

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

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Randolph 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 and 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, Randolph County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Randolph County Schools Vision for local AIG program: The Academically and Intellectually Gifted program in the Randolph County School System is structured so that gifted students receive instruction and programming suited to their needs. Outstanding abilities and giftedness are present in all areas of human endeavor, and cross the lines of culture, socioeconomic status, race, and gender. Gifted students, who demonstrate the ability to achieve at higher levels than their peers, should receive challenging education opportunities, intellectually stimulating curriculum, and differentiated instruction to address their academic and social/emotional needs. Through research based practices, challenging and differentiated curriculum, professional development, comprehensive programming, partnerships, and transparent accountability, our district will continue to build a program for AIG students that will not only prepare them for college and career, but create a desire for continual growth and community involvement.

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

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$918215.00	\$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: Procedures for AIG student screening, referral, and identification for the district are communicated in a number of ways. AIG specialists make presentations to all school personnel at the beginning of each year to ensure that teachers and administrators are aware of the procedures. Ongoing professional development is offered by the AIG Program Specialist on a yearly basis outlining the screening and identification process.

A copy of the plan has been placed on the district AIG website along with a FAQs section containing screening, nomination and identification information. Nomination logs are collected by the AIG Program Specialist annually to ensure compliance as students are nominated and screened according to the procedures established in this document. The identification and screening process is shared with stakeholders during AIG family nights at schools and by sending home parent handbooks.

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: The Randolph County School System utilizes a multiple criterion approach to gifted placement and services. In our most recent revision, additional options for use of nonverbal aptitude scores were added as a new option for identification. Survey and self-assessment ratings along with significant discourse during the revision process lead us to restructuring and realigning our pathways for identification to promote equity and consistency across grade spans. Measures of student aptitude, achievement and the "potential to achieve" indicators have been researched and implemented to create our pathways of identification.

The following designations were used to create our pathways and build bodies of evidence to best understand a child's abilities and potential.

Intellectually Gifted: This designation is for students who demonstrate high intellectual capacity, but have not yet demonstrated high academic performance. An Individualized Differentiated Education Plan will be written for students who are identified as IG.

7/7/2016

Academically Gifted: This designation is for students who have demonstrated high academic performance designated in a specific academic field. The Randolph County School System recognizes students in the area of math and reading who demonstrate high academic performance using off-grade level assessments that are nationally normed.

Academically and Intellectually Gifted: This designation is for students who are demonstrating high intellectual capacity and high academic performance.

Randolph County School System complies with the state legislation allowing a child to enter kindergarten early if he/she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. The principal, working with the school AIG team, will make decisions on a case study basis, considering the following criteria: student aptitude, achievement, performance, observable student behavior/student interest, and motivation. It is the parent's responsibility to present this supporting information to the principal regarding the student.

K-2 Criteria

In the Randolph County School System, various learning environments, enrichment opportunities, and programs are available to students. In grades K-2, multiple indicators are used to identify students who are achieving above their peers. These indicators are as follows:

AI Pathway (Academically and Intellectually Gifted Services)

97%-99% on a Standardized Aptitude Test Cognitive Abilities Test(CogAT)-Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal

97%-99% on a Standardized Achievement Test (IOWA Achievement)-Total Reading and/or Math

AG Pathway (Academically Gifted)

97%-99% on a Standardized Achievement Test (IOWA)

3.0 or higher score on District Performance Task

IG Pathway (Intellectually Gifted)

97%-99% on a Standardized Aptitude Test (CogAT)-Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal

The bodies of evidence above are examined on a case study approach. Only in these cases will formal identification occur before the beginning of the third grade. Using this case study approach, the Randolph County School System will use the Iowa Acceleration Scale to determine if subject acceleration or whole grade acceleration is warranted.

3-5 Criteria

Beginning in third grade, a countywide formal student search will be conducted annually. Scores from system-wide End-of-Grade/End-of-Course(EOG/EOC) and/or third/fifth grade Cognitive Abilities Tests (CogAT) at the 85th percentile or above will be used to screen students. The IOWA Test of Basic Skills may also be administered. This nationally normed test is administered one grade level above the student's current grade level. In addition, students from diverse cultures and socio-economic backgrounds or students with disabilities which may affect their learning will also be screened for gifted characteristics. Each school's English as a Second Language (ESL) and Exceptional Children (EC) teacher will be consulted to aid in the identification of students. Parents and/or teachers may

also request that students be added to the screening pool. Supporting documentation should accompany these nominations.

Each school must maintain a list of student nominations and should review the needs of nominated students for differentiated services. Data collected from teachers, parents, psychologists, and central office staff will include: standardized achievement test scores, group and/or individual aptitude scores, and performance tasks/assessments. Data will be recorded on the appropriate nomination form.

Grades 3-8 Identification Criteria

AI (Pathway One)

97%-99% on a Standardized Aptitude Test (CogAT)-Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal
97%-99% on a Standardized Achievement Test (IOWA)-Total Reading and/or Math

AI (Pathway Two)

90%-99% on a Standardized Aptitude Test (CogAT)-Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal
85%-99% on a Standardized Achievement Test (IOWA)-Total Reading and/or Math

AG (Pathway One) (Academically Gifted Services)

Standardized Achievement Test Score (IOWA) 97%-99%-(one level up)

AG (Pathway Two) (Academically Gifted Services)

Standardized Achievement Test (IOWA) 90-96% (one level up)
Score of 3.0 or higher on district performance task

IG Pathway (Intellectually Gifted Services)

97%-99% on a Standardized Aptitude Test (CogAT)-Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal

Identification/Placement

The next phase of the decision-making process involves assessment/review. When screening results indicate that a more in-depth assessment is warranted, parents are notified and given the opportunity to conference with appropriate school staff regarding the assessment(s). Assessment tools used as multiple indicators will come from the following categories: 1. District Performance Task – an indicator of the level and quality of a student's work. This file provides written documentation, based on performance assessment tasks, of what the student is capable of producing. Performance assessment tasks will be judged for appropriateness by a committee of AIG teachers other than the AIG teacher from the student's base school. A pre-established rubric guides the decision making. If the base school AIG teacher disagrees with the findings of the review committee, the assessment will be re-evaluated by a second committee of AIG teachers. 2. Achievement measures – an indicator of a student's knowledge. This may be shown through End-of-Grade or IOWA test scores in grades three through eight in reading and/or math or standardized test scores at the 90th percentile or above. 3. Aptitude measures – an indicator of a student's potential for learning. Aptitude may be shown by a standardized test score at or above the 90th percentile. Decisions will be made using appropriate sources to ensure that an accurate appraisal of the needs of the student has been made. No single piece of information will prevent a student from consideration of services; however, a single

piece of information can indicate that differentiated services are warranted (e.g. an aptitude score that is in the superior range is indicative of outstanding intellectual aptitude). School site decisions regarding the need for differentiated services will be made based on the information gathered on students and the decision will be documented on the appropriate form. The completed student AIG record will be sent to the AIG Program Specialist at the central office for review of all decisions made by the School-Based Committee for Gifted Education.

Grades 9-12

Students must enroll in at least one honors/Advanced Placement class per semester. Based on data, when students no longer exhibit the need for gifted services and do not enroll in at least two honors/AP classes per year, the AIG Program Specialist will ensure guidance is aware of these students. School personnel will plan and support the students' return to honors/AP courses. If the students do not enroll in advanced courses in subsequent years, school personnel will complete the appropriate paperwork and remove the students from the AIG program.

