Avery County Schools
Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan
Effective 2019-2022

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Avery County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide LEAs to develop, coordinate and implement thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs.

The NC AIG Program Standards encompass six principle standards with accompanying practices. These standards articulate the expectations for quality, comprehensive, and effective local AIG programs and relate to the categories related to NC’s AIG legislation, Article 9B (N. C. G. S. 115C-150.5). These best practices help to clarify the standard, describe what an LEA should have in place, and guide LEAs to improve their programs.

As LEAs continue to transform their AIG Programs to align to the AIG Program Standards, LEAs participated in a self-assessment process of their local AIG program, which involved multiple stakeholders. The data gathered during this process guided LEAs in their development of this local AIG plan for 2019-2022. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA’s board of Education and sent to NC DPI for comment.

For 2019-2022, Avery County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Avery County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Avery County Schools believes that all students should have opportunity to explore their individual interests and be intellectually challenged to ensure future success. Gifted learners present a wide-ranging set of attributes, gifts, and skills which require intentional nurturing and fostered development. The vision of the Academically and Intellectually Gifted Program for Avery County Schools is to provide an enriched educational environment, bolstered by strong family and community partnerships that allow for gifted students to explore individual interests, achieve at high academic levels, and develop stronger leadership capacity that will support them throughout their lives.

Sources of funding for local AIG program (as of 2019)

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<tr>
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Standard 1: Student Identification
The LEA's student identification procedures for AIG are clear, equitable, and comprehensive and lead towards appropriate educational services.

Practice A
Develops screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels.

District Response: Avery County Schools Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program is integrated within the fabric of the general education program. With the introduction of the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) framework, Avery Count Schools is utilizing the framework to assist with the identification of AIG students. MTSS teams meet at least three times per year to examine the progress of all students. Data sources reviewed include prior EOC/EOG results, including students scoring above the 95%, Amplify reading assessments in K-3, iReady math diagnostics in 2-8, and iReady reading diagnostics in grades 3-8. iReady assessments provide national percentiles as well as computer adaptive which allow for off-grade level assessment. High School teams review standardized EOG/EOC results, as well as reports from PreACT, ACT, and PSAT testing sessions. The overall goal of the MTSS team at each school is to assess the progress of student groups and make plans to further support existing needs. AIG student progress, as well as potential AIG students are able to be screened during this process as the MTSS team analyzes student performance.

As a formal screening process, all 4th grade students complete a group administered aptitude test (Inview Assessment). The Executive Director of Academic Services shares results with local MTSS teams for students scoring in the 90th percentile or above in either verbal or non-verbal portions of the assessment.

At any time, grade level teams/individual teachers may refer students to MTSS teams for potential placement, using a case study approach. No one factor is determining regarding placement, but teacher referrals include quantitative data reviewed by the MTSS teams (mclass, iReady, EOGs noting above 90th percentile, etc.), anecdotal qualitative data describing student giftedness, as well as gifted behavior rating scales of students exhibiting gifted characteristics for the MTSS team to further analyze for identification. Upon review of all of the data, the team determines eligibility and proceeds to meet with parents regarding potential identification.

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

District Response: Systematic procedures to screen and identify students utilizing multiple criteria are in place. In grades K-3, students are identified through a case management approach utilizing the MTSS process. The MTSS team takes into account the rapid developmental changes of the early
learner through the creation nurturing plans or formal identification of the student when there is an extreme need for differentiation. Multiple data sources used in the case study approach include iStation/iReady early literacy and math results denoting performance above the 95th percentile, gifted behavior rating scales, and anecdotal qualitative data from the classroom teacher describing student giftedness. All data sources are considered in the evaluation process regarding placement, as the school based team develops a plan for either continued nurturing or formal identification as Academically and Intellectually (AI) Gifted.

For students in grades 4-12, the Executive Director of Academic Services annually reviews of each child's performance on end of grade/course tests. Non-identified gifted students scoring in the top five percent according to state norms are entered into a screening pool for MTSS teams, with rosters sent to school principals. Teachers complete a rating scale related to learning characteristics and motivation for non-identified students exhibiting characteristics of giftedness. Teachers are also encouraged to share anecdotes that describe behavioral characteristics well beyond grade-level expectations. All 4th grade students complete a group administered aptitude assessment (Inview Assessment) as part of the general screening for the district. The Executive Director of Academic Services shares results with local AIG teams for students scoring in the 90th percentile or above in either verbal or non-verbal portions of the assessment.

In all grades K-12, the MTSS team uses all data to complete a student educational profile and proceed with a case-study approach to selecting gifted students whose academic needs exceed those of the general education program. No one identification criterion prevents a student from being identified to receive services, as all data is considered.

Alternative objective and subjective tools are used in elementary, middle, and the high school which include grades, writing samples, gifted behavior scale checklists, and/or portfolios. The collection of data to support nominations is the responsibility of the referring individual/team.

Identification areas are selected by the school-based identification team to align with student data. Students meeting performance criteria (95% or above on EOG assessment in reading or math) on standardized academic testing, along with grades, are identified as Academically Gifted Math (AM), or Academically Gifted Reading (AR) in the area of their strength. Students exhibiting strengths in both reading and math are identified as Academically Gifted (AG). Students meeting criteria on Inview or other aptitude assessments (90th percentile or above in either verbal or non-verbal portions of the assessment), but not standardized academic tests, are identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG). All identified students, regardless of specific identification have a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) developed to match opportunities to student needs and interests.

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

**District Response:** With the implementation of the MTSS framework, student data by grade and by subgroup is being examined much more intentionally for progress at all grade levels. All 4th grade students are administered a group administered aptitude test to begin the general screening process. The Executive Director of Academic Services shares results with local MTSS teams for students scoring in the 90% or above in either verbal or non-verbal portions of the assessment. The Director of Federal Programs, who supervises the English Learners Program and the Exceptional Children's Program, also reviews the data to assist in identification. In addition to these results, each MTSS team reviews EOG scores of all students scoring at or above 90th percentile. Results from other standardized assessments, including WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, along with student classroom performance are also evaluated, as well as students exhibiting gifted behaviors who do not have standardized measures in place. The team then evaluates all of the factors to then proceed to placement.

