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

Approved by local Board of Education on: 18-JUL-19
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Submitted to NC Department of Public Instruction on: 19-JUL-19

Cherokee 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 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 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, Cherokee County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Cherokee County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Cherokee County Schools believes that Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) students deserve rigorous, differentiated, high quality instruction All Day, Every Day. A free appropriate public education for gifted learners means an emphasis on growth and talent development for all students at all levels. We believe that the best way we can support the needs of our gifted students is to provide all teachers with quality professional development and educational resources to help guide their ability to differentiate and provide rigorous high-level instruction that meets the needs of all students. Gifted students excel when they are welcomed, educated and challenged amongst their peers and they deserve to learn in a school environment where they are regularly and consistently challenged to excel socially, emotionally and academically.

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

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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: In keeping with our motto of AIG All Day, Every Day -- CCS believes that AIG services should be integrated and supported both within the regular classroom and through extension and enrichment opportunities.

The goal of the referral process is to provide advanced academic services and enrichment opportunities to students who consistently perform and/or display academic and intellectual needs consistent with the criteria outlined below. AIG also strives to recognize and support the learning needs of our academically advanced students (those who perform or who are predicted to perform in the 80th percentile or above).

Screening criteria includes EVAAS predictions, teacher observations/recommendations, 90th percentile or above achievement on state and/or nationally normed assessments, and consistently advanced performance ("A" average in 3 out of 4 courses) in core-four/graduation requirement courses. (K-3 requirements are slightly different; please refer to the CCS AIG Placement Rubric). Note - Students who are predicted to perform in the 80th percentile will be included in our talent development program and will receive targeted support services to cultivate and develop academic and intellectual talent and abilities. (Please see the CCS AIG Placement Rubric)

To initiate a referral:
1. Collect student referral information based on the appropriate Grade-Level
2. Contact principal and obtain parent/guardian consent to recommend the student for AIG review
3. Contact School-Level Liaison or AIG Teacher for access to Gifted Rating Scale and complete the document
4. After a thorough review of the referral documentation, the AIG testing coordinator will contact the guardian to recommend and obtain consent for AIG testing
5. After all assessments are complete, the AIG testing coordinator will recommend that the student be placed in the AIG program if the test score meets the required 90th percentile and the student qualifies in two of the three areas of the referral criteria (Note: students who are referred as potential IG candidates may qualify if they meet testing requirements and one other referral criteria).

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:** CCS defines academically and intellectually gifted students as those students who demonstrate a level of aptitude, achievement, and/or academic performance that is significantly higher than that of their peers. Teachers and parents can help identify students as academically and/or intellectually gifted by understanding that academically and intellectually gifted students learn at a faster pace and a more complex level than their age peers.

How will we identify? CCS will use a combination of aptitude, achievement and performance measurements to identify academically gifted students. Using a combination of two or more scores for aptitude, achievement and performance measurements CCS will identify students as either:

- AIG - Academically and Intellectually Gifted (scores above 90th %tile in the areas of Math and Reading and above 90th %tile in a combination of 3 or more areas of an aptitude test);
- AG - Academically Gifted (scores above the 90th %tile in the area Math and Reading and has a combined academic performance score in the 90th %tile on a nationally normed performance assessment)
- AM - Academically Gifted in Math (score a level 5 or above on a state math assessment and has a combined academic performance score of 90th %tile or above on a performance assessment of math skills)
- AR - Academically Gifted in Reading (Scores a level 5 or above on a state Reading assessment and or a combined academic performance score of 90th %tile or above on a performance assessment of reading fluency or verbal skills)
- IG - Intellectually Gifted students are those with an intellectual aptitude significantly higher than his/her same age peers (denoted by a score of 90% or higher composite score or a 95% or higher score on a combination of 3 or more areas of a nationally normed aptitude test, but may fail to meet academic or performance achievement ability).