Grades 9-12 Identification Criteria

Academically and Intellectually Gifted Pathway 1 (AI)

97%-99% on a Standardized Aptitude Test (CogAT)-Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal

97%-99% on a Standardized Achievement Test (Math I EOC, English II EOC, ACT, or PLAN)

Academically Gifted Pathway 2 (AG)

90%-99% on a Standardized Achievement (Math I EOC, English II EOC, ACT, or PLAN)

Intellectually Gifted

97%-99% on a Standardized Aptitude Test (CogAT)-Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal

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: In 2015-2016, 17% of our LEA enrollment was comprised of Hispanic students. Over the past three years the representation of Hispanic students identified as AIG has nearly doubled to 9% of our total AIG population. We recognize this is an improvement, but our Hispanic population remains underserved. Over the past two years attempts have been made to monitor our identification data for demographic groups in our AIG population to determine if nurturing strategies are effective with developing potential. During 2016-2019, we will use "local norming" to identify the top ten students at grades three through five who are performing well when compared with students who share similar characteristics, such as race or school attended.

Currently, we administer the CogAT and Iowa (ITBS) tests as traditional testing measures. In order to identify our underserved population, we will continue to offer the Nagleri as an alternative assessment. The district will establish guidelines for requesting alternative assessments and will

make this available to teachers and families. Additionally, we need to change our evaluation procedures so that a more comprehensive profile of a student is revealed. The use of local norms on standardized tests will allow us to identify high potential students in our local context, and examining work samples will provide a more complete picture of a student's knowledge and capabilities, particularly for students whose giftedness may manifest in non-traditional ways. The Randolph County School System AIG Department has increased collaboration with the district's English as a Second Language (ESL) Department. Screening and identification processes have been reviewed with the District ESL Program Specialist.

Middle and high school referral and screening procedures are not being initiated intentionally to respond to under-represented groups in advanced classes. Efforts to recruit high school students for Advanced Placement courses need to be in place for 2016-2019.

Practice D

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

District Response: An AIG Handbook has been written and training takes place every year for all affected personnel at each school. This handbook includes beginning-of-the-year checklists, end-of-the-year checklists, placement criteria and options, nurturing guidelines and logs, all forms including sample forms, nomination and identification logs, and folder order of completion. In addition, all parent brochures and notification of rights are included for personnel referral and use.

The handbook contains all performance tasks (reading and math), all observation forms and instructions for completion, and all rubrics that are needed for scoring. In addition to this information being available in print format, the information is available to each AIG specialist electronically via a district AIG Google site.

Every school year the AIG Program Specialist asks specialists at each school to submit documentation of all completed forms, and every newly identified AIG student's information is reviewed. Each year, all students who have been screened for possible AIG identification are listed on a nomination log. This log lists all the data that has been collected on each student. It is submitted to the AIG Program Specialist who reviews it for consistency and thoroughness. The AIG Program Specialist attends elementary, middle, and high school principals' meetings periodically to share identification information.

Annually, all AIG students' progress will be reviewed to determine the level of need and appropriate service delivery options. The School-Based Committee for Gifted Education will conduct this review. If the School-Based Committee for Gifted Education recommends differentiated services for the upcoming school year, a Differentiated Education Plan will be developed.

School-Based Committee for Gifted Education

Each school site will develop a School-Based Committee for Gifted Education to:

Review student eligibility

Determine if further assessment is needed

In addition, committee responsibilities will include:

In-school monitoring and evaluation of the school's efforts for AIG learners

Transfer students: Any student who transfers to the Randolph County School System with AIG identification will continue to receive differentiation services as his/her needs indicate.

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: Each year the Randolph County School System conducts Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) meetings with parents and/or students to review the plan for differentiation that will take place during that school year. The DEPs address both the learning environment and modifications each student will receive. Cluster grouping is strongly encouraged at the elementary and middle grades. These meetings are held the first weeks of school during September so that all current stakeholders (teachers, parents, and/or students) can be present. The high school DEP is initially developed annually as course registration takes place, but is reviewed again in the fall after all schedule adjustments have been made.

At the end of each year, a student's service will be evaluated based on student performance, progress and EOG testing data. Services will continue if indicators show a need. If data shows a need for service change for the student, the appropriate school personnel will inform parents regarding the change in services. Schools will maintain documentation in the AIG placement folders.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: The district will research alternative assessments and nontraditional measures for future identification of traditionally under-represented AIG populations. The district will continue and strengthen the implementation of Primary Enrichment Thinking Skills at the K-3 level as a service for underserved students who demonstrate academic potential. The district will provide professional development to expand understanding of giftedness and tackle misperceptions. The district will work with middle and high school teachers and school counselors to identify potential AP students using the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude (PSAT), American College Testing (ACT), and ACT Explore results. The district will monitor the enrollment of under-represented groups in AP and Honors courses. The district will conduct AIG Identification and Placement Awareness sessions at each school in 2016-2017.

Sources of Evidence: • AIG Placement Criteria and Testing Procedures

- Performance Tasks
- Individual Student Identification/Placement Record

7/7/2016

- AIG screening lists
- AIG nomination logs
- Agendas for professional development sessions regarding screening and identification
- Signed DEP forms
- AIG student folders with signed documentation
- AIG Plan
- AIG Handbook

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 Common Core standards are used as the starting point for designing our students' instruction. The Gifted Program Advisory Council, AIG specialists, and district curriculum departments feel at this time that the Common Core Standards are not adapted consistently in our district to extend, enrich, or accelerate in meeting the needs of our gifted students. Inconsistency with implementation across the district is noted with variations from school to school. Our district EVAAS data indicates our higher performing students are often the students who are not making growth. The differentiation provided for students is being placed in an accelerated class, or taking Honors or AP courses, but there is little evidence of differentiation within the class setting.

Identified AIG students receive instruction from an AIG specialist in their area(s) of identification a minimum of two times each week in elementary schools. In middle and high schools, opportunities exist daily for advanced instruction.

As part of the DEPs and IDEPs, AIG specialists and teachers identify how they will differentiate the curriculum for each year. Differentiation strategies include but are not limited to differentiation of the learning environment (grouping strategies) and differentiation of process, content, and product. This content and process differentiation is based on pre-assessment of student skills prior to teaching the content. Once pre-assessment has taken place, the teacher is able to determine flexible grouping for instruction and instructional strategies that will be used. Teachers are encouraged to restructure what is taught, how students learn, and how they demonstrate their knowledge. Concepts are overarching guides to unit discussion with emphasis on complexity through viewing multiple perspectives, interdisciplinary topics, and issues over time and across cultures.

Teachers have resources for differentiation strategies in each of their school's AIG professional library available for reference. To further ensure consistency, professional development is occurring to refresh teacher awareness of multiple strategies and the need to differentiate. Based on professional development needs surveys, teachers are given opportunities to indicate areas where they need additional support and training.

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: AIG specialists serve as consultants for K-2 classroom teachers who have questions or needs for differentiation above their normal practices. The AIG specialist often provides resources, instructional strategies, and ideas for differentiation. In-class exploration is pursued by AIG specialists when the need arises. AIG specialists teach whole class or nurturing lessons in third grade using Primary Enrichment Thinking Skills.

Gifted students are placed in cluster groups to facilitate the peer interaction necessary for the cognitive growth of the AIG students. Cluster group teachers are required to complete our local AIG endorsement training and are encouraged to seek AIG licensure. AIG cluster teachers collaboratively complete Differentiated Education Plans with AIG specialists at the elementary level to describe ways they have differentiated the curriculum.

Grades 3-5

Students identified as AIG in grades three through five will be offered instruction with a teacher who has AIG licensure or in an inclusion setting with the classroom teacher and/or a teacher who has AIG licensure. During this time, teachers will present advanced instruction in mathematics, language arts, leadership, and problem solving. Students may participate in multiple subject areas. The emphasis is on structuring a physical and emotional environment that addresses the characteristics of gifted students and accommodates their learning styles.

The AIG teacher guides students in special projects and independent study activities, serving to facilitate advanced learning. The teacher is also responsible for ensuring that the students have demonstrated mastery of the skills and acquired the knowledge in the Common Core standards.