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

**District Response:** Avery County Schools are consistent in screening, referral, and identification processes. School MTSS teams meet at least three times per year to review and analyze student data. All fourth graders are screened with the Inview Assessment, along with a review of EOG performance. Teacher recommendations are also processed utilizing the gifted behavior scale. Students not in 4th grade may be recommended for screening through a teacher recommendation process where all current data and student academic/learning behaviors are evaluated for potential AIG eligibility through the MTSS process.

Processes and procedures are shared in a variety of formats and forums. New teachers attend an orientation program where the Executive Director of Academic Services explains the AIG program and processes. Principals are informed of processes during administrative meetings, with the processes and procedures being housed in the Powerschool Learning LMS. MTSS teams are trained and meet at least three times per year.

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

**District Response:** Screening, referral, and identification for the AIG program for Avery County Schools is integrated within the MTSS process. Communication with the student/parent takes place as each student/parent are enrolled in an online course within the district's Learner Management System, Powerschool Learning. Updates/reminders about the program are sent out via email to be further reviewed within the Powerschool Learning system. Information regarding the AIG program, including identification, screening, referral process, and services are located on the district's website. Individual schools host parent nights/events that highlight the activities of AIG students and explain the screening, referral, and identification process.
**Practice F**
Documents a student's AIG identification process and evidence which leads to an identification decision. This documentation is reviewed with parents/families and maintained in student records.

**District Response:** Screening, referral, and identification for the AIG program for Avery County Schools is integrated within the MTSS process. All MTSS teams undergo training in the analysis of data for consistency. Information regarding AIG is shared at principals meetings by the Executive Director of Academic Services. Information decisions of the AIG MTSS identification team are documented. Upon the initiation of an AIG referral, a folder at Central Services is started. Results from the team decision, regarding placement or non-placement, and subsequent service plans on the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) are also placed in the file and shared with parents. The document is reviewed and updated with parents upon school transition from elementary-middle and middle-high school. In addition to the prescribed updates, the plan can be re-evaluated and revised at anytime by re-convening the grade level academic team, the parent, and school administration.

Additional communication with the student/parent takes place as each student/parent are enrolled in an online course within the district's Learner Management System, Powerschool Learning. Updates/reminders about the program are sent out via email to be further reviewed within the Powerschool Learning system.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** The district continues to formalize and standardize the communication of processes used in the district. We are in the process of sending additional staff through training to receive AIG licensure. The ultimate goal is to have one AIG licensed staff in each school to serve on school level MTSS teams. This standardization and increased training on MTSS teams will assist in the sharing of information across multiple platforms, and mediums consistently.

**Sources of Evidence:** Referral forms, MTSS meeting minutes, Admin Meeting minutes, Training rosters
Standard 2: 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 an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the needs of gifted learners across all grade levels and learning environments. These services are aligned to a student's AIG identification.

District Response: A comprehensive service delivery system for academically gifted (Reading, Math, Both) and intellectually gifted learners is outlined in three segments: elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and secondary (9-12). A service delivery plan is divided into two major sections that address the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners across all grade levels and settings: academic development and talent development. Service options are presented in four areas: learning environment, content differentiation, interest/talent development, and special programs.

With small community schools, our primary service delivery is facilitated by flexible clustering, which is the purposeful grouping of students used to assist the teaching of students at their demonstrated readiness level. Such instructional grouping is flexible within and between individual classrooms or within and between teams that enables students to move in and out of groups based on their needs and performance. Students may be placed in a group based on their ability and/or performance or they may be placed in an option on a trial basis based on the recommendation of their teacher(s).

A variety of settings where differentiated services will be delivered include: the regular homeroom, another classroom, a resource room, etc. Content Acceleration – the use of advanced materials that match the students' level of performance regardless of their grade placement.
Content Sophistication – the use of complex material, presented with a higher level of abstraction, from a more complex viewpoint, using multidisciplinary material that allow students to see the larger system of ideas and concepts related to the core content.

K-5 services rely heavily upon small class sizes, and the use of technology and classroom differentiation strategies. As students progress into middle and high school, students begin to receive differentiated instruction in honors/accelerated courses (in conjunction with clustering students consistent with their identification), along with the introduction of Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment opportunities.

Talent Development describes the enrichment services that focus on the development of interests and special talents. At the elementary and middle school levels, interest development might occur through classroom centers, special activities and projects, special mini-courses, and enrichment clusters. Academic clubs/competitions such as Science Olympiad, Math Club, Battle of the Books, Envirothon, Robotics Club, Improv Club, are also offered both during and outside of school hours to
allow for students to expand their learning opportunities.

At the secondary level, interests and talents are further expanded through special elective courses and opportunities for independent investigations of topics of interest through seminars, mentorship's, and internships. Most of these programs are offered through regular education, distance learning courses or co-curricular opportunities; some are available from community resources.

Each of the schools in Avery County is a small community where students and families are known. New students and new families are immediately greeted and integrated into the school family. Each gifted student has a DEP that is developed and shared with the new team. Staff are supported by integrated professional development focused on content acquisition and differentiated learning practices. The district goal is also to have an AIG certified staff member in each school by 2022 that assists in the MTSS process in providing staff and student support in meeting the needs of gifted learners.

Practice B
Integrates and connects AIG services with the total instructional program and resources of the LEA in policy and practice.

