

Mitchell County Schools
Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan
Effective 2016-2019

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Mitchell County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide LEAs to develop, coordinate and implement 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 relate to the categories related to NC's AIG legislation, Article 9B (N. C. G. S. 115C-150.5). These best practices help to clarify the standard, describe what an LEA should have in place, and guide LEAs to improve their programs.

As LEAs continue to transform their AIG Programs to align to the AIG Program Standards, LEAs participated in a self-assessment process of their local AIG program, which involved multiple stakeholders. The data gathered during this process guided LEAs in their development of this local AIG plan for 2016-2019. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's board of Education and sent to NC DPI for comment.

For 2016-2019, Mitchell County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Mitchell County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Mitchell County Schools' vision is to be a school district in which every student will, upon graduation, be both locally and globally competitive and college/career ready. Our core values and beliefs address the following concepts:

- Diversity – Students have distinct needs and goals and deserve unique relationships.
- Collaboration/Accountability – We hold ourselves accountable for building relationships that expand opportunities for students.
- High Expectations/Hard Work – The highest level of personal responsibility and a high work ethic produces positive results.
- Adaptability/Innovation – Producing successful 21st century learners requires creatively approaching challenges and opportunities.
- Integrity – Respect and honesty in everything, by everyone, is the core of ethical practice.
- Compassion – Empathy and kindness build strong school communities.

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

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provided by the regular educational program, that meets their academic, intellectual, and social/emotional needs. These students are present in our population regardless of gender, various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, or other learning exceptionalities. The LEA and the Board of Education affirm the following:

- It is the responsibility of the LEA, through the direction of the AIG program, to modify curriculum in the regular classroom setting in order to provide appropriate levels of challenge for all students, including those identified as gifted. This requires the ongoing screening, referral, and identification of these students.
- It is also our LEA's responsibility to provide students with specialized instruction delivered by highly qualified personnel within a range of instructional settings that are integrated with, but apart from, the regular curriculum.

Our LEA and Board of Education commits to providing students an opportunity to discover and reach their potential by maintaining a program for academically and intellectually gifted students that responds to best practices and research in gifted education, and state AIG program standards. Our mission is to collaborate with families and community partners to provide a safe, caring, and engaging learning environment that prepares all graduates to become responsible 21st century citizens in a diverse, global society.

Sources of funding for local AIG program (as of 2016)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$98599.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A

Articulates and disseminates the procedures for AIG student identification, including screening, referral, and identification processes for all grade levels to school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community-at-large.

District Response: Effective communication plans are a vital aspect of gifted education programming. It is essential that clear information is available to all relevant stakeholders regarding student identification policies and practices. An effective communication plan for a gifted program's screening, referral, and identification procedures should be clear, meaningful, and timely, as well as respectful, while anticipating possible misconceptions. Such communications are best aligned with other district communication approaches, while based on an analysis of the needs of each constituency group. Local groups of stakeholders include students, parents, teachers, administrators/central office personnel, local Board of Education members, and the community. These constituent groups have been identified and input sought through various means such as surveys. The AIG Advisory Council analyzes stakeholder input annually, and the most effective and efficient communication methods for each group are identified. There are also opportunities for further feedback and input from stakeholders. The information that the Mitchell County Schools AIG program strives to share with stakeholders is relevant and reasonable, and care is taken to see that it is precise and accurate. The frequency, methods, and languages of our communications with stakeholders is determined with the needs and responsibilities of each group in mind. The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program conducted stakeholder surveys during the 2015 - 2016 school year. While our program is already utilizing various communication strategies, some parents/families either desire more frequent and meaningful contacts or do not feel that they are being reached effectively, as in previous surveys. Our program will again focus on this practice during the 2016 - 2019 plan cycle to improve both the means and the frequency of contact with all stakeholders.

Practice B

States and employs multiple criteria for AIG student identification. These criteria incorporate measures that reveal student aptitude, student achievement, or potential to achieve in order to develop a comprehensive profile for each student. These measures include both non-traditional and traditional measures that are based on current theory and research.

District Response: A gifted program's identification procedures develop from its vision and should document the systematic approach used to find gifted and talented students in the district. The instruments and assessments should be selected to closely match the services offered. The procedures should articulate who collects data and how data are analyzed and interpreted using appropriate tools. They also should reflect the characteristics of the student population and the local demographics. Procedures should be broad enough to include nominations of typically underrepresented students and be as free as possible from potential bias. Procedures should ensure

flexibility occurs when a student's profile necessitates alternative approaches.

Identification procedures for the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program utilize a comprehensive approach using multiple criteria and are effective at all grade levels. Our procedures support both our LEA and AIG Program vision, in that students have unique and diverse needs, and that we strive to identify those students who have talents and abilities that may necessitate the need for AIG Program services. Our identification procedures include both objective and subjective measures, using reliable and research-based standardized instruments as often as possible.

Our screening, referral, and identification procedures are as follows:

Formal identification of students begins in grade 4, although a student may be identified at any grade level K-12. The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has established a flow-chart timeline to summarize the screening, referral, and identification procedures (this document may be found in the plan's appendix). To facilitate the referral process, a screening pool of potential referrals is compiled from the administration of two screening tools to 3rd and 5th grade students: 1) the NNAT2 (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test), which measures non-verbal ability, and the CogAT Screener test, which measures verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal aptitude. These screener tests are administered to every student in these grades in the fall of the school year (usually mid-October). Student scores derived from either or both of these screener tests which are generally above average (above the 85th percentile for age or stanines 7-9) are included in the district-wide screening pool. Teachers are consulted for any additional nominations and nominations may also be accepted from parents, administrators, or the student. We will be uploading these forms on the MCS AIG website for easy access.

Once a parental consent signature is obtained to conduct further evaluations, the AIG Coordinator, with the cooperation of both the parents and the classroom teacher, advances the collection of data. Referred students are group-administered the full CogAT battery of tests, which are used in order to obtain more specific identification of student strengths in reading or math skills, or to further confirm nonverbal ability. This testing occurs in the spring, usually in mid-March or April. The school-based review team (consisting of the teachers, school administrator, and the AIG Coordinator) compiles the scores along with other criteria including parent and teacher rating scales, achievement data, classroom grades, and ability test results on the Mitchell County Schools Placement Rubric. This document may be found in the plan's Appendix. The SIGS forms (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students), provides standardized ratings for both parent, and teacher evaluations.

At present, this rubric consists of four rating categories (Well Exceeds, Exceeds, Meets, or No Qualifications) in six criteria category areas: Teacher Survey (SIGS), Parent Survey (SIGS), NNAT2 Ability Exams, CogAT Total Composite, Math Aptitude/Achievement (math class average, IOWA Achievement Math, CogAT quantitative score and/or quantitative/nonverbal score) and Reading Achievement (reading class average, IOWA Achievement Reading, CogAT verbal score). To be identified, a student should meet 4 out of 6 of the rubric categories.

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

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

2. Parent Survey (SIGS) – Standard Score of 115
3. NNAT Ability Test – NAI of 110 (based on local norms)
4. CogAT Aptitude Test – Total Composite (QVN) 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7
5. Math Aptitude/Achievement (must meet 2 out of 3 to place in Math) - Class Achievement Grade Average (most recent) 88%; CogAT Quantitative/Nonverbal Composite (QN) or Quantitative (Q) 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7; IOWA Achievement Test Math 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7
6. Reading Aptitude/Achievement (must meet 2 out of 3 to place in Reading) - Class Achievement Grade Average (most recent) 88%; CogAT Verbal (V) 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7; IOWA Achievement Test Reading 85th percentile and/or a stanine of 7

EOG/EOC/NCFE scores may also be used as quantitative evidence, as well as any qualitative evidence that may be relative to a particular student's placement. The objective is to build a body of evidence to best understand a student's abilities and potential. Students' scores should meet or exceed in a majority of the criteria areas to be considered for placement. This helps to ensure that no one criterion excludes a child from AIG identification. Parents may also request the use of alternative assessments or individually administered testing by a licensed professional, however, the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program may not provide this testing and parents will be responsible for the procurement and cost of such testing. The AIG Coordinator maintains a list of approved assessments, and these will be added to the MCS AIG website.

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

- AR - Academically Gifted in Reading: Students who meet 2 out of 3 of the Placement Rubric criteria category for Reading with achievement and ability scores that indicate an academic strength in Reading.
- AM - Academically Gifted in Math: Students who meet 2 out of 3 of the Placement Rubric criteria category for Math, with achievement and ability scores that indicate an academic strength in Math.
- AG - Academically Gifted in Reading and Math: Students who meet both of the Placement Rubric criteria categories (2 out of 3 in each criteria category) for both Reading and Math, with achievement and ability scores that indicate an academic strength in both Reading and Math.
- IG - Intellectually Gifted: Students who show high ability/intelligence (can be non-verbal) regardless of achievement/academic strengths. Such students may not meet 4 out of 6 rubric criteria categories, and should have an ability score greater than the district norm for the upper quartile.
- AI - Academically and Intellectually Gifted: Students who meet 4 out 6 of the Placement Rubric Criteria, with achievement and ability scores that indicate an academic strength in Reading and Math, AND an ability score greater than the district norm for the upper quartile.

Students who do not meet the criteria for placement are placed in a file for re-evaluation in the near future. Such students may not at the time be formally identified, but may be recommended for educational services or settings that can nurture their potential for future identification. Students in all grade levels, not just grades 3 and 5, are eligible to be referred. These students will be evaluated on

an independent basis by the school-based review team. Mitchell County Schools AIG program is in the process of developing guidelines for the identification and placement of K-3 students, as well as service options for those students.

Practice C

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

District Response: The manner in which school districts identify and cultivate student gifts and talents often affects a student's emerging potential. A high-quality AIG program will seek strategies to modify identification procedures that contribute to the successful inclusion of students from typically underrepresented populations. One strategy is the use of a screening or talent pool in which all students are screened using standardized measurements. Mitchell County Schools, at present, uses two screener tests: 1) the NNAT2 (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test), which measures ability, and the CogAT Screener test, which measures verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal aptitude. The NNAT2 is a non-verbal ability (IQ) test, which has been effective in screening students in a non-biased manner in regard to culture and language ability. The CogAT Screener (and the full CogAT) allow for accommodations to be given to students with exceptionalities and ELL students. We plan to combine the screening with the use of multiple pathways of identification as we seek to develop those during the next plan cycle. Other strategies that can be helpful are the early identification of high-potential students, as well as the analysis of student performance information. We will be establishing a K-3 initiative this plan cycle to assist in the identification of students in the early grades. The P.E.T.S. program (Primary Education Thinking Skills) will be used to nurture potential in all students and to assist teachers in identifying students who may need to be referred for identification. The program can also be beneficial in identifying a highly gifted student from any demographic. Implementing this program will require purchase of the material that supports the program and professional development for these teachers on an on-going basis. The AIG coordinator will be responsible for checking on the fidelity of the implementation, along with the principals at grades K-3.

Mitchell County Schools' demographics are unique in that it is a small, rural district with limited cultural diversity. Limited English Proficient students include approximately 5% of the student population. Approximately 16% of our student population is identified as exceptional (EC) students. The largest single demographic in our LEA is that of economically disadvantaged students, which comprises approximately 59% of our average daily membership. We intend to focus on these populations most closely to ensure our identification procedures are fair and equitable. Identification of twice-exceptional students requires careful inspection of evaluation data and close collaboration between EC and AIG Identification of highly-gifted students can be aided by using above grade-level testing when appropriate. Procedures for the service of highly gifted students is handled on an individual basis, as these students are found only occasionally in our small district.

Practice D

Implements screening, referral, and identification processes consistently within the LEA.

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

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

A short synopsis is provided below:

Mid-October: Screening tests are administered to all 3rd and 5th grade students district-wide.

Late October to December: Analysis of screening scores provides a "screening pool" of referral candidates. Teachers are distributed lists of referrals and are allowed to add recommendations to the pool.

January - March: Mailings are sent to parents for prior consent for further evaluation, also parent scales completed and returned; referral materials are sent to teachers for data compilation for students with parental consent returned.