Middle School

At the middle school, AIG students are served in advanced mathematics and language arts classes. Emphasis is placed on expansion and application of basic skills and augmentation of the program's content, process, and products beyond the regular classroom level of instruction. Students strengthen their knowledge of the concepts that are covered in the grade-level curriculum and move rapidly to more sophisticated, abstract levels of understanding. Students are expected to delve into more challenging reading, writing, and mathematics with greater sophistication. Their studies of literature and mathematical concepts are conducted with greater depth and breadth than would be found in the general educational program on their grade level.

High School

By local school board policy, all high school courses are available to students who have the necessary prerequisites, without regard to identification as AIG. Honors classes provide an opportunity for students to engage in a more challenging program in their area of concentration. In honors classes, work with greater depth and complexity is assigned, and a higher quality of performance is expected. Students who successfully complete honors coursework receive a higher level of credit in the calculation of their grade point average (GPA), which is the student's weighted academic average. The student's GPA also is used to determine class rank. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are open to any high school student who has met the course requirements and has a teacher's recommendation. AP courses are college-level courses and most colleges and universities give college transcript credit or advanced standing to students who successfully complete the courses. North Carolina Virtual Public School provides online course offerings, student-centered instruction, flexible scheduling, heightened critical thinking, and written communication skills to middle

school and high school students.

In addition, the Career and College Promise (CC) provides seamless dual enrollment educational opportunities for eligible North Carolina high school students in order to accelerate completion of college certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees. Early graduation is authorized by the local Board of Education for students who have met the school system's graduation requirements. Students must apply and meet certain criteria. Successful application leads to a high school diploma.

Practice C

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

District Response: Educators strive to include 21st century skills and content; however, they need to be covered in a more consistent and comprehensive way. We recognize the unique needs of gifted students and strive to cultivate their potential. AIG teachers at all levels are provided with supplemental resources for their gifted instruction. Each AIG specialist has purchased materials that match their particular need, but countywide materials have been purchased to ensure consistency of instruction district wide as well.

These materials include the following:

Common Core and Essential Standards

The New Bloom's Taxonomy

Junior Great Books at each elementary and middle school

Jacob's Ladder materials at each elementary school

Math materials by Ed Zaccaro in each elementary and middle school

Mentoring Mathematical Minds units for each elementary school

William and Mary Language Arts units for each middle school

Costa and Kallick's Habits of Mind

Sandra Kaplan's Depth and Complexity Icons

The AIG professional library at each school has books on differentiation strategies, concept unit development, and books about social and emotional needs and development of gifted students. The AIG professional library will be developed at each high school as well as expanded at all schools to encompass a larger array of topics for teacher use. These books are also available for parents as well as any other AIG stakeholders to review.

The Randolph County School System uses a wide variety of advanced educational materials and resources to enrich, extend, and accelerate the curriculum. The following resources address a wide range of ability levels and include many entry points.

Concept-based curriculum units

Hands-On Equations

Socratic Seminars

Primary Enrichment Thinking Skills

Habits of Mind

Wake Forest Problem-Based Learning

Stock Market Game
Stem Clubs
G.E.M.S. Girls in Engineering Math and Science
Cyberkids Robotics

Practice D

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

District Response: Educators strive to include 21st century content and skills; however, they need to be addressed in a more consistent and comprehensive manner. We have continued our partnership with the Center for Excellence in Research, Teaching and Learning (CERTL) (an affiliate of Wake Forest Medical School) and have provided a three-day training for middle school AIG cluster teachers. These teachers now have access to CERTL's library of Problem/Project Based Learning Cases and are able to create their own. On the district AIG Google site, these teachers access their peer's problem-based (PBL) learning cases and add their own.

Elementary PBL cases include global inquiry and emphasize social responsibility. Students build and apply skills in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, leadership, and metacognition. Reading and writing lessons in the middle school, as well as middle school math PBL cases, in advanced language arts courses are infused with topics of health awareness, leadership and ethics, social responsibility, real-world learning in regional and global contexts, and cultural responsiveness.

Practice E

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

District Response: The degree to which this is occurring to differentiate instruction is inconsistent from school to school. In some schools, benchmark mClass results are used to flexibly group AIG students for instruction. The next step is to support all of our teachers in knowing how to use the assessment data to make instructional decisions on how to best differentiate for their students. While we have made great strides in this area, our district is still inconsistent with this practice, especially with how we use data to meet the needs of our gifted students.

Beginning in 2016-2017, pre- and post- performance tasks will be given to gifted students in their area(s) of identification. Standardized achievement test data should be collected to demonstrate appropriate levels of mastery, but don't necessarily reflect gifted program content. Performance based assessment should be employed pre- and post- to demonstrate short-term gains on higher level task demands crafted for the gifted population. According to Joyce Van Tassel Baska, performance-based assessment has been seen as promising for the identification of gifted learners, but it also clearly represents an indispensable approach for assessing gifted student learning. Only

through challenging performance tasks do gifted learners have the opportunity to reveal both their considerable intellectual capacity and energy. Results from the pre-/post- performance tasks will be used to show individual student growth over time as well as the effectiveness of our AIG program goals.

Practice F

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

District Response: In the spring 2015 survey, 70% of students felt their social and emotional needs were being met through the AIG program. Affective growth of the student is addressed through developing the Habits of Mind. Affective education lessons are incorporated into the enrichment class curriculum. These lessons help students as they transition into the AIG program and between school levels. Topics include gifted awareness, an awareness of multiple perspectives, perfectionism and coping with the unique stress that comes with being gifted. Since gifted children have unique social needs and may feel differently from their peers, appropriate counseling support is available as well. Teachers, counselors, and other related professionals will receive training in recognizing gifted characteristics with an emphasis on special populations. School staff will receive information addressing the social-emotional needs of gifted children. Training will be provided to teachers and counselors in understanding the complexity of gifted students. This includes topics such as perfectionism, underachievement, asynchronous development, and bibliotherapy.

Middle and High School

Students will engage in activities that offer leadership and creative opportunities. Counselors support and advise gifted students throughout the registration process. This provides students with the guidance that they need in determining appropriate course offerings and understanding college expectations. Counselors will work with at-risk and/or underachieving students in middle and high schools to help them accept being gifted and understand the opportunities available to them as a result of their potential.

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 elementary schools in our district range in size as well as demographic makeup. Emphasis is placed on recognizing and nurturing students from traditionally under-represented populations in kindergarten through second grade. The AIG specialists use a combination of service options to cultivate potential in the K-2 population in conjunction with the regular education teacher. These options include the following strategies:

1. Consultation with the regular education teacher is used as individual student needs arise that mandate more rigor and differentiation than the regular classroom can provide. The AIG specialist

- provides resources and assists the teacher in developing differentiated assignments.
2. Consultation with the regular education teacher along with individual pull out is a strategy used if the AIG specialist feels the student needs follow up with assignments that are specific.
 3. Whole class lessons are used when the AIG specialist is assisting the regular education teacher in developing more rigorous coursework for his/her class. During this time the AIG specialist might be recognizing those who have potential for more complex assignments.
 4. Small group pull out is an option at some schools with larger populations. Students who have exhibited the need for different assignments in the regular classroom are referred to the AIG specialist who provides separate resource activities. Many of these students in talent development become part of the countywide screening pool at the beginning of the third grade year.
 5. Students are flexibly grouped in different same grade classes or placed in different grade levels for specific subjects when they show a need for more rigor than can be provided in their current setting.
 6. If a student shows extreme need more than one or two years above his/her current grade level, a case study approach is begun to ascertain if grade acceleration is a good option for his/her programming. This is initiated by his teacher, parent, or counselor. The Iowa Acceleration Scale is used as data is gathered, and a final decision is made by the school AIG team and the parent.
 7. Through the district's Professional Learning Community (PLC) initiative, the gifted program specialist collaborates with the English as a Second Language (ESL) team to better identify ESL students for the gifted program. This dialogue continues to emphasize testing, work samples, and how to use language acquisition skills as an indicator for potential.