District Response: Academically gifted students enrolled in Avery County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program; AIG programs and services are aligned with students' area(s) of AIG identification, program goals and resources system-wide. AIG services, specific to area(s) of identification, are integrated with the general education program, PK-12, and reflect research-based, best practices. Inherent to the district's philosophy and definition of giftedness, special care is given to students from traditionally under-represented populations. As a product of small schools with small class sizes, each student has an individual plan crafted to meet their own unique learning needs which is created with the collaboration of classroom teachers and grade level teams. The AIG program is supervised by the Executive Director of Academic Services who includes AIG updates to principals/staff through monthly postings in the Learner Management System, as well as monthly administrative meetings. All policies regarding the service plans of AIG students are current and up to date.

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

District Response: All AIG students are intentionally scheduled in classes/courses to flexibly meet the unique needs of AIG students. Our small community schools, where in most cases, only have 1-2 sections of a grade level make the clustering of AIG students imperative to meet their needs. AIG students are clustered in advanced courses, when offered, that offer content differentiation in conjunction with accelerated curriculum pacing, content compaction, and/or curriculum extension.
Avery County Schools integrates the gifted education program within the whole school environment through collaborative strategic planning by educators, parents and community members to ensure total school improvement. The planning processes that include programs and services, program goals and resources are aligned with the system's mission statement and core beliefs. Ultimately, a successful delivery model results in increased school/system-wide student learning. Opportunities for rich content, high expectations for critical and creative thinking and problem solving are objectives shared by general and gifted educators; all are recognized as critical components of a 21st century instructional program.

Avery County Schools delivers instruction utilizing 1-1 technology for all students resulting in a highly differentiated learning environment. Staff consult in PLCs to provide support for instructional planning for AIG students. In grades 6-12, students are enrolled in accelerated/honors courses for their core instruction and have the opportunity to select other courses/enrichments that match with student interest.

**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:** Avery County Schools continues to integrate the Gifted Education Program within the whole school environment through collaborative strategic planning by educators, parents, and community members to ensure total school improvement. All principals, AIG students, and parents are enrolled in an online course delivered through Powerschool Learning, the district's LMS. Curriculum updates, opportunities, and memo's are located and dispersed to all stakeholders via email when new content is added. All new teachers go through a new teacher orientation process that outlines ACS AIG services. Monthly Academic Services updates with administrators include AIG updates and are documented and shared through a Powerschool Learning page that can be shared with staff throughout the district. All teachers serving AIG students are participants in the update of student DEPs.

**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:** AIG services are firmly integrated within the Avery County School's approach to total school improvement. The Executive Director of Academic Services communicates both electronically via a Powerschool Learning course for Academic Services updates, as well as an AIG course to staff and the community. There is seamless integration with discernible overlap between programs as Avery County Schools seeks to improve the services and learning outcomes of all students. Updates to the Academic Services Powerschool Learning course are made monthly, while new content is posted on the AIG course for updates biweekly. DEP conferences may occur at anytime, but are at minimum held as students change schools and/or grade spans.
Practice F
Addresses the social and emotional needs of AIG students through collaboration among school counseling personnel, regular education teachers, AIG specialists, and others.

District Response: Avery County Schools’ general education teachers, exceptional children’s teachers, other specialists, instructional support staff, parents/families and school-based and central office based administrators collaborate to develop, support and evaluate district-wide differentiated programs and services. Most of the services for students are coordinated by MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) teams. The MTSS teams utilize the expertise of counselors, administrators, and teachers to meet both academic and social and emotional needs of students. Both middle schools as well as the high school employ full time counselors, despite their small size. Elementary schools are staffed with 1/2 time counselors. The team approach allows for flexible responses to meet the social and emotional needs of AIG students through direct services, PLC updates, and team meetings including the student and parents. Services, including counseling and/or team education on the specific social and emotional needs of AIG students are provided as needed, and referrals for additional services are available as well through a Student Care Coordinator position.

Practice G
Develops policies and procedures for a variety of acceleration opportunities, including compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, subject and/or grade acceleration.

District Response: Avery County Schools works to offer a wide range of programming options for acceleration for students. Credit Demonstrated by Mastery is listed as an option within our course registration guide. The process for Kindergarten Early Entry is outlined in Board Policy. Curriculum compacting, subject and grade acceleration are included within standard practice as part of the district’s AIG program. The AIG team discusses the appropriate services for students in the development of each student’s DEP. Annual meetings are held with parents to discuss middle school course compacting, and the scheduling courses in middle school for high school credit. Other specific examples include the consistent enrollment of students in the online (NCSSM) North Carolina School of Science and Math program, distance learning options through NCSSM, NCVPS, and APEX, as well as dual enrollment options through Mayland Community College. The registration process for these courses are consistently shared through course registration guides, as well as the district’s AIG Powerschool Learning Page. Students are individually counseled regarding their course options, which is facilitated by the district’s small schools.

Practice H
Implements intentional strategies to broaden access to advanced learning opportunities for under-represented AIG populations, including culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged,
English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional. These strategies may include talent development efforts.

**District Response:** Avery County Schools utilizes the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) framework to analyze student data from a variety of perspectives, including subgroup performance. Performance results on formative and benchmark assessments are matched to programmatic adjustments, as well as individual student services. In terms of identification, multiple criteria are used in the identification/placement process for all students. In addition to normed score reports, teachers are encouraged to consider student performance, observations and work samples from enrichment lessons when making referral decisions.

Professional development is offered to general education professionals that is focused on learning characteristics of under-represented populations and addresses: cultural sensitivity issues, twice exceptional student learning profiles, and positive peer cultures. Increased student identification among under-represented populations becomes an outcome of these professional development sessions. An appropriate integrated curriculum is aligned with learning needs of under-represented gifted and monitored through the MTSS framework.

Opportunities to engage in higher-order problem solving activities, built into content area curriculum, allow special gifted populations to develop skills that improve self-esteem. The Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Program Coordinator leads a staff of LEP professionals who assist in the identification of students who possess non-standard indicators of giftedness. They also translate documents, translate meeting content for Spanish-speaking parents, provide intervention services for LEP students and communicates with parents in the schools' efforts toward encouraging family involvement in all activities that promote student success.