**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:** As a small rural school system, CCS has historically experienced a somewhat homogeneous student population. However, as most communities throughout North Carolina, we are beginning to see increased diversity in our school system. The AIG department celebrates and welcomes this increase in diversity. Total minority population noted in the previous AIG plan (written in 2016) equaled 11%. CCS now has a 15% minority population. As noted in the Demographic Reporting and Comparison CCS v AIG (see appendix), in most reported categories
CCS AIG is within range for proportionally representing our minority population. Nevertheless, we know that we need to work to improve our representation. During this planning cycle, CCS AIG will provide demographic information and using EVAAS we will create a "students to screen" (those predicted in the 80th-90th percentile) and "students to refer" (those in the 90th percentile or above) recommendation to share with each school. Using this method, AIG has already identified 100 additional students to include in our talent development program and to screen for indicators of gifted behavior and 25 students who are not currently in our program whom we will recommend teachers screen and perhaps refer for testing. In the groups mentioned, 20/100 and 8/25 are minority students.

In respect to gender representation, CCS does quite well in consistency with district numbers. We have a nearly 50/50 representation in both our overall population and in our AIG student population. Another area we want to be mindful of is our representation of our economically disadvantaged population. Although we do not have a 1:1 comparison, we know that CCS is a Title 1 district and that we consistently serve a student population of which 80% or above qualify for free or reduced lunch. Our recent efforts to work collaboratively with the 21st-century program will ensure that we make improved strides to provide enrichment and talent development opportunities to this targeted population.

**Practice D**

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

**District Response:** AIG provides the CCS AIG Placement Rubric and Referral Process Chart (see appendix) for Schools and teachers to follow and make decisions regarding placement procedures. Information, Charts, and updates are shared with school AIG Liaisons quarterly (at minimum). Principals and district leaders are kept apprised of procedures during bi-annual leadership planning sessions. Any changes or updates of procedures are shared during monthly leadership meetings. Through our districts systematic integration of MTSS, an AIG representative will attend, provide data, and offer support for the specific differentiated needs of our students during quarterly school-level MTSS meetings. Working with curriculum, digital teaching and learning, and the exceptional children's department, AIG provides funding for substitutes and organizes opportunities for our teachers to develop their instructional and pedagogical skills as related to academically and intellectually advanced and gifted students.

The AIG department is small but we share a Google Team drive where AIG forms and reference guides are housed and readily available. Using EVAAS and state assessment data, the AIG team will annually evaluate our membership, and look for students who may have been overlooked in years past. Paying specific attention to our minority representation we will work to ensure that all currently eligible students are screened and served through our talent development program and if appropriate entered into the referral for the testing process. Information will be shared with schools and teachers via the student's SchoolNet Learning Plan.

**Practice E**

Disseminates information regarding the screening, referral, and identification processes to school personnel, parents/ families, students, and the community-at-large.
**District Response:** AIG utilizes various mediums to communicate and we will continue to develop our communication networks throughout the planning cycle. Currently, we are updating the forms and information packets we share with parents (we will work with our ELL Coordinator to provide appropriate translations for guardians and families). These packets will be delivered at the beginning of the school year (preferably during open-house events).

The presence of AIG Liaisons has improved the communication network between the district, teachers, and schools significantly this school year and as the wider community becomes more aware of the liaisons and their role within the school community, we foresee an increase in contacts and our ability to remain present and active in the schools. AIG also has access to and utilizes our "alert-now" phone messaging service. This resource enables our department to provide district-wide announcements and updates. The job expectations of our liaisons include that each liaison maintains their school’s social media presence for the AIG program and that the liaison contributes to our district’s quarterly update/newsletter for the AIG program. The program has also developed a guideline and flowchart that describes our screening, referral, and identification process. This information will be included in each newsletter updates and training events.

**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:** AIG will maintain student identification documentation and support information via the PowerSchool AIG Program documentation. We will increase our communication footprint with classroom teachers through Learning Plan notes included in the SchoolNet Student Profile. The SchoolNet Learning Plan section allows teachers and AIG personnel to share specific student strengths and potential barriers as well as shared goals and comments regarding students learning needs and interests. Specific student information will guide instruction and academic support and can be printed and/or be digitally shared with parents through the PowerSchool Parent application.

**Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:**
- Add an additional year to our universal screening group.
  Adding 7th grade to our universal screening group will ensure that more students (especially students who may have moved into our district) will have an opportunity to demonstrate advanced academic abilities and will be able to receive needed services.