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: This is an area that continues to need specific work and improvement. The AIG Program Specialist has worked collaboratively with directors of all grade levels, elementary and middle school administrators, and lead teachers of middle schools. The Program Specialist has provided training at individual elementary and middle schools upon request regarding differentiating curriculum. The AIG specialists receive training alongside regular education teachers regarding curriculum.

Beginning in the fall of 2016, the AIG Program Specialist will host and conduct bi-monthly meetings to ensure collaboration is taking place. It is essential for AIG specialists and classroom teachers to plan together weekly to develop differentiation strategies and multiple assessment tools to meet the needs of our gifted students that align with the standards. A stronger connection needs to be made with the Exceptional Children's (EC) department, especially in serving (academically and socially) twice exceptional students.

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: Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEP) are created for all identified K-2 students, students who are grade accelerated, Intellectually Gifted (IG) and for students who are twice exceptional. This plan includes instructional, as well as social/emotional objectives. Parents and classroom teachers are invited to a conference to discuss how the needs of the student will best be met.

All identified third through eighth grade students (who do not have an IDEP) have a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). Teachers invite parents to a meeting at the beginning of each school year and discuss methods by which students will receive differentiation. Documentation of this meeting including the invitation, a parent roster, and the plan itself is readily available at each school and at central services.

A comprehensive four year DEP was implemented for high school students in 2014-2015. Counselors, lead teachers, or principal designees are responsible for monitoring the DEP completion to ascertain the student is indeed receiving the Honors and/or Advanced Placement coursework he/she needs.

Once the School-Based Committee for Gifted Education has determined that differentiated services are needed, the following information should be used when matching student needs with appropriate service options. The School-Based Committee for Gifted Education may, at any time, ask teachers, parents, and/or counselors for additional evidence of need.

K-8 Service Options and Content Modifications

The service options below are available to all AIG students in grades K – 8 depending upon demonstrated need. The School-Based Committee for Gifted Education is responsible for determining the entry level of services.

SERVICE OPTIONS K-8

- Resource support
- In-class flexible grouping
- Cluster grouping with a regular class
- Cross-grade grouping with a regular class
- Subject grouping
- Resource class
- Resource coordination
- Whole grade acceleration/grade skipping

CONTENT MODIFICATIONS

- Differentiated units
- Integrated units
- Learning centers
- Curriculum compacting
- Tiered assignments
- Learning contracts
- Advanced content

Thematic units

Independent study

Whole grade acceleration/grade skipping is an additional option available to Pathway 1 students. These students must meet the criteria established in the section under "Whole Grade Acceleration/Grade Skipping."

At the end of the year, a Performance Review is completed on each third through eighth grader. Recommendations for continued services are also included on this form. The parents, school, and central office keep a copy.

SERVICE OPTIONS 9-12

By the end of the eighth grade, AIG students will be assisted in the development of a four-year high school AIG Plan. This plan must reflect challenging, rigorous course work in the student's area of giftedness. AIG students must also meet any prerequisites and requirements necessary for course inclusion and all graduation requirements. This plan is revisited and adjusted each spring as course registration takes place.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is also available to any North Carolina public school student (9-12) who is able to show a deep understanding of the content without seat-time and classroom learning experience for a high school course. CDM is not intended initially for the masses; rather, it is intended for highly advanced students of the specific content.

K-8: Whole-grade Acceleration/ Grade Skipping

When whole-grade acceleration/grade skipping is first considered by the principal, the principal should contact the AIG Program Specialist to arrange for a consultation. After reviewing the student information, if it is determined that the student might be a candidate for whole-grade acceleration, the assessment will proceed in the following manner:

1. A child study team will be formed to discuss strengths and potential difficulties for the child being considered for acceleration. Team members should typically consist of the child's parent(s), one or more teachers, a counselor, the school principal, an AIG teacher, and the AIG program specialist. The team approach ensures that all who have relevant knowledge of the child will have input in rating the child about important factors such as ability, attendance, motivation, attitude toward learning, etc.
2. The child study team, using the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd edition, provided by the AIG Program Specialist, will complete a thorough study of the child consisting of:
 - a. Ability tests (i.e. Differential Ability Scales, Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, Stanford-Binet Scales, Wechsler Scales, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Revised, or Woodcock-Johnson III, Tests of Cognitive Abilities)
 - b. Above-level achievement tests – Iowa Tests of Basic Skills at the level of projected placement
 - c. On-level achievement tests – Iowa Tests of Basic Skills or Woodcock-Johnson III Tests at current grade level
 - d. Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale
 - e. School history
 - f. Observed adult and peer relationships
 - g. Student's attitude toward learning, and other factors that have bearing on the decision to accelerate
3. After all assessments are completed, the child study team will have a thorough discussion concerning the decision about whole-grade acceleration. The goal of the team is to:
 - take an objective look at the student

- analyze the major factors to be considered when making the decision about whole-grade acceleration
- weight the relative importance of the major factors
- document the student's strengths and areas of concern
- develop a plan for implementation, acceleration, and differentiation.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: Ideas for Strengthening:

- Implement more consistent nurturing programs for K-2 in targeted Title I schools
- Provide professional development on differentiation and curriculum strategies in grades K-12 on flexible grouping, tiered assignments, curriculum compacting, Socratic seminars, problem-based learning, concept-based units, depth and complexity
- Utilize the lesson exemplars available on the DPI AIG Instructional Resource Project as mentors for developing differentiated lessons
- Develop instructional tasks and higher level questions using Revised Bloom's Taxonomy
- Increase the use of professional resources on differentiation and the Common Core at PLCs
- Provide professional development for guidance counselors, regular classroom teachers, and AIG specialists on meeting the social and emotional needs of gifted students
- Align curriculum units with topics that address and are relevant to the social and emotional needs of gifted learners
- Revise elementary, middle and high school DEPs to include social and emotional components
- Develop a method for constant communication and collaboration among personnel to help meet the needs of differentiated students

Sources of Evidence: • Student growth data

- Professional development notes and rosters
- PLC minutes
- Common assessments
- Differentiated Checklist
- Diagnostic assessments
- Use of flexible grouping
- Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
- Complete student DEPs
- Set time for dialogue and planning between AIG specialists and classroom teachers
- Data-driven discussions among all school personnel
- Notes and agendas from school and district meeting

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: The Randolph County School System employs a full-time, AIG-licensed educator who guides, plans, develops, implements, revises, and monitors the local AIG Program, K-12.

The AIG Program Specialist in the Randolph County School System has the following responsibilities:

LEA Coordination

Chair AIG Advisory Board

Advocate for AIG students

Serve as an AIG liaison between schools and community

Oversee implementation of program

Maintain documentation of AIG program implementation

Coordinate AIG plan revisions as directed by NCDPI

Oversee AIG headcount

Maintain and update AIG website

Attend regional and statewide AIG meetings

Purchase materials for AIG program

Maintain and update AIG forms, brochures, and handbook procedures

Screening/Identification Administration

Coordinate screening and identification of AIG students

Coordinate/administer testing at various levels

Coordinate Governor's School test administration, application process, and district level selection of candidates

Audit AIG folders for compliance

Professional Development

Lead monthly elementary and middle school AIG district level meetings

Lead professional development within the Randolph County School System for AIG continuing education

Share newest research, findings, and best practices for AIG education with all stakeholders

Consult with teachers/administrators

Observe AIG classrooms and model best practices in differentiation strategies

The AIG Program Specialist actively participates in regional meetings, professional development opportunities, and other statewide initiatives to support gifted programs. Quarterly AIG PLC meetings

have been scheduled to build capacity and leadership potential among AIG specialists. Ongoing professional development and resources are shared with AIG specialists at quarterly PLC and monthly meetings.

The AIG Program Specialist and Director are responsible for the district's involvement with Governor's School. This includes communicating with high school counselors, creating and chairing the Governor's School Selection Committee, submitting the selected applications, as well as contacting students who are selected to audition and those who are selected to attend.