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

April - June: School-based review teams meet.

June - August: AIG Coordinator reviews team decisions; parents notified in writing of placement decisions (by postal mail). Parents return signed Initial Placement Consent form, agreeing to the identification and consenting to services.

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

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

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

Practice E

Maintains documentation that explains the identification process and service options for individual AIG students, which is reviewed annually with parents/families.

District Response:

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Comprehensive written policies are necessary to protect the rights of AIG students, their parents/families, and to provide accountability to the LEA and the AIG Program. Such policies include, but are not limited to the screening, referral, and identification process, Due Process procedures, procedures for transfers from other LEAs, changes in services or intervention plans, consultative services, and parental denial or withdrawal of services. It is essential that these policies are widely available to the public through a variety of written formats and are translated into native languages when necessary.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG program's screening, referral, and identification process and the Due Process Procedure are described in detail in our plan under Standard 1, Practice B; they are also available by a variety of other means. Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has many written policies in place to safeguard the rights of AIG students and their parents/families, such as our screening, referral, and identification process and Due Process procedures.

During the 2016 – 2019 plan cycle, our goals include establishing other written policies and amending our submitted plan as needed, with local Board of Education approval. There is a need to have clearly expressed policies for transfers from other LEAs, changes in services or intervention plans, consultative services, and parental denial or withdrawal of service (either temporary or permanent) in written format and widely available to all stakeholders.

There also needs to be district-wide policies established for both acceleration (subject-based or grade level) and early entrance to Kindergarten as related to AIG identification and services. We will be seeking to work with related programs in the LEA to craft local Board of Education policies for these instances.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: 1-A:

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program will continue to conduct stakeholder surveys as part of our program evaluations.

We will employ communication strategies to solicit input from stakeholders on a continuous basis.

Program brochures will be developed.

AIG program representatives (the coordinator and/or Advisory Council members and lead teachers) maintain a presence and role in school transitions, including high school registration.

The Mitchell County Schools administration and the Board of Education will receive annual updates on program evaluations.

The local media (newspapers, radio, etc.) will be utilized to facilitate the dissemination of information to the public.

1-B:

Develop and merge multiple pathways of identification, using typical as well as atypical standardized evidence, with the MCS AIG Placement Rubric.

Investigate and include indicators/criteria for the identification of highly gifted students at all grade levels (including K-3).

Investigate and include additional indicators/criteria for the identification of IG (Intellectually gifted) and AI (Academically and Intellectually Gifted) students at all grade levels.

1-C:

The Mitchell County Schools AIG program will strive to send intentional communications to traditionally underrepresented subgroups in our LEA regarding screening, referral, and identification

procedures, translating such materials into native languages when possible.

The AIG Program/Advisory Council will investigate the use of multiple pathways for identification during the 2016-2018 plan cycle.

Additional measures to assist the identification of highly gifted students will be explored, such as above grade-level testing, and screening for the DUKE TIP (Talent Identification Program) for grades 4-5 and grade 7.

The establishment of partnerships with EC, ELL, Title 1, and other administrators and/or teachers will be sought to determine the best methods to recognize and identify these students, including those students who may be twice-exceptional. These partnerships will include assistance with testing accommodations for students who have documented need on an individual basis.

1-D:

Develop a form to document referrals that do not occur as part of the screening pool process (ex., parent, teacher, student, other educator, community member).

Develop procedures/timelines and maintain documentation to consistently and continually monitor future student data for students who are referred, but not identified; as well as students who are identified, but may qualify under a different or additional designation to inform services.

1-E:

Establish a local policy/procedure for acceleration, whether by subject-based or grade level, and establish a local policy/procedure for Early Entrance into Kindergarten; seek local Board of Education approval for both, since such situations may occur within or without the AIG program.

Establish a program policy/procedure for accepting students who transfer into the LEA with existing AIG identification from another LEA, both within NC and out of state.

Establish a program policy/procedure for student performance review and a possible change in services or implementation of an intervention plan.

Establish a policy/procedure and formal documents for parental denial of services or withdrawal from program.

Establish written guidelines governing consultative services (include in DEPs).

Communicate all policies clearly and effectively to program stakeholders.

Sources of Evidence: 1-A:

Program introduction at the elementary level (3rd grade screening pool) with updates on identification process for students at key school transition points, provided by teachers/AIG Coordinator.

AIG program presence at high school registration with information available on identification.

Website at the district level that includes a description of the identification process.

Informational meetings held at key school transitions to share identification procedures.

Parent survey responses concerning awareness of identification procedures.

Direct mailings sent to homes of referrals; Flyers sent to all homes describing the gifted program and identification procedures and providing contact information.

Agenda/sign-in sheets/presentations at faculty meeting and/or staff development in which identification procedures are outlined and shared.

Introduction of a program handbook of identification procedures that includes specific instructions on teacher referral and recommendations (also available on district website).

E-mail communications.

Presentations at administrative meetings to include updates on AIG program, including updates on student identification.

Faculty survey responses concerning awareness of identification procedures.

Introduction of a program handbook of identification procedures that includes specific instructions on teacher referral and recommendations (also available on district website).: Program overviews and

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updates through memoranda and e-mail communications to Board of Education members.

Annual reports that detail budgetary needs for identification procedures.

Brochures outlining program areas including identification procedures available in public locations.

Presentations at PTA meetings, civic groups, etc.

Press releases/news articles to include program updates and share identification procedures.

1-B:

Student AIG folders containing identification information.

School-based review team meeting minutes and signatures; Flowchart/timeline for identification procedures and rubric form available for review, both on website, in written communications, and by request.

Handbook of identification procedures developed and reviewed annually with school personnel.

Examples of parent or other referrals.

Due Process Procedures available in a variety of sources at all times.

1-C:

District-wide screening of all 3rd and 5th grade students using the NNAT2 (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test), which measures ability, and the CogAT Screener test, which measures verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal aptitude.

Documentation of testing accommodations for students with IEPs or 504 plans.

AIG child count data that includes analysis of the district's demographics.

Minutes from AIG Advisory Council meetings that document discussion of the establishment of multiple pathways for identification.

Emails and notes from formal and/or informal meetings with other school personnel concerning input on identifying traditionally underrepresented populations.

Purchase of the P.E.T.S. program, including documentation from staff development necessary for full implementation.

DUKE TIP Talent Search screening records and participation records.

1-D:

AIG student files containing screening, referral, and identification and placement documents; District flowchart/timeline for guidance of identification process.

Presentations, agendas, sign-in sheets from faculty meetings, parent meetings, etc.

DEP's in student files providing a match of services for areas of exceptionalities identified. School-based review team meeting minutes.

1-E:

Minutes and records from local Board of Education meetings where policies are established.

Student AIG folders containing written consent for identification and services.

Documentation of transfer placements or changes in services.

Parent surveys that refer to knowledge of written policies.

Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

Practice A

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

District Response:

The Standard Course of Study (Common Core and Essential Standards) can be used as an entry point for differentiation; however, high student achievement among gifted students is more likely to take place within exposure to a high-quality curriculum that contains ever-increasing levels of challenge. Differentiation is achieved by extending, enriching, and/or accelerating the objectives within the Standard Course of Study. This differentiation should begin at an early age (K-3), even before students are formally identified, to help develop students' potential. Differentiation of standard curriculum for gifted students should occur at all grade levels, including high school level courses. Locally, AIG students at the elementary level (grades K-5) and middle school level (grades 6-8) are typically not presented a differentiated curriculum other than leveled reading and/or math groups. At the high school level, students and their parents self-select honors level and Advanced Placement (AP) courses to meet their needs. Even at this level of rigor, it must be recognized that both Honors and AP (Advanced Placement) courses are not in themselves differentiation for gifted learners, and some learners' unique needs will dictate differentiation beyond that of the Honors or AP course. High school teachers in other classes are to be expected to take into account the advanced learner's needs as well. The State Board of Education approved the new Honors Level Course Rubric in June 2012. This rubric will be the foundation for courses developed at the honors level and will ensure local fidelity with programs across the state. The Honors Level Course Rubric (2012) will be used in the development process of honors courses at the LEA level as well as guide the local level Honors Level Course Portfolio Review Process. Our high school teachers need to be aware of these guidelines to ensure that all courses that carry the "Honors" classification are:

1. more challenging than standard level courses in order to foster growth for advanced learners, and
2. distinguished by a difference in the depth and scope of work required.

To address this need, consistency is being encouraged among district schools regarding service delivery and grouping methods at grade level spans. Our program is seeking to provide professional development to provide materials, coaching, and instructional support for teachers that work with advanced learners. We will utilize the AIG~IRP (Instructional Resources Project) provided through NCDPI to guide and support teachers, as well as begin focusing upon curriculum guides/maps for non-high-school level courses that serve advanced learners, providing extensions of the SCOS. Local support will also be made available to Honors teachers by local review of Honors Course Portfolios by a district team on an annual basis. In addition, our program is looking to expand enrichment opportunities available to all students.

Student acceleration should follow local and state policies, and be utilized to provide services to best

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benefit a student when indicated. CDM (Credit by Demonstrated Mastery) is now being offered to middle and high school students to whom it would benefit. Applications are available on the AIG program website, and in the high school registration handbook. Mitchell County Schools has a district team in place to manage the applications and the process.

Practice B

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

District Response: Mitchell County Schools' teachers have been historically offered training in differentiation, but not on a consistent basis. Currently, teachers in our LEA use a variety of processes and strategies to provide depth, complexity, and rigor into the learning experience for gifted learners. This is achieved in the modification of content, process, product, learning environment, or a combination of these options. Some include, but are not limited to: Problem-based learning, Socratic seminars/ Paideia seminars/Shared Inquiry discussions, tiered lessons, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, or extension and enrichment activities.

Since only a couple of teachers in our LEA have had any formal university training in gifted education, our program must rely upon professional development at the local level to train teachers on how to implement differentiated instruction. The regular classroom teacher, who may have a wide range of ability levels to address in one class, as well as multiple subject preparations, delivers the majority of our gifted services at the elementary level. Currently, no one school or the district as a whole adheres to any particular curriculum and instructional model, which helps guide instruction. The AIG Advisory Council will continue to look at models that seem to fit our LEA's initiatives and mission over the next plan cycle to arrive at a unified model or combination of models for our program. Also, there is no comprehensive district-wide policy on acceleration and its use with gifted students, and the Advisory Council will be working with administrators to support the acceleration of advanced learners when warranted. The State Board of Education Policy of "Credit by Demonstrated Mastery" will assist with acceleration, and we need to include the use of this policy when warranted for particular students.

Practice C

Selects and uses a variety of research-based supplemental resources that augment curriculum and instruction.

District Response:

While the addition of any supplemental resources in the classroom will assist the teacher in adapting the curriculum to meet student needs, this offers little in terms of program and district-wide consistency. The adoption and application of supplemental resources that present advanced concepts through models and frameworks, which have been developed for use with high-ability learners, offers our teachers a dependable and cohesive approach for addressing the instruction and assessment of gifted learners. Using similar materials district-wide also simplifies budgeting, and the implementation of the resources can be accompanied by meaningful and focused professional

development. The teacher instruction needs to be followed up by fidelity checks, along with coaching, and refresher training as needed.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG program has provided small classroom supplements during past plan cycles to allow teachers to purchase materials to aid in differentiation of the curriculum. These funds were provided to the teachers who had most contact with gifted learners during the course of a day, such as high-ability reading in elementary, high-ability math and reading in middle school, honors and AP teachers in high school. The Mayland Early College also has historically received some textbook support from the AIG Program as well. We would like to focus on getting similar programs with a research-base for gifted learners into the schools on a consistent basis, and especially in the area of math.

Attendance of district personnel at the NCAGT (North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented) and other professional conferences allow them personal exposure to new research-based resources and to gather materials to support gifted programming.

Practice D

Fosters the development of 21st century content and skills an advanced level.