- Review our assessment choice for testing.
  We will seek an online test option for testing students for placement. OLSAT online looks to be a great option as it provides information and online guides for parents as well as digital results and analysis. Having the ability to review and retain this digital copy of the student assessment will improve our ability to communicate student need and retain copies of student results.

- Participate in BOY meetings and then quarterly progress meetings with core four teachers and instructional staff.
Setting a meeting to review the goals and needs of our AIG students and academically advanced students will highlight and bring a greater sense of urgency to the needs of our students. These meetings will also allow AIG staff to support teachers with differentiation strategies.

- Review student data with schools to increase awareness of academically advanced students, especially those in underrepresented groups.

During the review of our demographic representation, several areas of weakness were highlighted that should be reviewed with schools to ensure that students who should be identified or students who may need additional support are highlighted and discussed with classroom teachers.

**Sources of Evidence:**
- CCS AIG Placement Rubric.pdf
- CCS AIG Data Review (Shared with Principals and District staff)
- AIG information section to the 2019/2020 Student/Parent Handbook
- CCS Website > Student Services > Academically and Intellectually Gifted
- Demographic Reporting and Comparison CCS v AIG 2018_2019.pdf
- PowerSchool and SchoolNet Student Profiles
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: CCS believes that AIG services should be integrated and supported both within the regular classroom and through extension opportunities.

K-3 student services will include adapted instruction, resources and materials and a focus on cluster grouping with pull-out services as needed. are nurtured through a talent development program where an AIG specialist works with students and teachers to develop Higher Order, Creativity and Critical Thinking skills to cultivate a love of learning and to inspire our student's intellectual curiosity. Utilizing programs such as Primary Education Thinking Skills, and early digital learning, citizenship, coding and robotics programs to engage students in the soft skills needed for future success.

4-5 students receive adapted instruction, resources, and materials as well as cluster grouping and/or "pull-out" services for students who have tested and qualified for AIG services. We will also continue to cultivate and provide talent development services for all students scoring or predicted to score within the 80th %tile or above on a state assessment. These services will focus on core academic support, but will also extend upon our High Order, Creativity and Critical thinking skills that were initiated in the K-3 program and continuing our digital learning, citizenship, coding and robotics programs to engage students in the soft skills needed for future success.

6-8 AIG and Academically Advanced student services will receive "push-in" support within their regular Math and/or ELA classrooms along with adapted materials and instruction. In addition, they will receive academic advisory services from a school-level AIG liaison supported by the school guidance counselor and middle school career coordinator. In addition, students are provided academic acceleration and enrichment opportunities via the Cherokee County Virtual School. This opportunity allows academically advanced middle school students an opportunity to pursue high school credit as well as interact and attend courses with other academically advanced students throughout the LEA.

9-12 AIG and Academically Advanced students' advanced academic needs are supported through comprehensive accelerated programming offerings on their campus such as Honors and Advanced Placement courses and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery options. Students are also provided opportunities to enroll in college-level courses and virtual school classes both through the CCVS program and the NCVPS program. Services allow our students who attend school in our rural area to pursue advanced and diverse courses such as Mandarin Chinese, AP Psychology, AP Computer Science and many others. These are courses that with limited funds and teachers positions would
otherwise not be available. Students will receive academic advisory services from a school-level AIG liaison supported by the school guidance counselor and high school career coordinator. Students may also participate in enrichment activities including mentorship programs with 21st-century academic services, career internships, advisory board opportunities as well as educational field trips and summer program opportunities.

AIG Liaisons are charged with the responsibility of becoming the personal advocate for their AIG students. By developing relationships with students, parents and teachers the liaisons can guide AIG students to programs, resources, and opportunities available both through the AIG program and our various resource partners. We envision a program that works collaboratively with curriculum, MTSS, career and technical education, digital teaching and learning, STEM, and our 21st-century afterschool program to support our students’ ability to explore their personal interests, academic goals and find to find new passions.

**Practice B**

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

**District Response:** A goal for the AIG program during the new plan cycle is to build our connections and communication with each instructional department. In the strategic plan for the district, AIG will work to support the MTSS committees at each school, request data information and resources from Testing and Accountability, build cooperative professional development events with Curriculum, Digital Teaching and Learning and STEM, and increase our career development and the practical 21st century soft skill development with the support of our CTE Department.