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: AIG program personnel have specific job descriptions that highlight their responsibilities. All personnel have a minimum of three years successful teaching experience, a B.S. or B.A. in a subject area or education, and hold a NC License in Gifted Education. Middle school and elementary AIG specialists are responsible for providing resources and services that address the following:

School Coordination

- Design enrichment opportunities for AIG students
- Advocate for AIG students
- Serve as an AIG liaison between schools and parents
- Oversee implementation of program at the school(s)
- Oversee AIG headcount

Screening/Identification Administration

- Coordinate screening and identification of AIG students
- Coordinate/administer testing at various levels
- Conduct parent meetings/parent nights

Professional Development

- Lead professional development at the schools for AIG continuing education
- Consult with teachers/administrators in providing appropriate models of service
- Model best practices of differentiation strategies in classrooms with an emphasis on differentiating for gifted learners

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: The Randolph County School System has mandated that any math and English Language Arts (ELA) teacher, specialist, or cluster teacher who is not AIG licensed must attend a

three-day academy to become aware of characteristics of gifted learners and differentiating the curriculum. Over the last three years, many of the middle school AIG math and ELA teachers have participated in this AIG Academy, as well as the cluster teachers in grades three, four, and five. High school teachers participated in the academy during the 2015-2016 year focusing on prevalent social/emotional issues found in gifted high school students as well as differentiating Honors and AP courses.

The AIG specialists at each school interact with the exceptional children's and ESL personnel to identify gifted students who are twice-exceptional and from underrepresented populations to provide best programming for them. Through the AIG professional library available at each school, all staff have access to high-quality materials related to gifted learner needs and issues.

In an effort to increase the recruitment and retention of under-represented populations, Multi-Cultural Gifted Education professional development will be delivered by the AIG and ESL Program Specialists to increase the awareness of knowing how to recognize gifted characteristics in socially and culturally diverse groups. ESL and cluster group teachers will be expected to participate in this professional development offering.

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: To reach their fullest potential, research indicates that gifted students require instructional time with like-ability learners. Likewise, effective differentiation for the gifted will generally not take place until teachers have noticeable numbers of those students in their classes. Support and adherence to clustering and endorsement should not vary from school to school. Therefore, the AIG Program Specialist conducts a three-day training for non-AIG certified teachers who teach gifted students. Elementary cluster teachers and middle school math and ELA AIG teachers not licensed are trained. The Academy consists of the following:

Day 1: Characteristics and behaviors of gifted students

Day 2: Differentiation strategies for gifted instruction

Day 3: Social/emotional needs of gifted students

In subsequent school years, this three-day training will continue for new personnel and for high school teachers who were included for the first time during the 2015-2016 school year.

Practice E

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

District Response: The AIG Program Specialist works with the district Curriculum and Student

Services departments to include AIG specialists in training that affect reading and math initiatives. AIG teachers participate in professional development training such as Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Common Core, and mClass.

Numerous professional development opportunities are employed throughout the school year to include: AIG monthly meetings, cluster teacher meetings, curriculum development, and in-service training. The AIG Program Specialist presents curriculum, social emotional strategies and other topics at these meetings. A district wide professional development on The Parallel Curriculum Model was offered for teachers in grades three through twelve during the 2014-2015 school year. Efforts are in place to offer training for cluster and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers on recognizing gifted characteristics in English Language Learners (ELL).

AIG Personnel as well as other stakeholders are highly encouraged to attend regional, state, and national conferences that promote and support gifted education.

Practice F

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

District Response: The AIG Program has set aside blocks of time throughout the school year when AIG specialists can come together to plan, implement, and refine applications of their professional development. AIG PLCs were implemented during the 2015-2016 school year to increase the capacity of our AIG specialists by allowing time for collaboration and planning. The AIG Program Specialist provides both elementary and middle school representatives with current articles about gifted instruction and discussions are held regarding the implications of research and how it affects gifted programming in the Randolph County School System.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: • At the present time less than 10% of teachers in the Randolph County School System have earned AIG add-on licensure. Our district will research and establish a cohort with a partnering university to ensure that gifted students are taught by instructors with specialized training in meeting the needs of gifted learners. Additionally, blended learning professional development will be facilitated by the AIG Program Specialist to increase the capacity of knowledge for those classroom cluster teachers who are teaching our gifted students.

- In an effort to ensure AIG students have maximum opportunities for growth, we will increase student placement through fidelity checks. We will also increase administrator awareness of AIG teacher credentials in elementary and middle school cluster grouped classes.
- Provide an AIG specialist position for middle and high school
- Encourage schools to establish a weekly time for collaboration with classroom teachers and AIG specialists
- Provide more time for AIG specialists from across the district to plan and collaborate as a PLC

Sources of Evidence: • Online course rosters

- Classroom rosters of cluster teachers who have completed local endorsement training

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- Rosters of AIG certified teachers by school
- Job description for AIG program specialist
- Professional qualifications of AIG program specialist
- AIG team meetings throughout the year
- AIG professional libraries at each elementary and middle school
- Professional development agendas and sign in rosters
- Documentation of grouping and differentiation strategies
- Documentation of contract with the University of North Carolina at Pembroke for AIG Licensure cohort
- List of participants in the University of North Carolina at Pembroke add-on licensure cohort

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: Our district provides a consultative model for kindergarten through second grade. Informal assessments will be used to identify students who are achieving above the level of their peers in language arts and math. They will be grouped for instruction within their classroom or across their grade levels. The classroom teacher and the AIG teacher will collaborate for differentiated activities.

In the elementary school setting, the pull-out approach is used for students who are identified as gifted in grades three through five. They are "pulled-out" of their regular classroom for the areas in which they are identified. In some school situations, the AIG program in collaboration with the school, may determine that a push-in approach may provide optimal delivery of AIG services. The school administrator together with the AIG specialist at each school decides on the appropriate schedule. State guidelines indicate that an increasing amount of responsibility is now placed on the regular classroom teacher in differentiating for these students in the regular classroom. AIG students must be placed in classrooms with teachers who are willing and knowledgeable in how to differentiate in the regular classroom for advanced learners. We will be "clustering" AIG students in classrooms to promote interaction with AIG peers. Middle schools are currently "clustering" students based on advanced and accelerated courses and high schools "cluster" students through student selection of honors and AP courses.

Program Service Options

Randolph County School System (RCSS) offers a continuum of services to address the unique needs of gifted learners in grades kindergarten through twelve. These services are accessible to all AIG-identified students in the district based on student needs.

The following program service options are available:

In-Class Flexible Grouping: This service option is used with all students. Learners have regular opportunities to be grouped by ability, readiness, or interest in order to fit the instructional focus and ensure peer academic support in a mixed ability classroom.

Flexible grouping of students facilitates instructional planning and delivery, enabling teachers to address learning styles, student interests, and student readiness levels. Grouping may be in-class, across-grade level, or above-grade level for part of the instructional day. Groups are formed and reformed for the instructional needs of students.

Cluster Grouping: This service option involves the assignment of groups of students having similar

academic needs and abilities to a regular education, mixed ability classroom. A cluster is made up of four to eight AIG-identified students. Clustering as a placement option provides students with academic peers and allows the regular education teacher, with the ongoing collaboration of the AIG teacher, to differentiate curriculum and instruction for a group of identified students.

Content Acceleration: In this service option, students who need accelerated instruction in one or more content areas are placed in classes with older peers for part of the day. The student remains with his/her grade level class for most of the day.

Grade Acceleration/Grade Skipping: The grade acceleration service option is appropriate for a small percentage of gifted students whose academic and social needs are substantially more advanced than their age/grade peers. The decision to implement this option involves a team including the student's current teacher, prospective receiving teacher, guidance counselor, AIG teacher, administrator, and parent. The team gathers data using a research-based acceleration scale. Multiple factors are weighed, the team makes a recommendation, and the principal makes the final decision for grade acceleration/grade skipping.

Early Admission to Kindergarten: The service option for early entrance to kindergarten must be made in accordance with state law. Parents are responsible for providing the information necessary to determine the need for early placement, including testing information. The principal makes the final decision for early admission.