District Response: The development of 21st century content and skills provides a framework that is intended to communicate knowledge, skills, and understanding at an advanced content level to enable students to experience success as global citizens. Students must learn and apply skills such as higher-order thinking, critical reasoning, creative production, problem finding and solving, and decision-making. They need to master communication and collaboration skills, as well as use effective information, media, and technology strategies.

Mitchell High School established the One-to-One Technology Initiative in the 2010 - 2011 school year, which utilized a grant to provide laptop computers to all students for their use at school and at home. This expanded into the middle schools during the 2015 - 2016 school year. While this is an extremely valuable part of preparing our students for a future as part of a global society, there are other skills and knowledge that are an integral part of that success. We have had some programs currently in place that allow our students to apply authentic learning in a real-life context. For example, the Graduation Project is a culminating senior activity that encourages high school age students to explore a career scenario by applying many of these skills. Clubs such as the Key Club and the Beta Club incorporate service learning. Our program feels the need to focus upon not only technology skills, but also ways that these skills can be utilized to enrich and enhance authentic experiences. These need to be infused at all grade levels, not just the secondary level.

Practice E

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

District Response:

All of Mitchell County Schools' students are assessed by quarterly benchmark testing using an online

assessment tool, and annually by state-required End of Grade/End of Course/North Carolina Final Exams testing.

The Mitchell County Schools district is still in the beginning implementation stage of MTSS (Multi-Tiered Student Support). It is a goal of the system to apply progress monitoring to all students, utilizing the school MTSS teams in place. Consistency is needed across the district as to how this type of assessment can be applied to and inform services for our gifted students.

Classroom assessments should be matched to curriculum objectives, and performance-based tasks and portfolio approaches are also encouraged and effective. Pre-assessments should be administered to advanced students to determine academic need, influence curricular decisions, and support flexible grouping decisions. Most of our district's teachers have also received some MTSS training and are familiar with the practice of progress monitoring for all students. On a program-wide scale, continually analyzing student assessment data for gifted students throughout the district assists the AIG program in matching service delivery options to overall student needs. All of these types of assessment are necessary to successfully drive differentiation for gifted students, both on an individual, classroom, and program-wide basis.

Practice F

Creates affective curricular and instructional practices which support the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

District Response:

Gifted students, as a population, encounter a number of unique issues and concerns that affect their social/emotional well-being. Classroom teachers offer the first line of service to the gifted student in this realm, and can serve their gifted students' needs in various ways that are integrated with curriculum units, some examples being bibliotherapy or videotherapy. School guidance counselors are in a unique position to help bridge the work of teachers, other educators, and parents in best meeting the student's individual needs. The counselor can help gifted students understand and cope with their unique intellectual and social/emotional needs during various phases of their development. They can help to create a supportive environment by serving as a student advocate and a link between other professionals serving that student.

Being that the Mitchell County Schools district population is small and mostly rural, teachers in the system generally have awareness of the need and a desire to meet the social and emotional issues of all of their students. This applies to the gifted students in their classrooms as well. The best meaning teacher, however, needs training and assistance from other educators in how to best meet those needs. Some teachers have had brief introductions to the affective needs of gifted students, but there remains a great need for all teachers who serve gifted students to receive training in this area as part of meeting local requirements. Our school guidance counselors also need specialized training to understand their role in working with these students.

Practice G

Cultivates and develops the potential of young (K-3) students through purposeful and intentional

strategies and differentiated curriculum and instruction.

District Response: The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program is seeking to incorporate strategies during the upcoming plan cycle (2016 - 2019) to differentiate in the K-3 classroom, while at the same time creating opportunities that enables teachers to observe primary students prior to the formal identification process, in order to recognize potential and respond to their needs. This may include making a referral for formal identification.

Currently, our district's K-3 use the Junior Great Books Program to provide some services in reading within a flexible grouping setting, in order to supplement core materials.

Our program will also be incorporating the P.E.T.S. (Primary Education Thinking Skills) Program into the district's K-3 classrooms to be used with all students. The following is a description of the program from the P.E.T.S. website:

"Primary Education Thinking Skills or PETS™ is a systematized enrichment and diagnostic thinking skills program. Lessons are presented in convergent analysis, divergent synthesis, visual/spatial thinking, and evaluation, suitable for grades K-3. The program aligns to the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. PETS™ helps build behavioral portfolios for talented learners that support a differentiated approach to their education, integrates flexibly into any existing primary curriculum, and offers opportunities for learners with different strengths to shine."
(<http://www.primaryeducationthinkingskills.com/>)

The AIG Coordinator will be collaborating with K-3 teachers and administrators to offer professional development on the thinking skills curriculum and any potential referrals for formal gifted identification. During the upcoming plan cycle (2016 - 2019), the district will also be seeking to integrate and embed other strategies and subjects to support students with high potential or advanced achievement.

Practice H

Collaborates with AIG personnel and other professional staff, including regular education teachers, special education teachers, other instructional staff, and administrators, to develop and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction.

District Response: The Core Beliefs and Values statement of the Mitchell County Schools system 2011-2016 Strategic Plan in the area of Collaboration/Accountability states: "We hold ourselves accountable for building relationships that expand opportunities for students". This indicates that administrators should encourage sustained, consistent collaboration in which general classroom teachers and others who work with gifted students in each school can plan together, observe one another's classrooms, and reflect on how they, as a team, can best serve students who have both specialized needs and may be twice-exceptional. The implementation of MTSS (Multi-Tiered Support System) in our district will be supportive of this process.

Learning experiences for all students should address the learners' needs through interest, readiness, level of support and degree of challenge. The AIG Program, supported by the AIG Coordinator, can

be available as a support system for general educators attempting to implement best practices for meeting the needs of the gifted, through continued research and providing resource materials. In addition, the AIG Coordinator can lend expertise and leadership in the implementation of these components and arrange or provide appropriate professional development for general education teachers, who must provide the differentiation services in our district in the absence of AIG specialists.

Planning time at all grades levels in our school district is a valuable commodity. It is difficult with the current structure of most of our schools to find time for collaboration. With our gifted population of students almost exclusively served by general education teachers, the greatest focus of collaboration is needed between these teachers and the Exceptional Children's and ESL teachers. Also, the assistance of special curriculum teachers and the guidance counselors is needed to fully integrate all areas of service.

Practice I

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

District Response: Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) provide an outline of service delivery options for a particular student, matched to that student's needs and strengths. It should detail the types of services offered (both direct and indirect), where or in what setting these services will be provided, and specify when the services are provided and with what frequency they will occur. The basis of services offered should depend on one or more established models of delivery that are researched-based and include best practices in gifted education. The DEP plan should outline the services best suited to the chosen model. While DEPs can include a checklist of services, these need to be examined for each student on an individual basis.

Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) have always been part of the Mitchell County Schools AIG program. During the 2013 - 2016 plan cycle, our program focused upon the high school DEP process, integrating them with their 4-year plan for graduation, beginning in the spring of the 8th grade year. While in the last plan cycle our program made significant improvements in our DEP process, we have several goals for improving the creation and sharing of these documents to make it a more meaningful process for teachers, parents, and students.

Presently, the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program asks teachers to collaboratively develop a DEP plan at each grade level for each student that is formally identified. This plan describes the differentiated curriculum and services that a student will receive that school year. These plans are discussed and signed at yearly AIG group parent meetings at each school, with parents having access for individual meetings if requested. With only the AIG coordinator serving as an AIG specialist, it is difficult to conduct individual DEP meetings for every student that is served by our program. An improvement in this process will be the goal of conducting one-on-one meetings with parents for initial placement, which will be facilitated by including AIG in the MTSS team process, when fully established. As students are initially identified, identification evidence will be recorded in PowerSchool, and we will investigate the use of the DEP tool on Powerschool as well.

IDEPs (Individualized Differentiated Education Plans) will be developed when a student show a demonstrated need for substantial differentiation, such as a highly gifted student at any grade level. They may also need to be developed for a student who needs an intervention plan. A student that is identified as twice-exceptional would need their IEP used as a support document. Also, while we have developed IDEPs for students in grades 3-8 before, we now intend to develop a policy to identify students in grades K-3, when necessary, who demonstrate need for early significant differentiation, and might also need an IDEP.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: 2-A:

Encourage consistency among district regarding service delivery and grouping methods.

Utilize the AIG~IRP (Instructional Resources Project) provided through NCDPI to guide and support teachers working with gifted learners; Provide professional development for all teachers on the AIG~IRP.

Provide and develop curriculum guides/maps for materials used with gifted learners.

Provide coaching and instructional support for teachers, provided by the AIG Coordinator or other AIG-qualified teachers.

Ensure that Honors Courses at the high school level are significantly differentiated from the standard curriculum, following the Honors Level Course Rubric.

Expand enrichment opportunities available to all students.

2-B:

Adopt one or more curriculum models district-wide to aid consistency and to help guide differentiation practices.

Provide targeted professional development for teachers of advanced learners on differentiating instruction.

Establish district-wide policy and procedures on acceleration (whole grade, subject, and within class).

2-C:

Find and select research-based supplemental sources for math differentiation in elementary and middle school classrooms.

Intentional programming for K-3 to develop and identify student potential using research-based resources such as PETS (Primary Education Thinking Skills).

Continue to expand the use of William and Mary ELA Units to all grades in the middle schools;

Expand and maintain the use of the Great Books Reading Program.

Explore future expansion of research-based supplemental resources for other core academic areas such as science and social studies.

Continue to support personnel state conference attendance (NCAGT and others).

2-D:

Integrate technology in classroom instruction within a real-world context.

Seek out ways to provide authentic learning and assessment opportunities, both in the classroom and through enrichment and extension activities.

Encourage the formation and continuation of service/leadership clubs

Use assessments to determine subject acceleration in courses such as reading and language arts, math, etc.).

Include gifted students' growth as part of the MTSS implementation.

Conduct local analyses of gifted students' assessment data in the LEA each school year to inform program evaluation.

2-F:

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Intentional and meaningful use of curriculum units and lessons that address the social/emotional needs of gifted students by both guidance counselors and applicable classroom teachers.
Intervention plans and/or IDEPs (Individual Differentiated Education Plans) developed for gifted students with social/emotional concerns or at-risk behaviors in school review or MTSS teams.
Establish school guidance counselor-led groups for gifted students.
Provide professional development for guidance counselors on the social/emotional needs of gifted students.

2-G:

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

2-H:

Gather resources and provide professional development for all teachers on how the NCSOS/Common Core and Essential Standards intersect with gifted education practices.
Investigate ways to establish formal means of team collaboration among all educators (such as MTSS) to develop and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction for gifted learners.

2-I:

Adoption by the AIG Program of one or more methods of service delivery at each grade level span district-wide, such as cluster-grouping, to facilitate DEP development, and to increase program fidelity and accountability.

School-based meetings with all cooperating teachers to develop DEPs early in school year, with a specific timeline for completion

Sources of Evidence: 2-A:

Student DEPs, IDEPs, etc. on file.
Records of student and personnel participation in enrichment activities.
Student/Parent/Faculty survey results.
Sample artifacts from teacher units, plans, etc. that have used resources from the AIG~IRP.
Sample student work projects and assignments.
Agendas, sign-in sheets from professional development sessions and training notes.
Copies of curriculum maps or pacing guides developed.
Honors teachers' course framework portfolios, and records of local review.
Advanced Placement teachers' syllabi.
Examples of "Credit by Demonstrated Mastery" policy used for students' benefit.

2-B:

The adoption of one or more curriculum models district-wide to aid consistency and to help guide differentiation practices.
Targeted staff development in the area of differentiation: agendas, sign-in sheets, presentations, and teacher products.
Written copy of a district-approved acceleration policy.
The integration of the State Board of Education's "Credit by Demonstrated Mastery" (CDM) policy into existing policies and procedures.
Student CDM records on file.

2-C:

Records of supplemental materials purchased with AIG funds; Research on file that supports the use of these materials.
Student work products.

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Pacing guides, curriculum maps and frameworks.

Agendas, sign-in sheets, etc., from professional development sessions during implementation.

Records of follow-up fidelity checks of the use of resources in classrooms.

2-D:

Evidence of technology integration into advanced classwork, such as lesson plans and student products.