We have requested that the AIG Liaison is included on each MTSS committee to ensure that the needs of advanced learners are not overlooked. We know that since meeting proficiency is rarely a concern for advanced learners, our student's continued ability to meet expected growth and/or receive instruction and resources that meet the goals of accelerated learning can often be overlooked. For these reasons, we believe it is essential to have the liaison serve as an advocate and advisor on these committees.

Through district provided testing reports, AIG is able to analyze our data to both recognize students who show advanced academic potential and to share these findings with schools, liaisons and teachers who may screen students or potential testing and/or include students in our talent development groups. We can also use these reports to guide teachers and to help provide intervention strategies and resources for students who are not achieving at anticipated levels.

Our professional development goals are to work with and support Curriculum, Digital Teaching and Learning and STEM in their PD efforts both through goal setting, topic recommendation, and by providing financial means to support teachers ability to attend training. For the 2019 school year, AIG has purchased a district account for <study.com>. This resources provided self-guided, online, just-in-time professional development for teachers. Some examples of course options include: "Using Differentiated Instruction in the Classroom," "Teaching Gifted Students," "Implementing Competency-Based Education," "Using Data for Improvement," and 73 other multi-lesson, just-in-time course options. In addition, we have worked with our Technology Department to provide an online resource
library through the "OverDrive" application. This resource allows the AIG department to purchase text resources in a virtual environment. These resources are available to teachers at all of our 13 schools.

Finally, our CTE department will serve as a partner for helping students to discover their potential as career-ready individuals. Partnerships with the CTE department and their connections with community members and business leaders will provide AIG students with opportunities to become active participants in the business community learning about business/social etiquette and the spoken and unspoken rules of professional practice, participating in the planning and organization of community events, honing marketing and promotion skills, as well as obtaining job shadowing opportunities and learning about business/community leadership. We hope to increase our connections with the CTE department over this three year period and build relationships that will help our community attract and retain the talents of our AIG students.

**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:** CCS AIG recommends that schools and teachers follow a blended learning model and the EVAAS school growth 5-level grouping system to support flexible grouping practices. With instruction designed to meet accelerated learning components of the content standards and the specific needs of a student in the 80th percentile and above standards may be adapted or enriched to meet our student's needs. (See the Academic Achievement by Proficiency Group PDF and the CCS Blended Learning Model in the appendix).

**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:** AIG informs and shares information in a variety of ways. We participate in district principal and administrator meetings monthly and are always afforded an opportunity to share information with leadership in those meetings. We share a Google Team Drive where we house AIG plans, information, and resources (we also share this information on our website). Common language and resources are shared with all schools and we have an active role in the district strategic planning committee. These practices allow our department to share goals, resources and to contribute to the district planning process.

**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:** Beginning of the year meetings with schools will include opportunities to share specific student information. Pertinent student strengths and potential barriers will be updated in SchoolNet and shared with "receiving" teachers. AIG provides best practices for differentiation along with specific content strategies to schools. The AIG Placement Rubric, along with additional information, definitions and description of AIG services are included in the Student/Parent Handbook. AIG Liaisons act as support personnel both for students, parents and school staff and maintain the documentation of student academic, social and emotional strengths and potential barriers. They serve as a help and source of information for students, parents and school staff. Communication pathways between liaisons, digital learning advisors and guidance counselors help support the continued focus on advanced learners and as mentioned before, AIG will share information, resources, and opportunities with leadership staff during monthly LEA meetings. Each schools MTSS team will serve as a support to teachers in regards to meeting student needs and highlighting possible "at risk" student populations for academic, behavioral and attendance concerns.

**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:** As active participants in the district strategic planning committee, the AIG department works to contribute and to support the holistic social and emotional needs of our students. Through the articulation of the AIG Liaison responsibilities to monitor student's areas of interest and progress toward personal goals as well as their classroom behavior and social/emotional development a special emphasis has been placed on addressing the needs of the whole student, not just student academics. Liaisons, teachers, and directors are also directed to communicate goals and concerns with our counseling staff at each school to ensure that students receive support from a variety of stakeholders. We have also reached out to our local communities to develop partnerships with community organizations and working to place a new emphasis on service and community development as we believe that service is an integral component of leadership as well as emotional efficacy and intelligence.