Resource Classroom: This service option is available for identified students in grades three through five. The student may work with the AIG teacher on differentiated curriculum at regularly scheduled sessions or as needed. The assignments/activities completed in literacy and/or mathematics extends the regular course of study. Intellectually gifted students may receive services in any or all of the following areas: social/emotional support, leadership, and problem solving.

Independent Study: An independent study service option exists for a small percentage of gifted learners in grades four through twelve who demonstrate an exceptional need for acceleration or enrichment. The student may participate in an individualized, independent study while continuing his/her regular class activities. The activity is directed by the AIG teacher in collaboration with the regular education teacher.

Online Courses: This service option is available to a student when the student has a need for academic acceleration that is not available in his/her school (or another school in the district, if appropriate) and whose needs for academic acceleration can be addressed through an online course.

Honors Courses: This service option is available to all RCSS high school students. Honors courses adhere to specific state standards and are designed to provide rigorous curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery: Students who can demonstrate mastery of content based on a body of evidence can be rewarded credit for the course without being required to complete classroom instruction.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses: This service option is available at the high school level for students ready for college level instruction. Our high schools offer AP courses in some content areas.

These courses are first-year college courses offered in high school. Students may earn college credit if they score at the required level on the respective AP exam.

Career & College Promise (CCP): CCP pathways offer students rigorous and relevant course work designed to engage their interests and help them achieve educational and career goals. For students interested in technical careers and post-secondary education, the courses they encounter as part of a CCP pathway will align closely with the level of work that will be expected of them after finishing high school. In addition, research has shown that high school students who take college courses are more likely to attend and graduate from college with an advanced certification or degree.

Extra-Curricular Opportunities: This service option takes various forms depending on the availability at each school. These services are not solely for AIG-identified learners. Extra-Curricular opportunities may include academic competitions, academic clubs, visual and performing arts clubs, journalism opportunities (newspaper, yearbook), writing contests, STEM clubs, science fairs, Duke University Talent Search Program for 4th-6th grades, Duke University Talent Identification Program for 7th-12th grades (TIP), and nominations for Governor's School for eleventh graders.

Practice B

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

District Response: Currently RCSS begins identifying students in the fall of third grade as AI or AG in either reading, math, or both. Our district also identifies students as IG, intellectually gifted. Our district has taken a needs assessment approach in designing services and programming. The act of identifying a student should look more like a needs assessment—determining a student's specific needs so that he or she can be matched with appropriate programming. Just because two students are identified as gifted does not mean that these students have the exact same needs. The degree to which a student can develop excellence in any given domain or demonstrates a need for advanced programming is not dichotomous. School programming should respond to students' academic and affective learning needs. Once identified, the students are then provided with programming in the area(s) identified. This ensures they are receiving services in their talent area. The AIG Program Specialist solicits feedback and collaborative support from the elementary and middle school specialists along with other district wide supervisors to ensure that gifted programming is both rigorous and compatible with regular education initiatives.

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: Students are receiving a variety of services in the areas in which they are identified. Sample math services include, but are not limited to: accelerated math curriculum, AP courses and college credit courses. Sample reading services include, but are not limited to: book clubs, 21st century research and media literacy, differentiated reading lists, project based learning,

AP courses, college credit courses, and Battle of the Books. Students are also enriched with science through AP courses, college credit courses, STEM and robotics clubs.

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: District leadership and AIG specialists will facilitate informational sessions and/or professional development in order to inform all educational professionals of the Randolph County School System's AIG Plan, differentiation services, and regulations related to gifted education. The RCSS AIG Plan will be shared with each educational professional across the district within the first month of school. A printed copy of the plan will be provided to each school site for the professional library in addition to being available electronically on the AIG website.

The AIG department will inform stakeholders of current research, trends, and methods of differentiation. DEPs will be made available to and shared with teachers of gifted students to ensure differentiation of instruction. Specifics about the AIG program are available at each school through the AIG brochure and district handbook. Administrators and AIG specialists have electronic access to the AIG Plan, procedures, and forms. The AIG Plan is posted on the district AIG website. There are "Quick Links" to "FAQ," "AIG Services," and the "AIG Program Brochure" on the district's AIG website.

Each AIG specialist is given a handbook that contains an overview of key information, forms, logs, and performance tasks. The AIG Program Specialist periodically shares updates regarding the AIG program at the district level with principals and lead teachers. The AIG Specialists or AIG contacts collaborate with administrators to stay informed regarding the gifted program. The role of the principal within the AIG program is critical with implementing the guidelines of the program.

The role of the Principal:

- Monitors and supports the components of the Plan for Gifted Education
- Monitors implementation of Differentiated Education Plans/Individualized Differentiated Education Plans
- Provides support for collaborative teaching models through common planning times for cluster teachers, AIG teachers, and other specialists
- Assigns AIG-identified students to classroom clusters
- Evaluates performance of AIG teachers assigned to his/her school

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: Regular and comprehensive communication among AIG teachers and between schools is critical. Therefore, efforts are made for these communication channels to be strengthened.

Elementary AIG Specialists

At the beginning of the school year, the AIG specialists at the elementary level interact with the gifted students' regular classroom teachers and/or exceptional education teachers about programming for the gifted students. The AIG specialist and the student's other teachers confer and his/her teachers sign the DEP's when the parents attend the DEP/IDEP meeting. The student's teachers are present at the gifted school based committee meetings when a student's screening, identification, and programming is discussed.

Middle School AIG Teachers

Weekly, the AIG teachers plan collaboratively and meet with their teammates and grade level counterparts. They have regular discussions about the needs and programming of their gifted students. These AIG teachers serve on the AIG school based committee with an administrator, lead teacher, guidance counselor and/or other stakeholders. At the beginning of the school year, AIG teachers meet and discuss the options they will present for that year's DEP/IDEP for the parents, and AIG teachers of a student will meet with the parents and sign the DEP/IDEP.

Joint Meetings of Elementary and Middle AIG Specialists

The monthly AIG meetings of elementary and middle school specialists focus on the same staff development; therefore, the training is similar and common language is developed. Beginning in 2015-2016, quarterly AIG specialists PLCs were implemented. These professional learning communities provided a platform where AIG specialists could interact and discuss specific concerns and needs that arise. These joint meetings allow time for AIG teachers to discuss students going from elementary schools to middle schools and middle schools to high schools to increase awareness and understanding of expectations and services available at the middle school/high school level.

Beginning in 2014-2015, a procedure was established for moving AIG folders during key transitions. This ensures there are no gaps in a student's services as they transition from elementary to middle or middle to high.

High School

In the spring, the high school representatives hold meetings at the middle schools to counsel the eighth grade AIG students in developing their four year academic plans and to prepare them for transitioning to the high schools. Once at the high school the content area teachers meet regularly to plan and collaborate. The guidance counselor provides for affective concerns and provides assistance in readiness and planning for the post-secondary part of the student's education.

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: In order for gifted students to reach their full potential, social and emotional needs must be purposefully included in programs and services for this population. When programs are in place where emphasis and focus is placed on the social and emotional needs of gifted students, learning is maximized. In order for our gifted students to fully realize their academic potential, it is imperative that we address their social and emotional needs. Often it is assumed that these students are survivors and do not need interventions. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The AIG Department must work collaboratively with other school personnel to ensure that the affective domain of these students is effectively addressed. We will collaborate with counselors, regular education teachers, and families to address the social and emotional needs of AIG students by:

- Referring students to school counselors who have been trained to address the unique social and emotional needs of gifted students.
- Encouraging regular classroom teachers to be cognizant of social and emotional issues that may be present in their students and to refer these students to school counselors when appropriate.
- Offering parent workshops on the social and emotional issues facing gifted students.
- Providing resources for counselors, teachers, and parents to help them better understand the social and emotional issues facing gifted learners.