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

**District Response:** Avery County Schools highly encourages the participation of gifted students in extra-curricular programs and events that enhance and further develop their interests. Each school in the district has established and sponsored extra-curricular programs intentionally designed with the needs of gifted students in mind. Schools sponsor academic competition teams for university math competitions, Battle of the Books, Enviro-thon, Science Olympiad, Project Lead the Way Robotics and Engineering clubs, NC Science and Engineering Fair, NC Academy of Science Fair, drama productions, and Coding Clubs. Students are encouraged to participate during the formation of DEPs, through formal and informal conferences with parents/students, as well as through communications through the district AIG Powerschool Learning course.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** The ACS AIG program is comprehensively integrated into the total school program of Avery County Schools. Continued efforts are in place to ensure collaboration between AIG services and the broader academic program. We are looking to improve in the delivery
of services within social and emotional learning through increased number of staff with AIG licensure, as well at implementation of the MTSS framework.

**Sources of Evidence:** DEPs

AIG Eligibility Criteria

ACS Strategic Plan

Powerschool Learning LMS
ACHS Course Guide
MTSS meeting minutes
Standard 3: 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: Academically or intellectually gifted students enrolled in Avery County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program. AIG services are integrated in a 1:1 technology-rich environment. Recognized as an Apple Distinguished Program, ACS provides all students, K-12, with a computing device (K-5 students receive an iPad; 6-12 students receive a MacBook) for use during the school year.

AIG services are integrated with the general education program, K-12, where flexible grouping and content differentiation are used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual, social and emotional growth. Differentiated services take place in a variety of settings and provide most positive effects when students are grouped for instruction. Each school designs opportunities for AIG students, taking into account AIG population, school size, staff expertise, and individual student need. Such opportunities may include subject acceleration, extension, and/or enrichment, opportunity for individual exploration/research, and/or participation in academic competition/clubs. Competitions and clubs meet both during and after school. Student participation in these opportunities are discussed annually with the student and parents to match with student needs.

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: Diverse and effective instructional practices are employed by staff and matched to the educational needs of students. K-5 instruction is heavily influenced by a focus on literacy and leveled instruction. 100% of all schools have multiple teachers who have completed a Master's Program at Appalachian State University (ASU) in Reading. A differentiated literacy program where learners are taught at their instructional level is foundational to the approach taught by ASU. Each school clusters students, in some cases across grade levels, to ensure that literacy instruction occurs at the level where each student is achieving.

Specific nurturing programs are in place for students in Grades K-3 prior to formal identification to
identify highly performing students and offer extension and/or acceleration opportunities within a 1-1 technology environment.

Identified students in grades 4-5 are clustered for instruction in all contents, as well as offered extension and/or acceleration opportunities within a 1-1 technology environment. Professional development and instructional resources are provided to staff to assist with the management of a instructionally differentiated classroom.

Middle and High School students are served through advanced classes across content areas. Consultation regarding self-advocacy begins to take a larger role, in addition to the direct services provided through advanced coursework. A wide variety of educational choices through the presence of high interest/high challenge opportunities are available as special interest courses such as engineering, arts extensions, and high school level electives are offered at middle school. High school course opportunities for middle school students are offered both face to face for Math 1, as well as online via NCVPS. Professional development and instructional resources are provided to staff to assist with the management of a instructionally differentiated classroom that includes both AIG identified, as well as other high performing students.

High School services continue through Honors, Advanced Placement, and Dual Enrollment Community College Courses. Professional development and instructional resources are provided to staff to assist with the management of a instructionally differentiated classroom that includes both AIG identified, as well as other high performing students.

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

**District Response:** Avery County Schools employs a variety of research based supplemental resources to augment curriculum and instruction. Resources include: Letterland, Reading 3D, Reading and Math Foundations, Junior Great Books, Jacob's Ladder, Mentoring Mathematical Minds, iReady, Reader's and Writer’s Workshop, Discovery Education Techbook and United Streaming, as well as other technology specific resources. Resources are tailored to match the learning needs of students.

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

**District Response:** Avery County Schools’ comprehensive gifted education program provides state-
of-the-art technology to support academic services. The AIG program is purposefully designed to provide 21st century learning opportunities that promote the growth of skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for gifted students to reach their potential in a competitive global society. Recognized as an 'Apple Distinguished Program' all Avery County Schools students are issued a computing device (K-5: iPad; 6-12: MacBook laptop; Teachers and administrators: iPad, MacBook, and/or Smartphone) for use throughout the school year.

Educational professionals direct focused effort in monitoring the progress of all students in order to ensure that all graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education, prepared for a productive life in the 21st century. By providing a safe and orderly environment, students are offered programs that require collaboration in performing tasks that reflect the most current, research-based practices. Curriculum is rigorous and relevant for all students. Advanced differentiated strategies are in place to assure appropriate challenge for advanced learners in all areas; literacy skills that include reading, writing, speaking, computing, critical thinking, and solving problems are incorporated in all learning environments.

The introduction of the K-12 1-1 technology program has facilitated an increased degree of vertical and horizontal alignment, while also enabling staff to individualize learning opportunities through a Learning Management System, Powerschool Learning. Project/Problem Based Learning, student research, and emphasis on multi-media presentation are all embedded within differentiated instruction across schools and grade levels.

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

**District Response:** Avery County Schools is implementing the MTSS framework as part of its process for continuous improvement. On-going formative and summative assessment data is used in all grade levels throughout Avery County Schools to provide educators with detailed information about students' progress in assimilating and expressing knowledge and skills and monitored by school based MTSS teams. Computer adapted diagnostic formative assessments assess student progress and understanding of concepts and skills so that teachers are able to tailor instruction to enhance learning. Summative assessments, i.e. NC End of Grade and NC End of Course tests provide useful information to educators on how students display their knowledge for comparative purposes.

Teachers utilize a variety of formative assessment tools, including Reading 3D, iReady, shared curriculum based assessments in SchoolNet, collaborative student assignments and work utilizing
Google Apps for education, etc. to cluster students in instructional groups for differentiated instruction. Student performance is monitored and DEP's are adjusted accordingly in response to the data.