Records of student participation in service learning opportunities and clubs such as Beta Club and Key Club, mentorships, academic enrichment and extension opportunities

2-E:-

Records of yearly data analysis as part of program evaluation.

MTSS district and school-level team meeting notes.

Documentation of the use of assessments to inform acceleration decisions.

2-F:

Guidance counselor/AIG Coordinator and/or school review team interventions are documented in individual student AIG folders.

Guidance counselor lesson plans and records of service.

Classroom teacher lesson plans, unit of study, etc. that address the affective domain of gifted student. Intervention plans or IDEPs for particular students, if needed.

Agendas, sign-in sheets, etc. from professional development targeted to guidance counselors and other educators.

2-G:

Sustained purchase of P.E.T.S. program materials.

Initial professional development and follow-up with teachers by the AIG Program

Administrator observations and fidelity check records.

Student AIG files of K-3 students referred and/or identified.

2-H:

Information shared yearly with general education teachers and specialists in regards to students they serve who qualify as twice-exceptional.

Resources shared in professional development for all teachers on how the NCSOS/Common Core and Essential Standards intersect with gifted education practices; agendas, sign-in sheets.

Establishment of formal collaboration teams at each school (perhaps MTSS) to determine the best manner to develop and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction for gifted learners; meeting notes, sign-in sheets.

2-I: -

DEPs developed for all identified students grades 4-12, updated by teachers annually; signed copies given to parent and placed in students' AIG folder.

IDEPs developed for students with documented need at any grade level.

MTSS team meeting agendas and notes.

DEP signed at one-to-one meetings for initially placed students; identification evidence entered into Powerschool.

Student files containing DEPs/IDEPs and documentation of any intervention plans or change in services Annual parent review meetings agendas, minutes, notes, sign-in sheets.

Parent and student program surveys.

Documentation of AIG program involvement in high school registration.

Standard 3: Personnel and Professional Development

The LEA recruits and retains highly qualified professionals and provides relevant and effective professional development concerning the needs of gifted learners that is on-going 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.

District Response: An effective coordinator of a gifted program must satisfy particular responsibilities, knowledge, and competencies in order to effectively administer the program. The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program currently has a Coordinator who is AIG-licensed and holds a Master's degree in Gifted Education.

Following is a job description of the AIG Coordinator for Mitchell County Schools, not necessarily all-inclusive:

Identification/Placement:

Develops an identification process that assures an individual body of evidence for potentially gifted students' knowledge and abilities as required by state standards and legislation and [DH1] State Board of Education Policy.

Selects assessments that include multiple sources of information about students.

Monitors the identification procedures and process to ensure fidelity.

Maintains an accurate program headcount and submits headcount to state authorities.

Programming/Curriculum/Instruction:

Plans and implements the district-wide programs and services for K-12 gifted learners that are specifically designed for the identified needs of the local population, in accordance with state standards and legislation and State Board of Education Policy, which has been approved by the LEA's school board.

Observes and evaluates the program's activities.

Designs programs in consultation with experts in the field based on research and "best practices".

Assesses the overall effectiveness of the program.

Initiates and directs improvements in the program.

Develops and solicits approval for policies including early entrance, acceleration, grouping, dual enrollment, and curriculum modification.

Collaborates with counselors to develop a comprehensive guidance program that addresses the unique social/emotional needs of gifted learners, as well as assistance with academic planning and vocational and career awareness.

Provides communications that include orientations and workshops that inform all stakeholders of program services and policies, as well as the academic and social/emotional needs of gifted learners.

Personnel/Staff Development:

Acts as a liaison between the Central Office administrative staff and local school staffs, state, and regional administration.

Articulates the roles and responsibilities of persons working with gifted learners.

Develops procedures for the selection of teachers that work with gifted learners that includes placement in classrooms where teachers have met local requirements for that position or have earned an AIG add-on license.

Determines needs and develops a comprehensive ongoing professional development plan for all personnel that work with gifted learners.

Maintains accurate records of personnel regarding gifted licensure and/or local requirements.

Facilitates implementation of staff development activities.

Evaluates and reports staff development activities to appropriate personnel.

Provides leadership for appropriate personnel.

Administrative Duties/Public Relations:

Provides leadership in the administration of the AIG program, and implements the plan for K-12 gifted learners in accordance with state standards and legislation and State Board of Education Policy, which has been approved by the LEA's school board.

Ensures that necessary administrative procedures are maintained.

Participates actively in regional meetings, personal professional development opportunities, and other state initiatives to support gifted programs.

Locates and facilitates the special and related services which support the program.

Establishes and leads an AIG Advisory Council that includes representatives from all stakeholder groups.

Evaluates the program on an on-going basis, both formally and informally.

Reports to stakeholders on an annual basis regarding program evaluation and activities and the progress of gifted students in the program, using data and information from all stakeholders to make or suggest changes in learning environments.

Fiscal Management:

Uses cost effective procedures in fiscal management.

Establishes and maintains control of financial resources specific to the continuum of services provided by the program.

Develops and administers a defensible budget that adheres to federal/state/local policies, while allowing for full implementation of the local AIG program plan.

Consults with the superintendent and finance officer on fiscal matters.

Participates in program audits and shares budget information with relevant stakeholders.

Practice B

Ensures that AIG-licensed specialists are engaged in tasks which explicitly address the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

District Response: Presently, our AIG program does not have sufficient funding to employ either full or part-time gifted AIG-licensed specialist positions for service delivery to our gifted learners. We

must rely on general education teachers and counselors at all grade levels from K-12 to differentiate the curriculum and meet the needs of these students. There are no particular service delivery models that our program follows, nor method of monitoring for fidelity of implementation, which leads to inconsistent and fragmented services across the district. Parent surveys conducted during the 2012 - 2013 school year indicate frustration among parents concerning inconsistencies among our district's schools. Our focus will be to develop and implement a district-wide service delivery model(s) for all students grades K-12.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG program and the AIG Advisory Council is constantly investigating and evaluating models of service delivery that will best serve the needs of our gifted population. In the past we have offered professional development to teachers, mostly in the area of curriculum differentiation, and have depended on the administration and faculty of each school to determine the best means of delivery at each site. This has resulted in fragmented services and a negative public perception of the local AIG program in general.

One of the most promising service delivery models that our district has investigated is the Schoolwide Clustering Grouping Model: SCGM (Winebrenner, S., & Brulles, D., 2008a). This model designs a setting for providing differentiated instruction that is practical for general education teachers and increases the probability that differentiation will be initiated and achieved, which results in greater potential for academic achievement and growth of gifted students (Brulles, 2005; Gentry, 1999; Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008b). This method of service delivery is essentially a grouping model, reducing the range of abilities in a particular classroom that a teacher must address. Students are placed in gifted cluster classrooms with teachers who have met the district's requirements for working with gifted learners. The advantage of implementing this method of service delivery would be a greater potential of growth for gifted learners, requiring relatively little additional expenditure for additional personnel once implemented fully.

Brulles, D. (2005). An examination and critical analysis of cluster grouping gifted students in an elementary school district (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ

Gentry, M. L. (1999). Promoting student achievement and exemplary classroom practices through clustered grouping: A research-based alternative to heterogeneous elementary classrooms. Storrs: University of Connecticut, The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Winebrenner, S., & Brulles, D. (2008a). The schoolwide cluster grouping model (SCGM). *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*, 22(2), 2–6.

Winebrenner, S., & Brulles, D. (2008b). *The cluster grouping handbook: A schoolwide model*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Practice C

Establishes specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, special education teachers, counselors, and school administrators.

District Response: Professional development in past years provided by the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has largely consisted of occasional workshops concentrated upon the characteristics of gifted learners or methods of curriculum differentiation. Records are kept of attendance at these workshops, and CEU credits are given to attendees. Nonetheless, our AIG program does not have specific local professional development requirements for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, exceptional children personnel, counselors, and school administrators that have not obtained official state AIG-licensure in place at the present time.

Direct services to identified AIG students are best provided by staff who have AIG licensure, which is obtained through the university pathway. The NCDPI no longer officially recognizes "local endorsement" as a means of licensure. In lieu of staff who have not received this licensure, our district needs to have in place a specific scope and sequence of coursework that meet our AIG program's local requirements for requirements for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, Exceptional Children personnel, counselors, and school administrators, including all grade levels K-12. Once established, this initiative also needs to be followed with on-going support through district professional learning communities. We hope to utilize state funding, as well as supplemental Title II funding in partnership with our district to accomplish this goal.

Practice D

Places AIG students in general education classrooms with teachers who have earned an AIG add-on license from an Institute of Higher Education (IHE) or who have met the LEA's professional development requirements for that position.

District Response: The intentional placement of gifted students with qualified personnel must be a consideration that is supported with the adoption and implementation of a service delivery model that is consistent across the district. Schoolwide cluster grouping offers the best and most cost-effective model for accomplishing this goal. Fidelity of the model must be maintained to derive maximum benefits to the students. A clear process for student placements in classrooms with qualified teachers also require the integration of other best practices in gifted education as well, such as requirements for all personnel who work with gifted students. There should be a partnership between the AIG coordinator and school-based administrators to ensure effective AIG student placement.

The Mitchell County Schools LEA or the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program currently does not have a plan or policy in place that addresses the placement of its identified AIG students in any particular manner. The grouping of students, and the placement of those students with particular personnel, is managed at each individual school by the principal and is not consistent district-wide. Some deliberate placement is occurring at the elementary and middle school levels where part-time flexible grouping of students by ability is managed within the school schedule. Our program needs to focus on this practice and other related practices to ensure the optimal placement for the growth of the district's gifted student population.

Practice E

Aligns professional development opportunities with local AIG program goals, other district initiatives, and best practices in gifted education.

District Response: Professional development supported and offered through the Mitchell County Schools AIG program has been historically opportunity-based and loosely based upon immediate needs. Focusing on this practice involves staying abreast of LEA initiatives, assessing present and future needs of the AIG program, and aligning program and personnel needs with the needs of the district as a whole. We will be investigating how collaboration with Title II plans and funding might benefit our program. This will involve advance planning and collaboration among the AIG Coordinator and other district administrators.

Professional development opportunities offered by the AIG program should be aligned to the AIG Program goals, while at the same time aligned with other district initiatives when possible. A goal of the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program during the 2016 – 2019 plan cycle is to implement a district-wide service delivery model such as cluster grouping. To implement this model, professional development would be offered to all teachers, but targeted to teachers willing to implement documented differentiation in a cluster classroom. Another goal of our program in the coming plan cycle is to develop specific coursework that will satisfy local requirements for working with gifted students and also encourage teachers to obtain gifted licensure add-ons. Both of these goals are also significant in relation to district goals and vision.

Practice F

Provides opportunities for AIG specialists and other teachers to plan, implement, and refine applications of their professional development learning.

District Response: The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program makes every effort to relate the professional development it provides locally to national (National Association for Gifted Children/Council for Exceptional Children) and state (North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented) standards, as well as best practices in gifted education. Whenever possible, professional development includes instruction in methods and models that stress 21st century skills, such as use of technology. Several teachers, who are also members of the AIG Advisory Council, regularly attend the state gifted conference. Our LEA also regularly participates in professional development offered regionally at our Western Regional Education Service Alliance (WRESA) and Northwestern Regional Education Service Alliance (NWRESA).

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

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: 3-B:

Provide clear and comprehensive descriptions for the role of general education teachers who serve gifted learners.

Establish local professional development requirements for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, exceptional children personnel, counselors, and school administrators.

Place AIG students in classrooms with teachers who have met the LEA's local requirements for that position or have earned AIG-licensure (see Standard 3, Practice D).

3-C:

Develop and communicate clear expectations district-wide for all roles regarding AIG personnel qualifications.

Establish specific local professional development requirements for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, exceptional children personnel, counselors, and school administrators that have not obtained official state AIG-licensure.

Provide a specific scope and sequence of local coursework designed to meet the local professional development requirements.

Development of local coursework components.

3-D:

Provide clear and comprehensive descriptions for the role of general education teachers who serve gifted learners.