Cluster grouping allows students of similar achievement/ability levels and common interests/passions to work together for a portion of the school day/week. Research is clear: gifted and high ability students' learning increases significantly when offered opportunities to work with intellectual peers. When counselors work with teachers to ensure a positive and productive collaborative learning environment, behavioral issues are kept at a minimum. For highly gifted students with significantly advanced academic social-emotional needs, opportunities for subject and grade acceleration are offered. Early entrance to kindergarten and dual enrollment are included in policies and procedures for qualifying students.

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: System-wide guidelines provide clear step-by-step procedures for acceleration that addresses the needs of individual learners and provide the appropriate educational environment for gifted learners. When evidenced through aptitude, achievement, or IQ testing data that a student needs accelerative instruction or placement options, the regular education teacher, AIG specialist, and/or guidance counselor will review work samples, portfolio entries, and advanced course work to articulate and implement best practices for gifted learners.

When a child demonstrates unusually rapid progress through the established curriculum in a particular subject area, the teacher will extend curricular experiences even if the experiences are generally defined as belonging to the next grade level. This extension may require that a student be accelerated into a different classroom for part of the day. When outstanding achievement is evident across all subject areas, consideration will be given to advanced grade placement.

Whole grade acceleration is determined on an individual basis. A student who is being considered for whole grade acceleration should be exhibiting characteristics consistent with the individualized level of differentiation. If minimum requirements are met and the gifted team recommends whole grade advancement, the principal will make the final decision at the school level regarding grade advancement. Parents may ultimately deny a recommendation for acceleration.

At the high school level, the coursework addresses this issue since students self-select Honors courses and AP courses. Credit by Demonstrated Mastery opportunities are available to current eighth graders (rising ninth graders) and current ninth, tenth and eleventh grade high school students for the upcoming school year. CDM allows students with deep understanding of the content prior to taking the course to receive a high school course credit. The intention of this policy is to enable students to access more advanced content to meet their academic needs. CDM is a multi-phase assessment process that builds a body of evidence that allows a committee to determine if a student has a deep understanding of the standards for the course or subject area, thereby earning credit for the course without experiencing it in the school setting.

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: In 2015, 75% of teachers and administrators surveyed agreed that the local AIG program provides services for traditionally underrepresented AIG populations, including culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional. We cannot wait until an English Language Learner reaches proficiency in English to place that student in a gifted and talented program. In grades three through eight, all students' standardized test scores are reviewed both by the AIG specialist at each school and by the AIG coordinator in an effort to ensure that equal opportunity for consideration is provided to all.

As we identify gifted learners from traditionally under-served populations, the AIG specialists will help guide the gifted placement team at each school to make careful placement decisions that will meet students' needs in appropriate and intentional ways and ensure that identification is ongoing. Multiple chances for entrance into gifted services are necessary for economically disadvantaged students. These students may need continued school exposure to a variety of content areas and higher level thinking skills before being identified or before they are able to thrive in a specialized gifted program. Also, these students may be more transient or absent from school when compared to other populations and consequently may miss key assessment opportunities if assessment is not ongoing.

Beginning in 2013, our district began using the nonverbal partial composite of the Cognitive Abilities Aptitude test to place students. We have also begun using multi-cultural literature to promote cultural awareness. Every effort will be made to continuously improve the identification of our under-represented populations. Establishment of structure for regular collaboration of Exceptional Children's, English Language Learners, classroom teachers and AIG specialists is needed to identify needs of twice-exceptional students and gifted English language learners. More professional development is needed to support the identification and programming for under-represented populations.

Practice I

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

District Response: Stakeholder survey data reflects that parents and students feel they receive little communication about extracurricular activities to develop their needs as AIG students. While many opportunities are provided in middle and high schools, AIG parents' and students' responses indicate they would like to receive more opportunities. Elementary students have a limited amount of extracurricular programs offered. This service option takes various forms depending on the availability at each school. These services are not solely for AIG-identified learners. Extra-curricular opportunities may include academic competitions, academic clubs, visual and performing arts clubs, journalism opportunities (newspaper, yearbook), writing contests, STEM clubs, science fairs, Duke University Talent Search Program for fourth through sixth grades, Duke University Talent Identification Program for seventh through twelfth grades (TIP), and Governor's School nominations for eleventh graders.

Practice J

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

District Response: At this time there is minimal intentional grouping to support the growth of AIG students. Beginning in 2016, elementary and middle school principals will be strongly encouraged to cluster group gifted students based on the Total School Cluster Group model. Effectively grouping students in clusters will allow for instructional strategies that are successful with groups of advanced learners. Additionally, considering the comprehensive needs, both academic and social/emotional, should be taken into account when grouping gifted students for instruction.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: • Provide professional development for administrators and teachers to understand data analysis, grouping practices of students, and instructional strategies that are effective with groups of advanced learners

- Provide more time for AIG specialists from across the district to plan and collaborate as a PLC
- Communicate service options stated on the Differentiated Education Plan to ELL, EC teachers, Title I and other teachers who have specialized student focus and partner with these teachers for effective programming
- Explore the possibility of administering aptitude testing in a student's native language
- Develop a protocol for regularly including school counseling personnel and other school wide personnel to work together to develop the DEP/IDEP, with specific components to address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners
- Review all local Board of Education policies that relate to AIG to ensure these policies are effective and based on current best practice

7/7/2016

Sources of Evidence: • Class rosters and schedules

- Student identification profile matched to service options
- Differentiated Education Plans (DEP)
- Individual Differentiation Education Plans (IDEP)
- Local AIG plan
- Data driven discussions
- AIG student folders
- K-12 Service Options
- Current research articles
- District website links
- Printed information about opportunities

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: The Randolph County School System advocates for parent and community organizations who support gifted education. The AIG newsletter contains information about the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of the gifted population. Other resources (books/websites/conferences) are often listed in this newsletter. Recommended reading for parents and articles dealing with social and emotional needs are shared through district AIG newsletters as well. A book study was completed by AIG specialists in 2013 on how to most effectively meet the intense needs of gifted learners emotionally. Specialists have thus supported parents and classroom teachers with strategies in handling overexcitabilities.

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: Information will be shared with parents and stakeholders regarding the program plan and policy through a variety of means. The AIG plan is posted on the AIG website as well as a parent handbook outlining information regarding the plan and policies. Automated School Messenger calls will go out to parents relaying important AIG announcements. Parent and community organizations who support gifted education will be promoted and membership will be encouraged. Attendance at local and state AIG events by parents, teachers, and AIG specialists will be encouraged.

The personnel of the Randolph County School System are kept informed of the AIG program through presentations, embedded professional development, Central Services curriculum newsletter, and the AIG handbook.

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: Needs assessments and surveys are used to involve stakeholders in the development and monitoring of the AIG plan. An AIG Advisory Committee was formed in the fall of 2015 to assist in writing the plan and analyzing stakeholder survey results. Our Advisory team built our new plan driven by stakeholder input and studied other districts' plans with similar demographics. The AIG Advisory Committee will meet on an ongoing basis to monitor the fidelity of plan implementation.

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: The Randolph County School System has posted enrichment opportunities on the district AIG website as well as disseminated this information in paper format to individual schools for stakeholders to know of opportunities available to AIG students. Information about partnerships, including the Career and Technical Education Departments, will be shared with parents. These opportunities might include mentorships, internships, and/or job shadowing. As AIG opportunities and events arise, we ensure parents, students, and other stakeholders are notified using a variety of communication methods.

Progress has been made in translating information for the parents/guardians of non-English speaking families. There are now Spanish versions of all AIG forms and letters to parents/guardians.

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: Randolph Community College houses our early college high school. Our district has a vibrant connection with the community college in offering dual enrollment for our gifted secondary students. We also have forged a partnership with Junior Achievement where business and community leaders deliver lessons in our classrooms integrating business, industry and economy. Mentorships and job shadowing with high school students also have been formed through this initiative.