The systemic investment in technology by Avery County Schools (tablet/laptop devices), increases efficiency for data analysis and subsequent response. It also increases the level of transparency and communication with parents as results are shared and collaborative plans created.

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

**District Response:** Avery County Schools consists of small community schools where students are known by multiple caring adults. The small size of each of our K-8 schools (one school of approximately 290 students, while the 6 others are all less than 200 students), a small high school (less than 600 students), along with comprehensive counseling services ensure that students have access to a small community of adults to meet social and emotional needs. Avery County Schools employs a high quality guidance program that has a service ratio of less than 300 students to 1 counselor which is much better than the state average of 1:378.

Our counseling school-based professionals understand the unique characteristics of gifted students and are equipped to address and meet their needs. Interns from Appalachian State University are also used to increase access for students to services. Counseling services are sensitive to diversity with interventions that recognize challenges related to cultural, language and socio-economic variances. Classroom curricular materials selected are sensitive to culture and gender.

The Avery County Schools utilize flexible, clustered grouping arrangements provide access to intellectual peers so that similar achievement levels, interest areas and pacing of instruction needs are met. Some flexible grouping options include cross-classroom and cross-grade level groupings. Differentiated guidance services address common concerns that specific groups of gifted students share. Transition meetings to complete DEPs are held to also address specific social and emotional needs.

Both middle schools employ a TAG (Teacher Advisory Group) program to offer students a consistent home base to provide relationship assistance, mentorship, and activities to support the social and emotional needs of students. Avery High School has an advisory program, as well as a Viking Period that allows students to meet with teachers regarding both their academic as well as their social/emotional needs. Additionally, Avery County Schools employs a mental health care coordinator through a NC Mental Health grant that facilitates the access and coordination with outside services to meet the social and emotional needs of students.

**Practice G**
Cultivates and develops the potential of young (K-3) students through purposeful and intentional
differentiated curriculum and instruction.

**District Response:** Avery County Schools recognizes that when high-ability children are identified in the early grades, an advanced differentiated education program designed to meet their unique needs will greatly enhance strengths and identify areas for potential growth. By meeting these students' challenge needs, a program is in place to ensure later school success and skill development. Experiences/activities that involve rigorous curricular work at a very young age enhance opportunity for acceleration and enrichment in later grades.

Student performance in rigorous activities, student work portfolios, teacher/parent recommendations and students' participation in accelerated activities providing opportunity for children to demonstrate high performance/ability will be used to increase numbers of young children placed in the AIG program. 1-1 technology opportunities afford greater opportunities for differentiated opportunities and nurturing across K-3 campuses.

While small schools limit the number of staff and formal programs that can be provided, the small sizes of our elementary schools are a positive is quickly identifying young gifted students and matching opportunities to individual needs. MTSS teams meet regularly to look analyze data as well as provide anecdotal reports on the progress of students. Each elementary school utilizes it's 1-1 technology program to differentiate instruction throughout classrooms with low class sizes. Students receive accelerated instruction through cluster peer instructional groups to meet learning needs. All grade level teachers participate in monthly PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to discuss instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students, including the specialized needs of gifted students.

**Practice H**
Develops and implements differentiated curriculum and instruction through collaboration among regular education teachers, AIG personnel, and other related instructional staff.

**District Response:** Academically or Intellectually gifted students enrolled in Avery County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program. Academically Gifted services are integrated with the regular education program, K–12, where flexible grouping is used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual and emotional growth. PLCs utilize staff resources such as staff who possess Gifted Licensure, Master's level content coursework, administrators, and outside resources via technology to gain the expertise needed to meet student needs.

As a district, we are to establishing a growth mindset culture for all students. Collaboration among schools within PLCs as well as via our LMS, Powerschool Learning enables staff and students to connect to a wide range of resources. Effective instructional strategies are regularly discussed and tied to data to ensure effective student progress.

MTSS teams, comprised of staff with varied expertise, meet regularly to discuss student needs.
Schools are actively pursuing additional staff with gifted licensure to increase expertise. Common themes and trends within schools are shared at teacher PLCs and monthly administrator meetings. PLC focuses include the creation of curricula to meet the needs of advanced 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:** Avery County Schools’ Gifted Education Plan defines a comprehensive curriculum and service delivery plan that addresses the varied needs of academically or intellectually gifted students. The Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) is developed by a variety of stakeholders that includes the parent, general education teacher, and the principal.

The DEP serves to communicate to all stakeholders the student’s academic needs in a specific curricular area(s). In addition, the plan articulates all components of the gifted program designed to enhance student learning. Acceleration/Enrichment opportunities are included options. DEPs are reviewed annually; and signed upon transition into new schools/programs. The DEPs can be edited/adjusted at anytime with the convening of the team.

The DEP communicates the following components:
- The curriculum resources and strategies provided by general education to deliver the NC SCoS and the manner in which the curriculum is to be advanced/enriched for the gifted student.
- The DEP provides opportunities for expansion of general education services in the student’s identified area of strength/giftedness.
- The DEP considers affective needs of the gifted student.
- The DEP addresses flexible cluster grouping arrangements.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** Avery County Schools is increasing its number of staff with Gifted Licensure. The goal is to have one student with Gifted Licensure per school by 2022. Teachers with Gifted Licensure will be included on MTSS teams to advocate and address the needs of gifted students. Avery County Schools is also working with counseling staff to increase their capacity to intentionally serve the social and emotional needs of gifted students.

