification and service models across varied school communities.
- Explore the implementation of local school norms during the upcoming plan cycle to support a more contextually appropriate and equitable identification process.
- Investigate and implement strategies to increase identification of students from underrepresented populations, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Provide professional learning for educators to increase awareness of bias in referral and identification practices and promote the use of multiple criteria in screening.
- Use findings to inform revisions to the AIG plan, adjust identification practices, and enhance services to ensure that all gifted learners—regardless of background—have meaningful access to advanced learning opportunities.

Rutherford County Schools aims to ensure that every student with academic and intellectual potential is recognized, supported, and challenged to achieve at the highest levels.

* **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 up-to-date licensure records for all employees. This includes regular updates on the credentials and qualifications of all instructional personnel, including those who work with advanced and gifted learners.

In collaboration with Human Resources, the AIG Program Coordinator maintains specific documentation for teachers who have completed AIG licensure requirements, as well as records for honors course evaluations and Advanced Placement (AP) Summer Institute training.

* **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.

Rutherford County Schools values feedback as a critical component of continuous improvement. The local AIG program actively seeks input from students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders to assess the quality and effectiveness of its services and to ensure the program is implemented with fidelity.

Feedback is intentionally gathered through multiple avenues and at various points throughout the year to identify strengths, address areas for growth, and guide decision-making. Opportunities for stakeholder input include, but are not limited to:

- Initial AIG placement meetings
- Annual DEP/IDEP conferences

- Parent-teacher conferences and information sessions
- Student perception and experience surveys
- An annual stakeholder survey to evaluate program strengths, challenges, and alignment with state standards
- Site-based team discussions, including PLCs and grade-level meetings
- Input from the District AIG Advisory Council

This ongoing feedback loop is essential in shaping a responsive, high-quality AIG program that meets the academic and social-emotional needs of advanced learners while aligning with district and state expectations.

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

Rutherford County Schools provides an AIG Annual Report to all stakeholders and the broader community to promote transparency, celebrate progress, and guide ongoing improvement. The report is shared through a variety of communication platforms and stakeholder groups, including but not limited to:

- District and school websites
- Presentations to the District Leadership Team
- AIG Family Nights
- Board of Education meetings
- School staff meetings and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- District AIG Advisory Council meetings
- District Teacher Advisory Committee
- Local Parent Advisory Committee

These communication efforts ensure that the AIG Annual Report is accessible, informative, and reflective of the program's commitment to continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement.

* **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.

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.

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

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

To strengthen this standard, we aim to implement more robust systems for **monitoring, evaluating, and improving our AIG services** based on data and stakeholder feedback. We want to ensure that our program remains responsive to the needs of advanced learners, equitable in its practices, and aligned with

the district's broader academic goals.

Planned Sources of Evidence

*	Advanced learning hub created by AIG department
*	Continuous data analysis
*	AIG Meeting notes and agendas

Documents

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

Local Board of Education Approval

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:
06/03/2025

AIG Related Documents

Rutherford County Schools (810) 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	AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources 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 3 Additional Resources
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources

Rutherford County Schools (810) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Phrase	Definition