**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:** CCS offers the following acceleration options for students who demonstrate the need for advancement beyond their grade-level:

- Compacted Content Differentiation including an emphasis on "leveling-up" vertical standard alignment and accelerated Lexile and Quantile alignment for students with acceleration needs (K-12)

- Credit by Demonstrated Mastery options for students who request or demonstrate a need for accelerated pathways in specific subject areas (see CDM Documentation)
> Advanced Academic Course (face-to-face and virtual) options include honors, AP, Career and College Promise/Dual Enrollment options for high school students; middle school students have opportunities to enroll in high school level course through our virtual school

> Grade-Skipping, in exceptional circumstances student at any grade-level may be considered for grade-skipping based on tested intellectual ability and academic need (see CCS Considerations for Subject Acceleration)

**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:** Through district provided testing reports, AIG is able to analyze our data to both recognize students who show advanced academic potential and to share these findings with schools, liaisons and teachers who may screen students or potential testing and/or include students in our talent development groups. We can also use these reports to guide teachers and to help provide intervention strategies and resources for students who may be in our underrepresented demographic areas. In addition, our efforts to develop partnerships with the 21st-century program will ensure that we make improved strides to provide enrichment and talent development opportunities to this targeted population. Partnerships with the CTE department and their connections with community members and business leaders will provide AIG students with opportunities to become active participants in the business community learning and exploring opportunities with the larger community.

**Practice I**

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

**District Response:** CCS AIG is currently building our partnerships within school club memberships and activities as well as our partnerships with CTE, STEM, Safe and Healthy Schools, and 21st-century coordinators. These partnerships currently and will continue to build around a common goal that our students work as leaders and active participants in community service learning partnerships and engage in real-world learning opportunities. In these partnerships, students may explore how their academic and social interests can be leveraged to make contributions to their greater community and explore the interconnected nature of public, private, and non-profit organizations. As we continue to develop these relationships we hope to partner with the MAC (our local art council), Murphy School of Dance and the John C. Campbell Folk School in an effort to offer a greater variety of artistic opportunities for our students. In addition, we will continue to host showcase nights and support our STEM/STAC, BOB, and Science Olympiad programs.
Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:
- Increase the number of AIG Staff.
In order to best meet the needs of our student population, AIG would like to see the county increase the number of AIG Liaisons in our higher population schools and we would love to have an elementary and middle school AIG teacher to serve the district. We would also like to have a differentiation specialist to serve our middle and high school population. This individual would work with teachers and instructional staff on the core four subjects to help with planning, data analysis, and blended learning and differentiation strategies.

- Continue to grow our resources and guides for teachers.
Utilize the OverDrive digital library to provide content and information regarding the needs of our students. Continue to provide and increase the number of AIG digital resources for teachers and instructional staff.

- Continue to partner with Digital Teaching and Learning department in order to reinforce our emphasis on personalized and the CCS blended learning model.
The Digital Teaching and Learning PPRC framework, personalized learning goals, and blended learning goals fit harmoniously with AIG learning and student support goals. Combining resources and efforts will help to send a cohesive message and ensure the success of the vision.

- Develop a condensed version of the AIG plan to share with teachers and principals.
Although the full AIG plan provides the most comprehensive vision of the AIG program and plan, we realize that many may not invest the time to read a lengthy detailed plan. Therefore we will work to condense and share an abbreviated version with staff.

- Create a unified CDM Phase 2 process.
With five high schools, we often have a variety of methods for completing various course requirements. Developing a cohesive process for CDM would strengthen the communication and quality of our CDM credits.

- Increase frequency of extra-curricular activities.
We believe that offering opportunities for social gatherings and events that will allow our academically advanced students from across the county to meet up will increase our students’ opportunities to share their academic curiosities and to develop their social and emotional skills.