**Sources of Evidence:** Powerschool Learning LMS
- Transition plans
- DEPs
- Student Achievement data
- PLC minutes
Training rosters for AIG sessions
Standard 4: 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 Executive Director of Academic Services is responsible for the implementation of the ACS AIG program. The Executive Director is pursuing licensure through taking the praxis. District AIG programming implementation is monitored through both the MTSS framework. Programmatic changes are shared with district leadership and changes are implemented appropriately. Changes are communicated through PLCs and through the Powerschool Learning LMS. Specific monitoring components, including screening, referral processes, professional development, and data monitoring for implementation fidelity are the responsibility of the Executive Director of Academic Services. Avery County Schools employs one AIG certified teacher who works to consult with the district-wide plan. NWRESA is offering AIG credentialing professional development to increase the number of AIG certified teachers district-wide, with the goal of having one AIG certified staff member in each building by 2022. Teachers involved in the NWRESA process will serve on MTSS teams and assist in guiding, advising, and monitoring the local AIG plan.

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

District Response: Avery County Schools historically has employed two AIG-licensed specialists who have assisted in the creation of the district plan. This past year the district decreased to only one specialist in the district. As a result, the district is sending four staff through NWRESA locally credential training with the goal of having one credentialed staff member in each school by 2022. All ACS staff collaborate to create individualized DEPs to meet student needs. The classroom teacher, school staff, school principal, parents, and district staff as needed are involved in creating the plans and working to build services to meet student academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of students.

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:** Currently, Avery County Schools does not mandate professional development for personnel working with AIG students. However, the district utilizes formative and summative data, as well as EVAAS to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction for students. Teachers identified with professional learning needs in working with AIG students are supported with a combination of local funds, AIG funds, and school level funds to improve. The District Strategic Plan incorporates specific strategies such as content differentiation, individualization of content utilizing technology, project based learning, etc. that does relate to offering quality services to AIG students. The goal is for every school to have an AIG certified staff member on their MTSS team by 2022.

**Practice D**
Provides general education services by personnel who have earned an AIG add-on license or have met the LEA requirements for that position.

**District Response:** Avery County Schools currently has one AIG licensed teacher in our district and 8 campuses. Each of the school campuses are well below the state average in relation to average school size, as well as significantly below the state average in average student to pupil ratio. Our district size, funding, and lack of AIG licensed teachers have been directly correlated to the development of our integrated AIG plan for services. We continue to monitor achievement gaps, including AIG services, and structure professional development to match the combination of both student and staff needs. With the support of NWRESA and the opportunity for teachers to take the praxis to achieve certification, ACS has set a goal to have one AIG certified teacher in each building by 2022. To facilitate quality services, AIG students are clustered to provide flexible learning opportunities within differentiated learning environments.

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

**District Response:** Professional development within Avery County Schools is integrated across all programs and district initiatives, including AIG. The delivery of professional development is blended within the Academic Services department. 1-1 technology is at the core of all program delivery and professional development throughout the system. Data systems are in place to investigate and respond to gaps in performance, and specific plans and supports are designed to meet student, cohort, school, and district needs. All subgroups, including AIG are analyzed for performance through MTSS teams. MTSS and School Improvement teams create plans for improvement. The district utilizes multiple resources, including AIG funds, AP Partnership Funds, local curriculum funds to ensure differentiated instructional practices are supported and implemented.

**Practice F**
Provides opportunities for AIG specialists and other teachers to plan, implement, and refine applications of their professional development learning.
**District Response:** Teachers throughout the district collaboratively participate in professional development. The district has intentionally worked to redefine professional development as an event or series of events into a learning culture where the craft of teaching and learning are constantly being refined. PLCs are in place K-12, where staff identify needs, work to identify potential resources, and collaborate to find both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities to make each other better. PLCs work to connect schools and programs to identify strengths that can be replicated and implemented across multiple schools and programs in the district. The AIG Powerschool Learning Page, as well as the Academic Services Page within our LMS shares resources, opportunities, and examples that teachers can use across teaching domains.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** AIG licensure has become more difficult to encourage staff to obtain due to proximity to a licensing IHE, and the lack of incentive for staff to pursue. As a result, through partnership with NWRESA, Avery County Schools has set as a goal to have 1 AIG certified staff member per school by 2022. We continue to strengthen our data systems, MTSS processes, and aligned Professional Development to be inclusive of the needs of teachers to teach AIG students.

**Sources of Evidence:** Roster of teachers attending NWRESA training
PLC minutes
District Strategic Plan
MTSS minutes
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 that are intentional and meaningful to support the following needs of AIG students:
* academic and intellectual
* social and emotional

District Response: AIG services in Avery County Schools take place in small community schools where individual and collaborative wrap around plans are developed. DEPs are created to take into account the needs of the whole child, including academic, intellectual, and social/emotional needs. District staff, school counselors, and outside resources are included when needed in both the development and implementation of the plan.

Ongoing conversations about AIG opportunities take place through the district Powerschool Learning course. In the Spring 2019 AIG Parent committee meeting, considerable conversation was centered on meeting the social and emotional needs of AIG students. The district has employed a care coordinator position to assist with meeting the social and emotional needs of all students, including AIG by connecting students to both in school as well as out of school services. AIG students are highly encouraged to be involved in school sponsored extra curricular activities, including academic competition, competitive Career Technical Student Organizations, and academic clubs. Each of these activities encourage increased family engagement as well as increased home/school interaction.

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: All AIG students and parents are connected and informed through the district Powerschool Learning course in our LMS. Emails are automatically generated to every student when the AIG course is updated, with a weblink that leads directly to new content. Students and parents are surveyed regarding the services they are receiving, as well as ideas to better meet their needs. Parents are involved in the creation of individualized DEPs that match their student's needs. A letter is mailed out yearly to describe AIG services and ensure parental access to the Powerschool Learning course.