Establish local professional development requirements for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, exceptional children personnel, counselors, and school administrators.

Place AIG students in classrooms with teachers who have met the LEA's local requirements for that position or have earned AIG-licensure.

3-E:

Alignment of AIG Program professional development offerings with LEA and individual school-based improvement and strategic plans.

Conduct an annual needs-assessment of AIG Program professional development needs as a part of continual program evaluation.

Establish specific local professional development requirements for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, exceptional children personnel, counselors, and school administrators that have not obtained official state AIG-licensure.

Provide a specific scope and sequence of local coursework designed to meet the local professional development requirements.

Development of local coursework components.

3-F:

Use technology to share new ideas and grade-appropriate resources.

Work with district leaders to provide vertical planning within subject areas.

Encourage and financially support conference attendance and participation (presenters); encourage membership in professional organizations that support gifted education.

Sources of Evidence: 3-A

Employment of an AIG-licensed coordinator on a full-time basis; funds encumbered for such employment on an annual basis as part of AIG budget.

Written job description for the AIG Coordinator position.

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Licensure records in personnel files.

AIG budget records.

3-B:

The development of written descriptions of roles for general education teachers who serve gifted learners, shared annually district-wide.

The development of written local professional development requirements for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, exceptional children personnel, counselors, and school administrators.

AIG coordinator's records of personnel who have met local AIG program professional development requirements or have earned AIG-licensure.

Documentation of AIG student placements with personnel who have met local AIG program professional development requirements or have earned AIG-licensure.

Implementation of a district-wide service delivery model(s).

Agendas and sign-in sheets from professional development on program service delivery models.

Notes and documentation from AIG coordinator fidelity checks on implementation of program service delivery model(s).

3-C:

The development of specific local professional development requirements for teachers and other personnel who are involved in providing AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, exceptional children personnel, counselors, and school administrators that have not obtained official state AIG-licensure.

LEA communications with personnel concerning staff requirements.

Written specific scope and sequence of local coursework designed to meet the local professional development requirements.

Agendas and sign-in sheets from professional development. AIG coordinator's records of personnel who have met local AIG program professional development requirements or have earned AIG-licensure.

Documentation of AIG student placements with personnel who have met local AIG program professional development requirements or have earned AIG-licensure.

3-D:

Written district-wide policy for placement of gifted students.

Documentation of partnership and planning with school-based administrators.

Records of student placements on DEPs and/or class rosters. AIG Coordinator and district personnel records.

3-E:

AIG Coordinator participation on LEA planning teams and committees.

Agendas, sign-in sheets, etc. of professional development opportunities that are aligned with both AIG program and district initiatives.

Personnel survey results outlining needs assessment for professional development.

3-F:

Documented alignment with NAGC/CEC professional development standards, NC teaching standards, and NC AIG licensure standards.

Membership in national and state professional organizations.

Records of attendance at the NCAGT (North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented) Conference.

Documentation of session presentations at conferences.

Documentation of local staff development provided by teachers who have attended "Train the Trainer" sessions in our region.

Standard 4: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

The LEA provides an array of K-12 programs and services by the total school community to meet the diverse academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

Practice A

Delivers AIG programs and services which are comprehensive of the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners across all classroom environments, grade levels, and settings.

District Response: The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program strives to provide programming that will meet identified students needs, and offer enrichment to advanced students to help develop their potential. We do not currently have a K-3 initiative in place other than supporting those grade levels with advanced ELA curriculum materials. Our program's focus going forward will be to establish a formal nurturing program in critical thinking skills (such as P.E.T.S. - Primary Education Thinking Skills). This would be supplemented with professional development in both the specific curriculum, as well as training on recognizing characteristics of gifted students. Teachers will be encouraged to observe students through the use of this and other curriculum in their classroom and refer any student that demonstrates exceptional potential for evaluation and possible AIG identification. Our program is recommending the practice of "cluster grouping" (intentionally placing identified students in a classroom which contains a small group of gifted students, along with other levels of students) to be used in our K-5 classrooms. This method of service offers several advantages in our district. There is no additional cost incurred for additional personnel, only for specialized training for teachers who are assigned a cluster classroom. This practice could reduce the levels of student abilities that a teacher must address, without the classroom becoming totally homogenous. The AIG program will support the transition through funding and professional development. The intentional placement of gifted students with qualified personnel must be a consideration that is supported with the adoption and implementation of a service delivery model that is consistent across the district. Fidelity of the model must be maintained to derive maximum benefits to the students. A clear process for student placements in classrooms with qualified teachers also requires the integration of other best practices in gifted education as well, such as professional development requirements for all personnel who work with gifted students and clusters. We will also continue to promote flexible grouping in both ELA and Math at the elementary level.

Our middle schools continue to offer services in ELA and Math through offering advanced blocks in those subjects. Our newly initiated district-wide STEM program begins in the middle grades and continues through the CTE program at the high school, supported by grants which provided state-of-the-art STEM labs at each school.

Our program will continue to focus upon improving the high school DEP process, integrating the DEP with their 4-year plan for graduation, beginning in the spring of the students' 8th grade year. We also continue to see the need to intensively train high school teachers in differentiation strategies, especially in the honors course offerings. We will be continuing the Honors Course Reviews at the local district level.

Our district is in the second state cohort for implementation of the MTSS model (Multi-Tiered Support

Services), which includes PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies). The AIG Coordinator serves as a member of the District Level team, and as the model is fully implemented within the next four years, the AIG Coordinator will seek to ensure that advanced students' needs of all grade levels are included in the service structure as it is implemented. This should include a plan for the school counselors to address the social/emotional needs of gifted students as part of the district-wide behavior supports.

Supplementing and supporting the AIG Program is the formation of a local NC P.A.G.E. chapter (Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education). Interested parents, educators, and community members have formed a steering committee, and are in the process of fully establishing the chapter in the fall of 2016. This group's goal is to support the MCS AIG Program by offering volunteer and financial support to the program in order to provide our advanced students and their parents with increased opportunities for relevant information and enrichment.

Practice B

Aligns AIG programs and services with each area of AIG identification, goals of the program, and resources of the LEA.

District Response: Learning opportunities for gifted learners should consist of a continuum of differentiated curricular options, instructional approaches, and resources. Along with appropriate service delivery models, these should be aligned so that identified student needs are met as well as is possible within program services and resources. These should be documented on the student DEPs, which also should be consistent across the district. Service delivery models that require fewer personnel resources, such as Schoolwide Cluster-Grouping, are currently being explored in our district due to lack of sufficient funding to hire AIG specialists to service the schools.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has made improvements in providing specialized curricular resources for use in classrooms that serve advanced and gifted learners. We are trying to expand the use of these resources consistently across the district and throughout as many grade levels as possible. We include information in the student DEPs (Differentiated Education Plans) that reflect how we align the use of these resources with different areas of the curriculum to serve identified needs (such as student placements in Math, Reading, or as Intellectually Gifted). All grade level teachers who serve the gifted population are required to document differentiation strategies on the DEP, and individualized DEPs must include documentation on how we will match the needs of the student to available services. We are striving to ensure that the service delivery models that are chosen to provide services for each grade level span are implemented consistently across the district.

In addition to curricular resources, we will be establishing a protocol for counselors and other educators for meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners, both in group and individual settings. Professional development will be targeted to equip educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to meet those needs.

Practice C

Delivers AIG programs and services that are integral and connected to the total instructional program of the LEA in policy and practice.

District Response: The AIG program should be an integral part of all LEA initiatives and divisions, which includes areas such as professional development and course development. The coordinator should be a part of the LEA decision-making teams, and consideration given to the program as decisions are being made that may affect the implementation of the local AIG plan. Communication should also occur between the AIG program and the curriculum/instruction departments of the LEA to ensure that gifted services are integrated with the total instructional program.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Coordinator position is currently included in the district leadership administrative team, and serves on individual district teams at the superintendent's request. In order for the coordinator to purposely monitor AIG program involvement, inclusion of the AIG Program and its Coordinator as an established part of such meetings and teams is essential. The AIG Coordinator attends local Board of Education meetings and reviews local BOE policies that relate to the AIG program, to ensure current policies are effective and based on best practice. The AIG Coordinator will also make recommendations for new policy as needed.

Practice D

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.

District Response:

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program shares information about all aspects of the local plan and its program policies and services, as well as the state regulations related to gifted education, with all personnel annually.

Communication with all LEA personnel is accomplished through many different means. The AIG Coordinator shares plan updates and program goals at the district-wide meeting at the beginning of the school year. Professional development in gifted education topics is available to most of the LEA's personnel each year either locally or regionally. Other means of distributing information among personnel involve time on the agenda at principal's meetings, scheduled AIG Advisory Council meetings, emails, phone calls, and the district and AIG website. A future goal is to provide a handbook for all personnel to help them understand the essential components of the plan.

Individual formal meetings will be held at least annually with other administrators to ensure all principals and central office personnel understand the AIG Standards, the local AIG plan, and analysis of AIG data at the LEA and school levels.

Practice E

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

District Response:

All principals/teachers in the Mitchell County Schools LEA are made aware annually of gifted student identification and service needs for the students that they serve. The AIG Coordinator presents an AIG update to personnel at the district-wide meeting at the beginning of the school year. We understand there is a need for special trainings for teachers at grades where school transitions are made in our district, typically grades 4-5 and grade 8. Transition meetings between teachers will ensure an effective continuation of services and allow pertinent data to be shared confidentially. We also would like to explore beginning an AP (Advanced Placement) preparation program that occurs in the summer to encourage participation and better prepare our students for success in these courses.

Practice F

Facilitates collaboration among school counseling personnel, regular education teachers, AIG specialists, and others to address the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

District Response:

The asynchronous development of gifted students can cause varied difficulties for gifted students. Referral information needs to be readily available for families regarding local agencies, specialists, and dependable websites where they can find information and support. In educating parents about the social/emotional needs of their children, we are enabling them to become better advocates for their child. Differentiated guidance and counseling should be a part of school-wide services for gifted students, as well as grouping practices that allow access to other gifted peers at least part of the day. Levels of challenge and rigor along with appropriate curriculum pacing also play a part in meeting the students' needs.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has provided professional development in the past that has included resources addressing the characteristics of gifted learners and their unique affective needs. However, it is perceived that a systemic and sustained written plan should be developed to address these needs. This is sustained by on-going professional development and information for parents/families. The MTSS/PBIS (Multi-Tiered Student Support/Positive Behavior Intervention Support) school-based teams will also be included as a part of the process, helping to develop intervention plans for students who may have social/emotional needs. Our counselors will take a lead role in helping to develop these plans, which will sometimes also necessitate the development of an IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) for the student as well. Professional development for specifically for counselors concerning the characteristics of gifted learners needs to occur and be updated frequently.

Practice G

Articulates and implements opportunities for acceleration, including compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, subject and/or grade acceleration when an appropriate body-of-evidence indicates the need.

District Response: While our district has had students who have accelerated at least one grade level, started kindergarten early, or subject accelerated at least once, to date we have not had a consistent district-wide policy to govern such decisions. The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program will continue to focus on assisting the district in developing a policy to guide administrators and parents in making these decisions. Also related to accelerative options for students is the offering of distance-learning courses and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery. Our program will be active in helping the district to develop the full use and potential of these options for our students. An IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) will be developed for a student if acceleration is utilized as a service option, detailing the method and means of acceleration.

Our program's goal is to assist administrators and parents in making accelerative decisions. We have purchased the IOWA Acceleration Scale, which is a tool to help schools and district teams make informed decisions concerning grade skips. The strategy is to develop a child study team to analyze several factors and make objective decisions. Principals and other administrators have been informed of the need to utilize this tool. The AIG program, in assisting to develop district policy, will offer professional development to administrators to familiarize them with its use. A district-wide local Board of Education policy on acceleration is needed to ensure that all parties in the LEA provide options similarly and obstacles are removed that prevent students from the research-based benefits that acceleration provides. In the development of district policies, we have integrated the SBE's "Credit by Demonstrated Mastery" policy into existing policies and procedures. Additionally, we will promote the opportunities accessible through distance on-line learning (ex., NCVPS, APEX Learning, etc.) and on-site/off-site dual-enrollment courses for our students, which is especially helpful to us as a rural district with limited financial resources and personnel.