Sources of Evidence: - Academic Achievement by Proficiency Group PDF
- Liaison Responsibilities Document
- Study.com Contract
- OverDrive Content
- CCS Blended Learning Model
- CDM Documentation
- CCS Considerations for Acceleration
- Active BOB, STEM, and Science Olympiad Programs
- CCS Website > Student Services > Academically and Intellectually Gifted
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: Definition
Cherokee County Schools defines an advanced learner as a student who based on the CCS AIG placement rubric, has been identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG, AR, AM, IG). In addition to this qualification, a student may also be identified as an advanced learner if he/she scores in the 80th percentile or higher on a state End of Grade or End of Course Reading or Math assessment, or one and a half grade levels above the student's like-aged peers on a state/nationally normed assessment.

Schools leadership teams and the AIG director will annually review student data to determine for each grade-level which group of students should be provided with advanced learning support. Each school's AIG Liaison should be included on the school's MTSS team in order to review, refer and to support teachers in strategies to support advanced learners.

Expectations - System Wide Recommendation
Classroom teachers and learning support personnel are encouraged to provide for the advanced learning needs of advanced learners by utilizing the NCDPI Vertical Progression Document for the ELA and Math standard course of study. It is recommended that teachers incorporate skills at a level one to two grades above the students peer-group as identified in the Vertical Progression Documents and as aligned with appropriate standard currently being addressed with the larger student group. These advanced standards may be incorporated into their instructional plan and presented through differentiated, personalized-learning opportunities (content, product, environment, process) and through a blended-learning station-rotation model for classroom instruction. Teachers are also encouraged to provide collaborative and explorative learning opportunities to groups of advanced learners where students can collaborate with like-skilled students.

K-3
Students identified as advanced learners in the K-3 group will be identified for talent development and will be included in the CCS talent development program. Students who show exceptionally advanced learning abilities in the k-3 classroom will be recommended for AIG testing based on teacher recommendation and achievement of 2+ grade-levels on an MClass assessment as compared to their age peers. Teachers are encouraged to review the guidelines noted in the above "system-wide recommendation" and work in collaboration with their school AIG liaison to determine appropriate strategies for differentiation.

K-5
In addition to the placement opportunities described in the K-3 description, a universal screening opportunity will be provided for any 4th-grade student who presents as an advanced learner based on the CCS AIG placement rubric. Students identified as AIG and/or who display advance learning needs will be included in pull-out services provided by the elementary AIG support personnel. Teachers are encouraged to review the guidelines noted in the above "system-wide recommendation" and work in collaboration with their school AIG liaison to determine appropriate strategies for differentiation.

6-12 grade students will be recommended for placement in the AIG program based on teacher recommendation, GPA or advanced academic achievements, and/or advanced scores on a state assessment. A final universal screening opportunity will be provided to any student who presents as advanced learners based on teacher recommendation, high academic marks, and/or advanced scores on a state ELA or Math assessment during the spring of their 7th Grade year. In addition to the system-wide recommendation for advanced learners, students identified as AIG or advanced learners in grades 6-12 will be provided opportunities to participate in advanced course placement including but not limited to high school course enrollment (6-8), honors, advanced placement (AP), credit by demonstrated mastery (CDM), and college-level course (CCP) options.

Enrich - Extend - Accelerate
CCS offers a variety of digital programs to enrich, extend, accelerate and adapt to the needs of our advanced learners. Many of our digital programs offer enhanced, enriched, or accelerated learning opportunities for our AIG and advanced learners. Current examples include NewsELA, Gizmos, Edmentum, Edgenuity, Overdrive, SchoolNet, and others. The AIG department will work with the Digital Teaching and Learning (DTL) department to research which supportive technologies best meet the needs of our advanced learners. As the AIG budget allows, the AIG department will work in conjunction with other academic departments to procure digital resources for our students. During the 2019/2020 school year, AIG will provide a Study.com account for each Middle and High School Liaison.

CCS AIG also encourages teachers to follow the PPRC framework and it's recommendations as set forth by the DTL department. PPRC stands for Personalized, Progressive, Real-World and Collaborative Learning; it is a learning framework that encourages a differentiated learning approach designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of learners. (See PPRC Framework for details). CCS AIG also works with the DTL department to encourage and train teachers to use a blended learning approach to classroom instruction. We will continue to work with both the Curriculum and the DTL departments to provide training and professional development in both of these instructional strategies.