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:** AIG programmatic meetings with Avery County Schools are addressed both formally and informally. There are regular meetings between the Executive Director of Academic Services with both principals and staff members that discuss academic achievement and programming for all students, as well as specific subgroups, which include AIG. Programmatic changes are addressed as issues arrive. Additionally, AIG parents provide school level feedback as they develop individualized DEPs, as well as programmatic feedback through discussions with the Executive Director of Academic Services. The AIG Powerschool Learning course assists in sharing additional information and prompts opportunities for dialogue. An Advisory Committee, consisting of both parents, teachers, and administrators meets to review the AIG plan and progress towards its 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:** All families are enrolled in an AIG Powerschool Learning course where enrolled students and parents receive emails when new content has been updated. Documents are translated into Spanish as needed for native Spanish-speaking AIG families. All families receive a mailing over the summer informing them about the Powerschool Learning page and soliciting feedback on AIG programming. Our small size is also an asset for communication and opportunities. The Executive Director of Academic Services also provides direct supervision for CTE (Career Technical Education) and as a result is able to blend CTE opportunities for advanced course work aligned with students’ future plans, opportunities for internships and job shadowing, as well as advisement for community college opportunities.

**Practice E**
Partners with community stakeholders, such as institutions of higher education, local business and industry partners, and others to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services.

**District Response:** Avery County Schools possesses strong community relationships that are exhibited in the programming of AIG students. We work collaboratively with both Appalachian State University and Lees McRae College to offer coursework, internships, independent studies, and extracurricular opportunities. Both institutions are heavily invested in supporting core academic programming, as well as enrichment activities. Mayland Community College also offers a tremendous number of dual enrollment courses that are taught on their campus, as well as the campus of Avery High School. Local businesses are also very involved in the general programming of Avery County Schools and support students through the hosting of internships, volunteering, and direct sponsorship of academic events such as the robotics team.
Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Avery County Schools continues to seek ways to increase participation of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the AIG program and plan. The district has launched a new format for its webpage that can be improved for outward communication.

Sources of Evidence: AIG website

Stakeholder communications/emails

Sponsorship agreements/plans
Powerschool Learning AIG Page
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 local board of education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

District Response: Avery County Schools has a written AIG Plan that is aligned with state and local legislation and policies. To create the 2019-22 plan, the AIG Advisory Committee comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators, reviewed the 2016-19 plan and compared it with the standards for the 2019-2022 plan. Student and parent surveys were analyzed and taken into account when developing strategies for the new plan. The plan is approved by the Avery County Board of Education and sent to SBE/DPI for comment.

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

District Response: The Executive Director of Academic Services monitors the integrated services outlined within the Avery County Schools AIG plan. The Director ensures policies and legislation outlined in the AIG plan relating to identification, services, and overall program quality are in place. The Director also meets monthly with principals to review academic progress, programmatic and legislative policy updates as part of the total school improvement process. MTSS processes have been created to monitor student progress and needs to make programming and scheduling adjustments to meet student needs.

Practice C
Develops and monitors a budget using allotted state funds, and local funds if applicable, to address the needs of the local AIG plan in accordance with state policy.

District Response: Funds are monitored by the Executive Director of Academic Services, along with the district's Chief Financial Officer. AIG funds are used to support the programming and education of gifted students consistent with state policy. Specific use of funds are used to hire AIG certified staff, support professional development, including staff pursuing AIG certification, and support AIG student activities. Additional fund sources, including general curriculum and local funds are used to help strengthen AIG goals as well.
**Practice D**
Maintains, analyzes, and shares student achievement, student growth, and annual drop-out data for AIG students.

**District Response:** Avery County Schools maintains, analyzes, and shares student performance growth reports. All teachers and administrators are focused on increasing student achievement for all students, including gifted education students. Formative and summative assessment reports are disaggregated to ensure growth among gifted and advanced student sub-populations.

Formative assessments are scheduled regularly throughout the year and summative assessment data is collected annually across all grade levels beginning with grade three. Results are analyzed and used in making curricular and program decisions. Individual student score reports are analyzed in order to ensure an appropriate service match.

**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:** Avery County Schools recognizes that academic and leadership potential and levels of giftedness exist among all populations of students, including those with multiple exceptionalities and those from culturally, linguistically, or ethnically diverse backgrounds. MTSS procedures are in place to screen, identify, and, place students using multiple measures. Communications among counselors, exceptional children's program educators, limited English proficiency educators and gifted education educators promote and ensure that equitable identification and service delivery programming that meet the needs of underrepresented student populations are met. Student growth for AIG students is monitored in both EVAAS summative data, as well as interim iReady assessments across subgroups.

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

**District Response:** The director of Human Resources maintains current data regarding the AIG licensure of school personnel. All staff licensure credentials are housed in the Human Resource Management System (HRMS). As a small district, we are seeking avenues to increase the number of staff possessing AIG licensure.
Elicits regular feedback from students, parents/families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program.

**District Response:** Avery County Schools elicits feedback from all stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program both formally and informally. Central Services support, building level administration, and teachers meet regularly regarding differentiated programming, student performance data, and instructional resource needs. Parents and students provide feedback as a result of the AIG Powerschool Learning page that lists coming events, happenings, and general accomplishments as they relate to AIG programming. Yearly surveys are given to AIG parents and students, and results are discussed in both district administrative meetings as well as district PLCs. DEP updates include input from parents and teachers on meeting the needs of AIG students.

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

**District Response:** Avery County Schools has a very strong data culture and utilizes multiple sources of data in reviewing, evaluating, and revising the AIG plan. Formal and informal conversations with students, parents, and staff at various stakeholder meetings, student performance data with EOG/EOC and EVAAS scores, PLC meetings, and monthly administrative meetings with district and school leaders. In the process of evaluating and revising the new AIG plan, an AIG Advisory Committee, comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators met to review surveys, EVAAS results, and anecdotal data and used the feedback in crafting the new plan.

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

**District Response:** The local AIG plan is submitted on the Avery County Schools website, the AIG Powerschool Learning page, and presented to the local Board of Education. Parents of AIG students also receive a link to the plan yearly through a letter outlining program highlights and access to the AIG Powerschool Learning page.

Annually, the highlights of student programming are published in the Avery County Schools Annual Report. Also, as part of yearly reporting to the Board of Education, the Executive Director of Academic Services highlights successes of all academic programs, including AIG, CTE, and Accountability results.