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Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: • Sponsor meetings to inform parents and community of relevant AIG issues and policies

- Written communication with high school AIG parents to ensure they know their child is still identified as AIG
- Continue yearly stakeholder surveys
- Conduct Gifted Program Advisory Council quarterly meetings
- Increase information provided on the district AIG website and AIG specialists websites for parents and families
- Share information with students and families about partnerships available with civic and local agencies, including CTE department
- Partner with standing organizations and/or other LEAs to create opportunities for professional development for teachers and administrators
- Share resources between institutions of higher education and the local LEA to support gifted programming

Sources of Evidence: • Publicly posted local AIG plan

- AIG stakeholder surveys
- District Website
- Brochures
- Advisory Board minutes
- Results of stakeholder survey
- Use of translators during verbal communication
- Forms written in their native language

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: The written AIG plan adheres to the six standards and multiple practices of the NC AIG Program Standards. The revised AIG plan continues to create, facilitate, and initiate many educational opportunities for highly capable students through acceleration and enrichment by providing diverse service delivery options. An AIG Advisory Team was formed at the end of the 2014-2015 school year to lead the development of the next AIG plan. A self-assessment was completed and stakeholder surveys were disseminated. The feedback from all stakeholders was used to guide the process and plan development. The AIG Program Specialist attended regional/state level meetings and webinars to support our local plan development and improvement.

The AIG Advisory Team will review, revise and submit our local plan to the Board of Education along with a presentation outlining the major changes from the previous plan.

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: A full time AIG Program Specialist has been employed to monitor and oversee the implementation of the local AIG program and plan. The AIG Program Specialist conducts regular visits across the district to oversee consistent implementation of the plan with fidelity. An AIG PLC has been formed to allow time for collaboration focusing on the successes and challenges of program implementation and effectiveness. By meeting periodically, those involved in the implementation of the program will be able to assess progress continuously and make suggestions regarding program design and implementation. All program evaluation is based on current best practices and research in gifted education. Our district collects and analyzes data to evaluate the performance of all subgroups. AIG student academic growth is one evaluative tool in measuring AIG program strengths and opportunities for growth.

Practice C

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

District Response: The Randolph County School System uses all of the allotted AIG funds for

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professional development, salaries, or materials that directly benefit AIG students. Each year funding is reviewed with the district Finance Officer and spending is prioritized to focus on specific training needs as well as material needs. Expenditures are monitored to ensure funds are utilized for comprehensive AIG plan implementation. The budget aligns completely with the programs' gifted services, and is monitored regularly for accuracy and accountability.

Practice D

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

District Response: The AIG Program Specialist and AIG specialists collect and analyze AIG student performance growth data. Trends and patterns gleaned from the data are shared with appropriate stakeholders to establish areas where increased rigor and support are needed. The AIG Program Specialist collects annual drop-out data for AIG students as well. When possible, the AIG Program Specialist follows up with students who drop out to find out why they leave school.

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: Demographic reports are studied annually to compare the overall ethnicity representation in the district to the number of identified AIG students from underrepresented populations. In this way, representation and retention can be monitored. In addition, nurturing guidelines and nurturing reporting will be implemented during the 2016-2019 plan cycle so that under-represented students can be identified for talent development in grades K-2 and later potential identification as AIG.

Other districts' AIG plans were reviewed to explore identification measures for under-represented populations. The teachers and coordinator will continue to nurture, screen, and identify candidates from under-represented populations. In the plan and program monitoring process, AIG School Teams, and the AIG District Advisory Council will review screening and identification practices for under-represented populations.

Practice F

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

District Response: District level AIG staff request that school level administrators provide data on the credentials of personnel serving AIG students in the school. Each school is encouraged to place clusters of AIG students with teachers who hold licensure in AIG or who have the three-day Randolph County School System local endorsement. During the 2016-2017 school year, teachers in

kindergarten through second grade will have the opportunity to participate in the AIG Academy for the first time. Their training will be specialized in ways to help them recognize gifted characteristics in the primary grades and support the talent development initiative.

Cluster grouping of AIG students in elementary schools with an AIG certified teacher is essential. Research indicates that AIG students grow academically when placed in a classrooms with other AIG students. Instruction from a licensed AIG teacher who understands effective differentiation practices and social/emotional issues of the gifted encourages student growth.

As funding permits, plans are being explored to create cohorts with local universities to certify additional teachers in our district.

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 AIG Program Specialist developed and revised an annual survey for stakeholders in the local AIG program. These stakeholders are teachers, administrators, parents, and students. The surveys are completed electronically with a slightly different approach for high school students. The survey for high school students is formatted differently to allow space for explanation on why they may have chosen not to participate in Honors and/or AP classes. This information is being monitored and current plans are being made to high school programming to increase the retention rates of our gifted high school students.

Most recently, this year's stakeholder input was featured in the NCAGT publication showcasing the Academically/Intellectually Gifted Program of Randolph County. Stakeholder input will be studied annually for the continuous improvement of gifted programming and services.

Practice H

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

District Response: The AIG Program Specialist, teachers, and District Advisory Council will use information from several sources such as surveys, parent meetings, and student assessment scores as data to study and monitor the plan. This monitoring will be ongoing and not based exclusively on standardized test results. Performance tasks are being developed during the 2016-2017 school year to demonstrate short-term gains on higher level task demands crafted for the gifted population. Paired with other assessment measures, program effectiveness can be measured for further strengthening.

Practice I

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

District Response: Results of the annual stakeholder surveys are now posted on the AIG website for transparency. Additionally, a feature article appearing in the North Carolina Association of Gifted and Talented (NCAGT) publication will be posted on our website providing an additional lens into our gifted program.

Beginning in 2016-2017, AIG subgroup Educational Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) data will be shared on the district website to create more transparency with our stakeholders.

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 RCSS AIG program reflects the state policies and procedures governing the administration of gifted programs and services. Screening, testing, and identification procedures are reviewed annually to ensure equity and consistency. Policies are clearly in place in hard copy as well as electronic copies of parent handbooks.

The DEP/IDEP, reviewed annually, safeguards the implementation of services at each grade level. Appropriate and sufficient service delivery is monitored and reviewed for modifications on an annual basis, or as needed. Special populations of gifted students, including those who are twice exceptional or socio/economically disadvantaged, receive services based on their specific needs.

Randolph County Schools Appeal Process for Parents

§ 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).)

If parents wish to appeal the decision by the Randolph County Board of Education, they may proceed with STEP V.

STEP V: Appeal to the State

- The parent may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the

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General Statutes. The scope of the 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.

(ii) whether the local plan has been implemented appropriately in 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.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: • Discuss and disaggregate qualitative data regularly to guide practice and improvements to determine if AIG student needs are being met

- Standardized achievement test data will be collected to demonstrate appropriate levels of mastery even though they do not necessarily capture gifted program content
- Beginning in 2016-2017, performance based assessments in ELA and math will be administered pre- and post to demonstrate short-term gains on higher level task demands crafted for the gifted population
- Ask for volunteers from families of diverse backgrounds to serve on the Gifted Advisory Team
- Strengthen the survey questions to address more of the AIG program standards
- Encourage schools to provide more opportunities for middle and high school students to complete the surveys

Sources of Evidence: • Documentation of Board Approval

- Board Agenda
- Review by DPI
- AIG plan published on website
- Gifted Program Advisory Council, meeting minutes
- Disaggregation of EOG and EOC data
- Annual budget statement
- Receipts/invoices for materials and curriculum products
- List of AIG certified teachers
- Documentation of complaints and subsequent LEA responses and changes
- Parent appeal process written and shared in various ways
- Annual dropout data for AIG students

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Glossary (optional):

Off-grade level testing- occurs when student scores on standardized instruments are interpreted at levels beyond current chronological age and grade placement.

Cluster grouping-A cluster group is comprised of 6-10 Academically/Intellectually Gifted students placed in a heterogeneous classroom setting.

Local norms allow for within-group comparisons so students are compared not against the student body as a whole.

Appendix (optional):

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