Practice H

Provides intentional programming for traditionally under-represented AIG populations, including culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.

District Response:

Mitchell County Schools' demographics are unique in that it is a small, rural district with limited cultural diversity. Local demographics play a role in how our gifted services are structured in that there are a relatively small amount of identified gifted learners who are cultural or ethnically diverse or are Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. LEP students include only approximately 4.5% of the student population. Approximately 15% of our student population is identified as exceptional (EC) students. The largest single demographic in our LEA is that of economically disadvantaged students, which comprise approximately 57% of our average daily membership. We provide student identification information to personnel who have a specialized focus (such as ELL and EC teachers) that may also provide services to some of our gifted students. We monitor our economically disadvantaged students in order to provide financial assistance to any student whose need would present a barrier to participation in extracurricular activities.. On the occasion we have a highly gifted student, an IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) is developed for that student. Our early college, Mayland Early College High School, addresses the needs of these populations of students as part of its stated mission. Our district also provides opportunities through online learning and dual-enrollment and assist students who demonstrate need for participation in those courses.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program attempts to ensure that traditionally under-represented populations receive the same opportunities and services across the district. All personnel have been offered professional development concerning the characteristics of gifted students and the special needs of all special subgroups of gifted students. Students who show exceptional potential, but may be lacking in language skills, are nurtured in advanced classes with support from the ELL teachers. Likewise, students who may be identified as twice-exceptional are monitored in advanced classes for any difficulties that may be addressed through assistance from the EC teacher. When necessary, a student who has extraordinary circumstances that need intensive interventions will have an IDEP developed to specify what special services that student will receive. Budget resources are allotted for students who may face difficulties participating in curricular or enrichment opportunities because of financial constraints, such as subsidies for fees charged for AP exams or registration fees and travel. Due to the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act), federal Title I funding may be used to supplement services for low-income AIG students. We will be working with local personnel to determine (following state guidelines) if and how Title I funding could be budgeted for these purposes.

Practice I

Encourages extra-curricular programs and events that enhance and further develop the needs and interests of AIG students.

District Response: Parents in our district indicated in past survey data that they would like to see our district and AIG program offer more enrichment opportunities. This desire was echoed by the student survey data as well. There are numerous different enrichment options that could be added to the offerings currently available to students in our school district, with little perceived impact on our limited funding. Some examples include those supported by outside entities, such as regional math and science fairs and competitions, problem-solving competitions, and area summer camps and other activities offered through local colleges and universities. Other options that could be carried out locally, with school staff and volunteer support, could be group programs such as gifted showcases of work, local Saturday programs, technology seminars, or other activities designed to meet areas of perceived student interest. Additionally, individual options could include service learning and mentorship programs.

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program currently encourages participation in individual choice experiences targeted to gifted learners, such as Duke TIP (Talent Identification Program), UNC-Asheville's Super Saturdays, or Governor's School. We are advocating for increased participation in service clubs and competitions currently active in our district (such as BETA Club, LEGO Robotics, WCU Math Competition, and Battle of the Books. The steering committee of the newly formed P.A.G.E. (Parents for the Advancement of Gifted Education) chapter of Mitchell County has indicated that part of their mission is to coordinate volunteers and raise funds to assist in providing some of these types of opportunities to our students. We are supporting the P.A.G.E. chapter in these efforts to help provide enrichment opportunities to students both during and outside of school hours. Local media and the AIG program website will be utilized to promote these activities to both students and parents.

Practice J

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Utilizes intentional, flexible grouping practices to facilitate effective instruction and support the growth of AIG students.

District Response:

Gifted learners should be included in flexible grouping arrangements, and in all content areas and grade levels, to ensure that they have the opportunity to learn with and from their intellectual peers. Any grouping method utilized should consider the comprehensive needs of the students. Research shows that gifted learners thrive when grouped with other gifted learners for the majority of the school day. This means using grouping practices intentionally to reduce the levels of ability in any particular classroom setting to provide for effective instruction. Administrators should be made aware of the need for flexible grouping and all school personnel should be offered professional development to understand grouping models of service.

At the elementary level (K-5), Mitchell County Schools AIG Program is encouraging the use of the Schoolwide Clustering Grouping Model: SCGM (Winebrenner, S., & Brulles, D., 2008a) model of service delivery within homerooms and regular education classes (see Standard 3, Practice B). This model is not only optimal for the grouping of gifted students, but also fosters growth among all students. Within the cluster grouping model, students can also be flexibly grouped during the instructional day and for specific content, based on other factors such as readiness, interest, and learner profiles. In addition, students will need to be strategically placed in classrooms with teachers that have had met specific local professional development requirements for working with gifted students.

Middle school services in our district are largely provided by offering advanced sections of core courses such as reading and math. In math, students who require acceleration are offered Math I for high school credit. At the high school level, students/parents "self-select" Honors and AP courses based on student needs and choice. At both the middle school and high school levels, however, other content area teachers need to be made aware of the needs of gifted learners and instructional strategies to meet their needs. Also, students at the high school level should receive guidance from school personnel and the AIG program to register for coursework that best meets their abilities and needs. Currently the AIG program offers "AIG 101" for upcoming freshman AIG students and their parents. Information is provided about advanced coursework, and students are encouraged to develop a tentative four-year plan.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: 4-A:

Launch a formal "nurturing" program in grades K-3; train primary teachers to recognize characteristics of gifted students and refer students for identification.

Establish "cluster grouping" in elementary level classrooms.

Work with the MTSS district team to include the needs of advanced learners and identified AIG students, including social and emotional needs.

Concentrate upon providing professional development in differentiation for all teachers, especially at the K-3 and high school grade levels.

Continue Honors Course Reviews at the local level.

Support the continued formation of the Mitchell County P.A.G.E. chapter.

4-B:

Targeted professional development offerings.

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Continue to solicit and adopt research-based curriculum resources to assist teachers to meet the needs of specifically identified groups of gifted learners. Budget resources to replenish consumable materials.

Adopt a district-wide service delivery model at each grade level span that makes best use of available personnel and resources.

Ensure all schools have access to all programs, services, and resources available; establish a lending library for teachers and parents at a central location.

4-C:

Include AIG Coordinator on district leadership teams, including federal programs such as Title I and II, to make suggestions and monitor ESSA legislations and regulations concerning gifted and talented.

Make AIG a standing part of district-wide meeting agendas.

4-D:

Formally meet with administrators individually at least once a year to ensure all principals and central office personnel understand the AIG Standards, the local AIG plan, and analysis of AIG data at the LEA and school levels.

Develop a handbook for all personnel to help them understand the essential components of the plan.

4-E:

Establish meetings involving teachers at the key school transition points: elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school.

Investigate establishing an AP preparation summer seminar for high-school students.

4-F:

Develop strategies to address the affective characteristics of AIG students district-wide, which includes RTI teams.

Provide on-going professional development that encourages collaboration between all faculty, school guidance counselors, and area professionals concerning the social/emotional needs of gifted students.

Provide parents/families with information and resources to address the social/emotional needs of their gifted children.

Develop an IDEP and/or Intervention Plans for students when necessary.

4-G:

Establish district-wide policy and procedures on acceleration at all grade levels (whole grade, subject, and within class).

Develop IDEPs for students being accelerated.

Encourage opportunities for distance learning for students who need additional service options not available at the local level; Encourage dual-enrollment options.

4-H:

Solicit/investigate the use of Title I funds (per ESSA guidelines) to supplement services to low-income AIG students.

4-I:

Communicate in a timely manner to parents, families, and students about appropriate extra-curricular programs and events.

Sponsor academic and intellectual activities, both during and after school hours, that are of interest to AIG students and/or meet their needs.

Support the Mitchell County PAGE group's efforts to provide additional enrichment opportunities.

Ensure all students have access to enrichment activities (transportation, budget, etc.).

4-J:

Utilize the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping model to facilitate the growth of all students at the

elementary level, as well as flexible ability grouping in core subjects.

Provide guidance to middle and high school gifted students on choosing appropriate coursework to meet their needs.

Professional development for administrators and other personnel to raise awareness of grouping options.

Sources of Evidence: 4-A:

Targeted professional development agendas, sign-in sheets, presentations.

DEP forms in student files detailing strategies used to meet individual needs.

Powerschool records of student Identification and services.

MTSS meetings/notes.

Local Honors Course Review submissions and feedback; meeting notes.

4-B:

Student DEPs/IDEPs.

Budgetary resources set aside for purchase and maintenance of specialized/supplemental curriculum.

Consistent use of service delivery models and curriculum across the district.

4-C:

AIG Coordinator's job description

District-wide meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes.

4-D:

Agenda, presentations at district-wide meetings.

Agenda, sign-in sheets, minutes from AIG Advisory Council meetings.

Agenda, presentations, sign-in sheets from professional development.

Emails and website communications.

4-E:

AIG Coordinator participation in the beginning of the year district-wide meeting.

Evidence of transition meetings held: agendas, presentations, sign-in sheets.

Preparations made to begin an AP preparation summer seminar for high-school students.

4-F:

Student AIG files that include a list of documented supports and interventions that support the affective needs of gifted students in the district, which includes MTSS/PBIS. .

Workshops for parents; agendas and sign-in sheets.

Brochures, flyers, list of parent resources available on AIG website.

4-G:

Professional development offered to administrators; agendas and sign-in sheets.

Examples of "Credit by Demonstrated Mastery" policy used for students' benefit.

Development of a written LEA policy for accelerative instructional and placement options.

IDEPs in student AIG files.

Enrollment records of gifted students who have enrolled in distance learning and dual enrollment courses.

4-H:

Analyses of all LEA-enrolled student and gifted student demographic data.

Evidence of budget funds (state AIG funding or Title I) used to assist economically disadvantaged students.

Professional development: sign-in sheets, agendas.

Student DEPs/IDEPS.

Enrolled students (AIG-identified) in Mayland Early College High School

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4-I:

Communications to parents, families, and students about appropriate extra-curricular programs and events, such as through the AIG and district website, local media, e-mails, flyers, pamphlets and brochures, automated calls, newsletters, and mailings.

Evidence of AIG or non-AIG student and/or parent and district personnel involvement in activities held at various sites: pictures, media coverage, sign-in sheets, etc.

Budget resources allocated for assistance of sponsored activities (materials, etc.) and financial assistance for low-income students with demonstrated need.

4-J:

Class lists which document grouping strategies utilized.

Planning sessions offered to middle and high school students encouraging appropriate and challenging coursework; sign-in sheets, communications.

Sign-in sheets from meetings and professional development offered to administrators and other personnel concerning grouping practices.

Standard 5: Partnerships

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

Practice A

Develops partnerships with parents/families and the community that are intentional and meaningful to support the following needs of AIG students:

- ☐ academic and intellectual
- ☐ social and emotional.

District Response:

Our program has a demonstrated need, indicated by responses on our AIG Parent Surveys, to increase the quality and quantity of communications with parents and families. While we do offer basic information on our website, there needs to be more information and suggested resources available for parents, to promote understanding in the exceptional needs of their gifted student. Two-way communication methods currently include e-mail, phone, and regular mail, but technology constantly provides more options and these should be explored. Also, news about the AIG program and its students should be shared frequently to improve public perception and community relations. Frequent and meaningful communication with parents/families, and the community at large, promotes the AIG program in a positive manner. Parents of gifted students often both request and need additional information on the needs of their children, and the AIG program can assist in referring and acquiring appropriate resources and making them accessible. Advocates in the district are also forming a local PAGE (Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education) Chapter. The purpose of the chapter will be to provide extra educational opportunities for students, as well as to inform parents about the characteristics and needs of gifted students. This empowers them to become better advocates for their student. The PAGE group intends for focus upon utilizing community partners as guest speakers and to facilitate interest-based activities for advanced students.