Based on individual learning needs, CCS AIG will provide opportunities for accelerated learning within the classroom, through virtual course placement, and in actions such as providing support to students who display a need for advanced course placement and or grade accelerations. CCS will address the need for early promotion or accelerated grade advancement on a case by case basis.

**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: Following the research-based recommendations developed by the NCDPI Digital Teaching and Learning division, CCS AIG encourages a personalized approach to learning that incorporates the use of Learner Profiles (SchoolNet), Individual Learning Pathways (DEPs), and Flexible Learning Environments (Virtual Learning Options CCVS/NCVPS) to meet the diverse learning needs of our advanced learners. As we continue to develop our program we plan to also incorporate Competency Based Progression as a new learning option for our students. This strategy will provide our learners with access to rigorous content and the ability to progress through content and pursue learning objectives that align with student interest and advanced abilities.

The use of SchoolNet Learner profiles will allow AIG Staff and Classroom teachers to share a "digital conversations" about the skills/strengths, interests/passions, and struggles or potential barriers our advanced learners may face in their learning journey. The ongoing "conversation" can be added to and reviewed by all who have instructional responsibility for our AIG students.

The Individual Learning Pathways (DEPs) will help teachers to know the learning goals, milestones and learning styles that are preferred by our AIG students. These pathways can help teachers to customize the learning in their classes to fit the needs of our advanced learners.

Finally, providing access to flexible learning environments through virtual learning options will enable our students to add value to their education and to access courses that CCS, as a small rural district, may not have personnel or resources to offer at each school location.

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

District Response: Working in collaboration with the district curriculum, accountability, and digital teaching and learning department, CCS AIG contributes, encourages and supports the acquisition of a variety of digital, supplemental, and supportive programs that enrich and enhance the differentiated learning needs of our advanced learners. Our current curriculum for both Math (Affirm/EurekaMath) and ELA (Wit and Wisdom) are designed to support the needs of a diverse range of learners and our district purchases curriculum enhancement programs such as NewELA to support the diverse reading levels of our students and to support our Social Studies standards and Gizmos to provide enhanced experimental/laboratory scenarios for our Science courses. These resources along with other digital and traditional programs (Edgenuity, StudyIsland, ReadTheory, P.E.T.S, Study.com, ActivelyLearn, etc) enhance curriculum, promote critical thinking strategies and provide teachers a resource they can use to differentiate their instruction.

Specific Recommendations
AIG recommends teachers use online Quantile and Lexile Frameworks to support their understanding of the state assessment measure, to gain a more in-depth understanding of the individual learning needs of the advanced learner and aid in the teachers' ability to provide instruction at the appropriate developmental level. We also encourage teachers to incorporate the ISTE standards for students in their instructional design. The ISTE standards encourage teachers to consider how a student thinks and communicates their learning and challenges students to take personal ownership for their learning.
Quantile
CCS AIG encourages teachers to use the Quantile Teacher Assistant and the Quantile Math Skills Database to understand and leverage the interconnectedness of the math standards in order to best meet the learning needs of the advanced learner. The Math Skills Database helps teachers dig deeply into their focus standard and locate resources to support student learning. The Quantile Teacher Assistant provides teachers with an adjustable quantile range for each state standard thus enabling teachers at all levels to understand how to best support and extend the learning for their advanced learners. The Quantile Teacher Assistant also links teachers to resources that enable them to customize their instruction based on student need.

Lexile
CCS AIG encourages teachers to use the Lexile framework to help students locate books of interest, to analyze the Lexile level of classroom texts and to locate an appropriate interest level book by using the Lexile codes. The Lexile framework also aids teachers in extending student learning by helping teachers build customized summer reading lists and to guide students to take ownership of their reading choices.

ISTE
Following seven standards (empowered learner, digital citizen, knowledge constructor, innovative designer, computational thinker, creative communicator, and global collaborator) to encourage deep and comprehensive thinking, AIG recommends that teachers enhance their curriculum content by incorporating the strategies described within the ISTE standards. ISTE also provides an opportunity for teachers to consider the social and emotional learning needs of their students as they encourage learners to consider their global citizenship and responsibilities as a learner.