**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:** 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: Avery County Schools has policies, procedures, and practices that outline specific components to protect the rights of all AIG students. Monitoring by individuals who have expertise in the area of gifted education ensure that regulations are implemented and compliant. The district plan, updated and revised at least every three years at a system level, looks at fairness and equity issues relating to student screening, referral and identification processes. Program management and services at each grade level, student outcomes, student grouping procedures, professional development, counseling and guidance services, funding sources, and program evaluation participate in ongoing review and revision as part of the continuous improvement process. Due process procedures are contained in local board policy, posted online and shared among all stakeholders. The full Student and Parent Grievance Procedure Policy 1740 may be accessed at: http://www.averyschools.net/cms/lib3/NC01000809/Centricity/Domain/50/1740-4010_Student_and_Parent_Grievance_Procedure.pdf Excerpts from the policy are found below:

**PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

A. OPTIONS FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

The board strives to resolve concerns and complaints whenever possible. To this end, the board has provided opportunities for students and parents to express their concerns through processes established in board policies. Board policy 1742/5060, Responding to Complaints, identifies these different processes and provides a mechanism for resolving complaints in an informal manner.

While the board encourages informal resolutions, the board recognizes that students and parents may want a more formal process for certain types of complaints or if an informal process was not satisfactory. This policy provides a complaint procedure that can be used as described below.

Any parent or student who is unclear of the options for proceeding with a concern may contact the principal's office or the superintendent's office for further information and copies of all applicable board policies.

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notified the grievant of the delay and the reason for the delay, such as the complexity of the investigation or report. The official will make reasonable efforts to keep the grievant apprised of progress being made during any period of delay. Delays are not permitted that interfere with the exercise of any legal rights.

Failure by the grievant at any step to appeal a grievance to the next step within the specified time limit will be considered acceptance of the decision at that step, unless the grievant has notified the official of a delay, the reason for the delay and the official has consented in writing to the delay.

D. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. No reprisals of any kind will be taken by the board or by an employee of the school district against any grievant or other student or employee on account of his or her participation in a grievance filed and decided pursuant to this policy.

2. All meetings and hearings conducted pursuant to this policy will be private.

3. The board and school district will consider requests to hear grievances from a group of grievants, but the board and officials have the discretion to respond to individual grievants.

4. The grievant may have a representative, including an attorney, at any stage of the grievance. However, any grievant intending to be represented by legal counsel must notify the appropriate school official in advance so that school personnel also will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel.

PROCESS FOR GRIEVANCE

1. Reporting Grievance

a. Whenever a student or parent/guardian believes that he/she has been adversely affected by a decision of a school employee, the student or parent/guardian may file a grievance as provided in this policy.

b. A grievance must be filed as soon as possible but no longer than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the grievance. For a grievance submitted after 30 days which claims a violation, misapplication or misinterpretation of state or federal law, including discrimination, the superintendent or designee will determine whether the grievance will be investigated after considering factors such as the reason for the delay; the extent of the delay; the effect of the delay on the ability of the school district to investigate and respond to the complaint; and whether the investigation of the complaint is necessary to meet any legal obligations. However, students and parents should recognize that delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of the school district to investigate and respond effectively to such complaints.

c. A student who has a grievance must provide the following information in
writing to the principal: (1) the name of the school district employee or other individual whose decision or action is at issue; (2) the specific decision(s) or actions at issue; (3) any board policy, state or federal law, state or federal regulation, or State Board of Education policy or procedure that the parent or student believes has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated; (4) and the specific resolution desired. If there is not a specific decision at issue and no concern that state or federal law has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated, then the procedure established in board policy 1742/5060, Responding to Complaints, is appropriate and the principal will address the concern following that board policy.

d. Even if the principal is the employee whose decision or action is at issue, the student will submit the grievance first to the principal in order for the principal to address the issue within the formal process. If, however, the grievance claims that a state or federal law has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated, the student may submit the grievance directly to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

2. Investigation

a. The principal will schedule and hold a meeting with the student and/or parent within five school days of receiving the request. The student may be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or other person who is in a position of loco parentis to the student.
b. The principal will conduct any investigation of the facts necessary before rendering a decision.

3. Response by Principal

a. The principal will provide a written response to the written grievance within ten days of the meeting. The response will include the principal's decision regarding resolution of the grievance and the basis for the decision. In responding, the principal cannot disclose information about other students or employees that by law is considered confidential.
b. A copy of the grievance and the principal's response will be filed with the superintendent.

4. Response by Superintendent

a. If the grievant is dissatisfied with the principal's decision, the grievant may appeal the decision to the superintendent. The appeal must be made in writing within five days of receiving the principal's decision.
b. The superintendent may review the written documents and respond or the superintendent may schedule and hold a conference with the grievant and principal, and any other individuals the superintendent determines to be appropriate within five school days after receiving the appeal. The student may be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or other person who is in a position of loco parentis to the student.
c. The superintendent will provide a written response within 10 days after receiving the appeal. In responding, the superintendent cannot disclose information about other students or employees that by law is considered confidential.

5. Appeal to the Board
   If the grievant has alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local board of education policy or procedure, the grievant shall have a right to appeal a final administrative decision to the board of education (see Mandatory Appeals below). If a grievant has not alleged such specific violations, he/she may request a hearing before the board, which the board may grant at its discretion.

Idea to Strengthen the Standard: ACS continues to look for ways to strengthen feedback processes in the development and implementation of the plan. Programmatic effectiveness is very data focused with a focus on both total school and district performance, as well as the specific AIG subgroup. Additional indicators of success such as the increase in the enrollment of advanced courses and/or student participation in academic competition will be published within on the AIG Powerschool Learning page to encourage programmatic transparency.

Sources of Evidence: AIG Powerschool Learning page

Data disaggregation reports

Documentation of data meetings, PLC meetings, and AIG Advisory meetings
Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

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