Practice B

Shares with stakeholders, including all students' parents/families, information regarding the local AIG program, the local AIG plan, and other policies relating to gifted education.

District Response: The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program uses a variety of methods to communicate with all stakeholders concerning the goals and policies of the local AIG program and its relation to the North Carolina state gifted program standards. AIG information is presented periodically at local Board of Education and administrator meetings, faculty meetings, and parent meetings. The Mitchell County Schools' local AIG Plan is available for viewing through the district website. Contact information for the AIG Coordinator is included for the any interested individuals to ask questions or voice concerns. Families of AIG students are invited to annual meetings at each school to obtain current information about the program, ask questions, and sign DEP's (Differentiated Education Plans). Presentations from the parent meetings are also available on the website. The district automated phone system is used to help inform parents about meetings and events. Parents

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are asked to serve on the AIG Advisory Council, with efforts made to include parents of students from different grade levels (elementary, middle, high school, early college) and from different demographic regions in the district. The AIG Coordinator also provides informational presentations to various stakeholder groups on an as-needed basis.

Practice C

Establishes and utilizes an advisory group to develop, implement, and monitor 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 and families, AIG teachers, and other instructional and support staff.

District Response:

A functioning AIG Advisory Council that meets regularly currently exists as part of the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program. Parent input and perspective is intentionally sought, as well as other stakeholder groups such as civic and community groups, and businesses. Advisory Committees can have a positive impact on the overall development of a gifted program. The members support the quality and integrity of the services by offering their expertise and knowledge. Mitchell County Schools AIG Program Advisory Council includes members from administration, teachers, counseling staff, and parents/community corresponding to the district's demographics. The teachers on the council serve as school representatives for the AIG program, assisting the coordinator with the dissemination of information and providing school-level support for other teachers in the building. In addition to supporting a successful advisory council, we support the formation of a NC PAGE (Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education) chapter in the district. This will be a primarily parent-led, non-profit organization whose purpose is to advocate for gifted education in the district as well as provide assistance to the program in various ways.

Practice D

Informs parents/families and the community of opportunities available to AIG students on an ongoing basis and in their native language.

District Response:

While the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program presently uses several methods of communication with its stakeholders, it has been presented in the previous program parent surveys that some parents desired more frequent and meaningful communications from the AIG Program. We have a website in place, and it is connected to an AIG event calendar. There is also a need to update flyers used in the program as well. Whenever possible, we intend to translate both written and spoken communications into needed languages (primarily Spanish). Technology is an important tool for communication, especially for the enhancement of an initiative that is handled by a single practitioner. A well-managed website can offer instant access to essential information for any stakeholder. Special effort is made to maintain an effective and attractive website for the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program that is updated on a regular basis. E-mail distribution lists of teachers, parents, and students are currently being compiled to facilitate the timely sharing of information. Our program will continue to utilize all available means of communication to update and maximize our effectiveness with our program stakeholders.

Practice E

Forms partnerships with institutions of higher education, local business and industry, and other stakeholders within the community to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services.

District Response: Partnerships with stakeholders are essential to the well-being of the local AIG program and the students that it serves. The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has some already established partnerships, such as including parent/community representatives on the AIG Advisory Council, encouraging participation in DUKE TIP activities, and supporting students at the Mayland Early College High School. We are still exploring other avenues of support that are available to us in the region.

A partnership with parent/families needs to extend beyond representatives our AIG Advisory Council to foster involvement in the planning and implementation of the local AIG program. We are supporting and encouraging the formation of a NC PAGE (Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education) chapter in our district, to provide a practical means of advocacy for the program. These advocates intend to solicit local businesses for both financial assistance and other means of support.

Mayland Community College, in partnership with the Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey County school systems support the Mayland Early College High School. The enrollment there typically includes approximately 10% identified AIG students. These students are typically from underserved populations and come from all three surrounding counties. We would like to expand our partnership with the school and our AIG students in attendance there to include them in extracurricular and enrichment opportunities offered to our other high school students, and hold AIG parent meetings on the campus for informational and Differentiated Education Plan purposes. An effort needs to be made to remember the teachers in our professional development offerings as well.

Existing partnerships with businesses and industry include support from the Unimin Corporation, a local nationally known mining company, for our science programs at the middle and high school level. They supplement the purchase of lab equipment and consumable supplies, which aids our district in offering quality higher-level classes, such as Advanced Placement, in science. In the past, they helped to support enrichment and extracurricular activities in our schools such as science fairs and Olympiads. Our AIG program would like to see a reappearance in these types of activities in our district, and a renewed involvement with not only Unimin, but also other potential supporters of STEM activities in our region. We would also like to increase our involvement with other institutes of higher education to expand enrichment opportunities for our students, as well as professional development in gifted education and potential AIG licensure for teachers. Mayland Community College offers dual enrollment courses for college credit with our high school, both on our campus and theirs. Other nearby colleges and universities include:

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

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

institutions.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: 5-A:

Provide parents/families information on current issues in gifted education, especially academic, intellectual, and social/emotional needs of gifted students, in a variety of ways.

Suggest resources for parents on the unique needs of their gifted children and make those resources readily available.

Concentrate on providing more two-way communication methods for parents/families and encourage their use.

Share news and achievements of the AIG program and its students through local media and community resources with the assistance of the LEA's public relations officer.

Involve the newly-formed PAGE Chapter partner with the AIG program in sharing appropriate resources with parents.

5-B:

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

Utilizing local media outlets when appropriate to showcase student accomplishments to improve community perceptions and relations.

5-C:

Encouragement and support of the formation of a NC PAGE (Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education) chapter in the district.

5-D:

Increased and updated communications with parent/families and the general community about AIG opportunities on an on-going basis.

Translation of AIG materials shared with parents/families/communities in appropriately needed native languages.

5-E:

Form meaningful partnerships with AIG parents/families to advocate for the AIG program.

Strengthen and expand partnerships with regional institutions of higher education to enhance AIG programs and services.

Establish meaningful relationships with local businesses and industry and other stakeholders within the community to enhance AIG programs and services.

Sources of Evidence: 5-A:

Agendas, minutes, sign-in sheets from parent and community meetings.

Parent/family and community surveys.

Evidence of news and achievements shared through local media outlets.

Communications with the LEA's public relations office.

Information shared through website, flyers, pamphlets, and brochures.

5-B:

Documentation of parent informational and placement/DEP meetings at all school sites annually.

Current AIG plan available on district and school websites.

Brochures, pamphlets, flyers, newsletters that disseminate information about various aspects of the AIG program.

Parents representing all school levels/schools serving on the AIG Advisory Council.

Informational presentations at Board of Education/Principals'/district-wide and school-based faculty

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meetings.

5-C:

Parent representatives on AIG Advisory Council reflecting demographics of district.

AIG Advisory Council Meeting Agendas and Minutes.

Analysis and sharing of summaries of annual survey results of stakeholders, including faculty/staff, parents, and students.

Documents that have been translated into native languages.

Evidence of the initial efforts of the formation of a NC P.A.G.E. chapter.

5-D:

Communication through AIG websites, e-mails, flyers, mailings, newsletters, and automated phone calls.

Materials translated into native languages when possible.

Presence of interpreters/translators at AIG meetings and functions, as needed.

5-E:

DEP/Informational meeting agendas and sign-in sheets for MECHS.

Professional development agendas and sign-in sheets.

Budget resources allocated for MECHS.

Evidence of financial and like-kind support from business and community partners.

Evidence of outreach to institutes of higher education for assistance with program initiatives.

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 academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

Practice A

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

District Response: Every three years, the Mitchell County Schools AIG Program completes the development of a local AIG plan, with the assistance of the AIG Advisory Council, the Regional AIG Coordinator's Roundtable, and has it approved by the local Board of Education. The AIG Coordinator writes the local AIG plan, in cooperation with and with assistance from, the AIG Advisory Council as a team. The plan is based on guidelines approved under State Board of Education Policy, GCS-U-000, which are the approved NC AIG Program Standards, and also mandated by legislation under Article 9B, Academically or Intellectually Gifted Students (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.05-.08). Feedback is gathered from stakeholders to guide the process and assist program self-assessment. When writing the plan, each practice is addressed with a rationale, based on data and local context. The plan is submitted to the local BOE for approval, and then to NCDPI for review and comments. The final plan is available for review on the LEA's website and in written form upon request. The plan may be revised before the end of the next plan cycle; major revisions that reflect a change in policy or practice will need to be resubmitted for local BOE approval.

Practice B

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

District Response: The AIG Coordinator, along with assistance from the AIG Advisory Council and applicable Central Office staff, is responsible for successful local AIG plan implementation and the continual monitoring of the plan on a consistent basis. The aim is to ensure what is documented as policy in the plan is what is being carried out in practice. Interim reports are made during each three-year plan cycle to the State Consultant of Gifted Services at the NC Department of Public Instruction. The Mitchell County Schools AIG Coordinator currently oversees the implementation and fidelity of the local plan and program on an on-going basis.

A written procedure needs to be developed for annual program evaluation. Also, the AIG plan needs to be integrated with all school improvement plans and the district strategic and improvement plans when they are developed. Annual multiple data measure collection should be included which address the NC AIG Program Standards and Practices. Summaries of the evaluations should be shared with all relevant stakeholders.

Practice C

Uses and monitors state funds allotted for the local AIG program according to state policy.

District Response: The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has a yearly budget in place to categorize expenditures for implementing and facilitating the local AIG plan. The AIG Program's budget prioritizes costs and program needs to provide the best alignment possible with the local plan. Each category of the yearly budget is tied to a standard and practice of the local AIG plan. The AIG Coordinator is responsible for the development and maintenance of the budget, considering the feedback of the AIG Advisory Council. During regular AIG Advisory Council meetings, alignment of the budget and the local AIG plan are discussed. The Coordinator requests and receives regular updates from the district Finance Officer about expenditures and balances in each budget category. All state funds received for the gifted program are necessary and should be available for that purpose. Any personnel paid from state AIG funding should have AIG licensure. Also, due to the low level of state funding for our district, the AIG Advisory Council will be advocating for and seeking out other funding sources as well, including local monies, grant funds, and business partnerships to help meet the needs of our gifted learners and the program.

Practice D

Maintains, analyzes, and shares student achievement, student growth, and annual drop-out data for AIG students.

District Response:

The tracking of student data is an important tool in continuing AIG program evaluation. The AIG Coordinator is the primary person responsible for compiling and analyzing the data at the LEA level and distributing the data to all relevant stakeholders, and therefore should take an active role in the LEA's data team. Such data supports program fidelity and accountability, and serves to guide the program's services. Often data that includes potential failures, especially at the high school level, can serve to indicate students who would benefit from individual counseling, mentoring, or an academic intervention plan (IDEP or Individualized Differentiated Education Plan). Overall performance and growth data of AIG students helps the coordinator and administrators evaluate program effectiveness on a continual basis.

Practice E

Monitors the representation, performance, and retention of under-represented populations in the local AIG program, including students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.

District Response:

In order to be sure that students from underrepresented populations are being served, it is essential for the AIG Program to not only look at the growth and achievement data of each subgroup of the gifted population, but also how these groups are being referred, identified, and served. Often, other

specialists that work with these students can recognize gifted characteristics in these students more readily than other educators, and should be encouraged and trained to cultivate potential and recognize giftedness. Our program will strive for collaboration with the district's ELL and EC teachers, as well as counselors and other support staff, to ensure that our services are responsive to all students in our population who show potential and need for nurturing or AIG identification and services.

Practice F

Maintains current data regarding the credentials of personnel serving AIG students.

District Response:

Professional development records for all employees of the LEA are officially kept in personnel files at the Central Office. This contains certification and licensure records and includes Continuing Education Credits an employee has earned. Mitchell County Schools and its AIG Program currently do not have enough funding to facilitate the hiring of any AIG teaching specialists. Therefore, we must rely on regular education teachers to deliver instructional services to our gifted students. We would prefer our teachers obtain gifted licensure through the university pathway; however, this is up to the individual teacher to pursue. As of the 2015 - 2016 school year, two employees have gifted education licensure through the university pathway. The program will focus on keeping a separate set of files for this purpose, maintained by the AIG Coordinator, that includes all coursework and professional development in gifted education completed by district employees, as they seek to meet local requirements. We are continuing the process, during the 2016 - 2019 plan cycle, of establishing local professional development requirements for teachers who work with gifted students. This would include almost all teachers in our district within our current structure. Accurate records will need to be kept by the AIG Coordinator and cooperation with the Personnel Director at our Central Office will be essential in this process.

Practice G

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

District Response:

The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has an active Advisory Council, which meets regularly (at least quarterly) during the school year. Its members represent the demographics of the district and include Central Office and school administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and interested community partners. Members perform an important and necessary role as a group of stakeholders that offer their perspective, expertise, time, and commitment to the implementation of the local AIG program.

Functions of the AIG Advisory Council include:

- Meeting regularly and working together to offer advice about the development or improvement of gifted student services; helping to establish program priorities.

- Becoming knowledgeable about current programs, research, and best practices in gifted education and its relationship with general education.
 - Providing feedback about the effectiveness of the gifted education plan and reviewing it annually.
 - Fostering a collaborative relationship between the school personnel, the local Board of Education, and the council.
 - Making suggestions to promote community awareness of gifted education.
 - Supporting professional development training for staff.
 - Advocating for gifted education initiatives in the district and providing input and support for funding at all levels.
 - Encouraging communication and a better understanding of gifted education issues among teachers, parents, and the general public.
 - Serving as a liaison to help the community understand and support gifted education services.

Since our district lacks the funding for hired AIG specialists in the schools, the Advisory Council helps to fill the need for school representation. Members of the AIG Advisory Council who are school employees will serve as their school's representative, helping to manage school AIG identification teams and solicit and disseminate information at the school-level.

Practice H

Utilizes multiple sources of data to review and revise the local AIG program and plan during comprehensive program evaluation.

District Response: The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has complied with the submission of required state reports and plans, including minor revisions to the current plan. However, it is sensed by the Advisory Council that program evaluation should occur on an annual basis, using multiple sources of data, and any major changes in the program should be reflected in a revision to the local LEA plan, and subsequent Board of Education approval.

In North Carolina, gifted education programs are accountable for documenting that state resources dedicated to the program are being used both effectively and economically. Stakeholders have a right to be involved in the program evaluations and the process needs to include both formative and summative data. Care will be taken to include all relevant stakeholder groups during future evaluations, including more community member input and feedback from parents of students who are not identified gifted. We are still working on a specific plan for annual program evaluation. This will include the surveys we are already conducting, as well as other data collection methods and sources, such as EVAAS growth scores. An important piece of information that we will definitely be tracking is AIG student standardized testing using growth data, not merely percentile scores or achievement levels.

Findings will be presented yearly at open public meetings, such as the local LEA Board of Education meeting, and in written or graphic forms published on the AIG website as well.

Practice I

Disseminates all data from evaluation of the local AIG program to the public.

District Response:

The only formal evaluations conducted in recent years have been the self-assessments completed by the AIG Advisory Council in preparation for revising the local AIG plan as required by the state. Our goal is to gather multiple types of evaluation data broken down by building and grade level. It is the intention of our program to be transparent, and to focus on sharing and publishing data from our program evaluations in various formats based on the audience. Evaluation data should be summarized and communicated to relevant stakeholders in a timely manner that is clear and that reflects local perspectives and is considerate of the context and situational factors affecting the schools and personnel involved. In the collection and distribution of this information, there should be both qualitative and quantitative information shared.

Practice J

Safeguards the rights of all AIG students and their parents and families 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.

District Response: The Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has a Due Process Rights policy in place as set forth by North Carolina General Statute § 115C-150.05-.08 (known as Article 9B) in Section 8 (see below). The rights are posted on the AIG Website, as well as included on parent brochures and orally read and discussed at most parent meetings. We will be maintaining this practice as well as translating the policy into needed languages.

Mitchell County Schools AIG Program has written policies in place regarding the identification and placement of students. Signed forms for prior consent for evaluations must be obtained at the time of student referral. Parents are provided with procedures and a timeline. An improvement in this process would be to include a copy of the Due Process Procedures along with the consent form.

At the time of student identification and placement, parents must also sign a consent form for the identification and placement of the student as determined by the school team in order for the student to receive services. We are going to begin including the Due Process Procedures with the placement forms as well.

The rights of AIG students to receive appropriate services is protected by the yearly DEPs (Differentiated Education Plans). These are approved yearly by the AIG Coordinator and signed by parents at school meetings. Parents may request a change in services at any time. The request will be reviewed by the AIG Coordinator and changes made if deemed necessary. Re-evaluation of identification area will occur as appropriate in each student's case or if requested by the parent. The evaluations timeline will vary upon the individual situation.

Students who transfer to the district indicate on a school registration form if they were previously identified as AIG in their previous school. If so, the student information data manager will report the

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student's basic information to the AIG Coordinator for investigation. The AIG Coordinator will contact the parent for prior notice/consent before services begin. If a student transfers from a district, within the state of North Carolina, their information will be obtained from the Powerschool database, and the student will be placed in services according to their identification area. Transfer students from outside the state will be evaluated the same as a new referral, in order to determine identification area(s).

State Statute Regarding Due Process

§ 115C-150.8. Review of Disagreements.

In the event that the procedure developed under G.S. 115C-150.7(b)(7) fails to resolve a disagreement, the parent or guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The scope of review shall be limited to (i) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted student, or (ii) whether the local plan developed under G.S. 115C-150.7 has been implemented appropriately with regard to the child. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings of fact and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on the parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. (1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 18.24(f).)

Mitchell County Schools AIG Program Due Process Policy

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

1. The parent/guardian requests a conference with the school-based review team.
 - a. Parent/guardian may make a request for a conference with the team to discuss the concerns about the recommendation.
 - b. The team will review the student's records and their previous nomination, identification, and service option decision. The team may gather additional information about the student from teachers and or parent as needed.
 - c. The team grants the conference within 5 school days of the request and responds to the parent in writing within 5 school days of the conference.
2. The parent/guardian appeals the team's decision to the AIG Coordinator.
 - a. Parent/guardian may appeal the team's decision in writing to the AIG Coordinator within five days of receiving the written response from the team.
 - b. The AIG Coordinator reviews the grievance within 5 school days of the receipt of the appeal.
 - c. The AIG Coordinator responds in writing to the outcome of the review within 10 school days.
3. The parent/guardian appeals to the Superintendent of Mitchell County Schools.
 - a. The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the AIG Coordinator to the superintendent within 5 school days of receiving the response.
 - b. The superintendent reviews the grievance within 5 school days from the receipt of the appeal.
 - c. The superintendent responds in writing concerning the outcome within 10 school days to the parent/guardian, AIG Coordinator, and principal of the given school.

4. The parent/guardian appeals to the MCS Board of Education.
 - a. A parent may appeal to the MCS Board of Education in writing within 10 school days following the written response from the superintendent.
 - b. The Board may offer a final decision within 30 days of written receipt.
5. The parent/guardian petitions the administrative law judge for a contested case hearing.
 - a. Parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under ~Article3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.
 - b. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings of fact and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of ~Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decision of the judge becomes final, is binding on all involved parties, and is not subject to further review under ~Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: 6-A:

Maintain an AIG personnel qualifications file, indicating the credentials of personnel serving AIG students.

Cooperate with the personnel director to maintain accurate records.

6-B:

Inclusion of the local AIG plan in all other strategic plans at the school and district level.

Develop a procedure for annual program evaluation, that includes multiple measures, and is paralleled to the NC AIG Program Standards and Practices.

Publicize and share evaluation data with stakeholders on an annual basis.

Collect data regularly, both informally and formally, from a variety of sources, especially student growth data.

6-C:

Develop a defensible budget that allocates 100% of state funding received (034) to facilitate and implement the local AIG plan.

Advocate for and seek out other funding sources, such as local monies, grant funding, and business partnerships.

6-D:

NC testing results, EVAAS growth predictors, and other performance indicators.

Local high school dropout rate reports and potential failure reports compared to AIG headcounts.

6-E:

Create a systematic procedure for the collection and analyzing of data.

Include the AIG Coordinator to serve on the LEA's data team.

Collaborate with other specialists in the LEA to help cultivate potential and recognize giftedness.

6-F:

Maintain an AIG personnel qualifications file, indicating the credentials of personnel serving AIG students.

Cooperate with the personnel director to maintain accurate records.

6-G:

Conduct surveys of stakeholders on a regular basis.

6-H:

Gather multiple sources of data for continuous program improvement.

Yearly annual review of plan/program evaluation, facilitated by the AIG Coordinator and the AIG

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Advisory Council.

6-I:
Disseminate all data from evaluations of the local AIG program by the sharing and publishing data from our program evaluations in various formats based on the audience.

6-J:
Translating all protective policies into needed languages.
Include a copy of the Due Process Procedures with prior consent forms for identification, placement, re-evaluations, and transfers.
Obtain prior consent before officially serving transfer students.

Sources of Evidence: 6-A:

Local AIG program completed written self-assessment on file.
Local AIG Plan BOE approval document with signatures.
Submittal of BOE locally-approved LEA AIG Plan to NC Department of Public Instruction.
Availability of local AIG Plan on district and AIG website.

6-B:
Development of a written process and timeline for program evaluation.
Longitudinal data and evaluation evidence kept on file.
Summaries of evaluation data shared with stakeholders on an annual basis.
School-level and district-level strategic plans that include goals of the local AIG plan.

6-C:
A budget that allocates 100% of state funding (034) to facilitate and implement the local AIG plan.
Records of other sources of funding received.

6-D:
Create a systematic procedure for the collection and analyzing of data.
Gather, analyze, and share AIG student growth and achievement data for the LEA, including EOG, EOC, PSAT and SAT, AP, ACT, PLAN, EXPLORE, and other qualitative data.
Use disaggregated data to determine individual and group AIG student trends and to inform instruction.
Track and address LEA dropout data and potential AIG student failures.
Inclusion of the AIG Coordinator to serve on the LEA's data team.

6-E:
AIG LEA identification and headcount data, analyzed for trends in demographics and subgroups.
Enrollment data for upper level courses at both the middle and high-school levels.

6-F:
AIG personnel qualification files, maintained by AIG Coordinator.
Personnel records on file at the LEA Central Office.

6-G:
Advisory Council member list.
E-mail communication with members.
Advisory Council meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, minutes.
Documents that reveal work accomplished by the Advisory Council, such as program evaluations and program self-assessments.
Notebooks kept by Advisory Council members.

6-H:
Copies of various data analyses on file.
AIG Advisory Council agendas, sign-in sheets, minutes.
Program self-assessments.

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Plan revision draft copies and copies of revised plans.

Evaluation results shared at meetings.

Evaluation results posted on website.

6-I:

Written reports of AIG program evaluations shared on website, etc., with public.

Presentations (oral and/or written) of AIG program evaluations at AIG Advisory Council, principals/Central Office leadership, and parent/family meetings.

6-J:

Due Process Rights included and detailed in local AIG plan.

Due Process Rights shared in multiple ways with families (website, pamphlets and brochures, shared orally at parent meetings).

Due Process Rights translated into needed languages.

Copies of Due Process Rights included in all prior consent communications with parents.

Student AIG records on file.

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Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

AIG Prior Notice and Consent Letter_MCS_AIG Form 1.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

AIG Referral Information Letter .pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

AIG Referral Information Letter 2nd Notice .pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

Identification_Placement Rubric.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

Initial Placement Letter.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

Initial Placement_MCS_AIG_Form 4.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

Mitchell County AIG Placement Timeline Flowchart .pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

Non-placement letter.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

Parent Referral Form_MCS_AIG_Form 3.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

SIGS_Letter.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

Teacher Referral_MCS_AIG_FORM 2.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

Due Process Procedures.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:6*)

AIG Purchase Request Form 2016-17.docx (*Appendix - Standard 2:6*)

MCS_AIG_BOE Approval Document.pdf (*Local Board Approval Document*)