AIG support personnel, including school-based liaisons, will work with grade-level/subject-specific teams and the MTSS teams at their schools to explore recommended resources, to inventory current of curriculum resources in order to determine how to best meet the needs of our advanced learners, and to reflect upon and research potential programs that may enhance our current programs to meet the needs of their current population.

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

District Response: CCS AIG partners with the Digital Teaching and Learning (DTL) Program to encourage the integration of the PPRC framework (see appendix) into classroom instruction. The PPRC framework for CCS schools guides teachers to plan lessons that incorporate Personalized, Progressive, Real-World and Collaborative learning throughout the instructional day. In this planning cycle, we are beginning to build more partnerships with our stakeholders both within and outside of the school system. We are also beginning work with our DTL program that will strengthen the digital citizenship elements of our Virtual School (a platform utilized to meet the advanced academic needs of our advanced learners). AIG wishes to work more closely with the DTL program to incorporate a comprehensive SEL program within the digital citizenship units included in each virtual course.

Discussions with our 21st Century afterschool Director, have inspired a collaborative planning
process that we hope will enable our elementary and middle school AIG students (especially our underserved populations) to participate in afterschool future ready programs such as STEM Club, Robotics and Design, Green Screen film productions and many other technical, creative, future-ready, and real-world learning opportunities. Our high school students will be encouraged to participate as creativity coaches leading and planning group activities for our students.

In addition, AIG is working to develop a partnership with our CTE department, particularly with our Middle and High School Career Development Coordinators to provide opportunities for our academically advanced students. AIG plans to take a more active role to support the talent development and real-world preparation our students need to be successful throughout their time with CCS and after high school. Plans with our NCWorks Career Development Center and Tri-County Community College will offer more career exploration opportunities for our Middle and High School students. This will include opportunities to learn more about community planning and to participate in community enrichment events.

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

**District Response:** For the past several years, Cherokee County Schools Digital Teaching and Learning Director has worked with the Testing and Accountability department to create and provide benchmark testing for all CCS students. Benchmark testing has been provided through the SchoolNet application and teachers have access to student results for evaluation and personalization. In the coming school year, CCS will move from the district-created benchmark for 3-8 and will use the state Check-ins as our interim assessments. CCS will continue to use SchoolNet Benchmarks for High School EOC tested subjects.

For the past several years, the DTL director has provided an Academic Achievement Chart with Achievement breakdowns (see appendix) for each School Growth Group as outlined by EVAAS (Level 5 = student predicted to score at the 80th percentile or above on a state or a nationally measured assessment). These groupings include the highest level 5 group (our advanced learners) outlining expected proficiency rates connected to EOG achievement along with the corresponding Lexile and Quantile levels for students in these ranges. AIG encourages teachers to utilize these charts to measure the progress and growth of our advanced learners and to assess whether adequate growth and progress are being met. In addition, the AIG director has requested that the AIG teacher and school liaisons be included in each school MTSS meeting to provide guidance and recommendations for supporting the unique growth and learning needs of our academically advanced students.

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

**District Response:** As mentioned in Practice D, AIG recognizes the interconnectedness of
community health and involvement, social-emotional learning, digital citizenship, and a personalized approach to student learning. In this planning cycle, we will continue to work with our Safe and Healthy Schools district partners and strengthen our networks of communication to provide avenues for our advanced learners to participate and contribute to our safe and healthy school coalition as youth task force advisors. Safe and healthy school advocates for and provides support to students in the areas of drug prevention, healthy life choices and encourages our students to speak out regarding their experiences and struggles during our annual "PRIDE" survey. AIG Liaisons at each of our schools has been provided with information and a contact list for organizations that contribute to and support the wellness of our community and student body -- this includes Safe and Healthy Schools.

AIG is also working with our Liaisons to create a more visible presence during our beginning of the year open house events and during our "move-up" day events in our Middle and High Schools. Our plan is to ensure that each school liaison creates an information booth or session for parents and students and share the resources, events, and opportunities the school offers for our advanced learners. In addition, we will for the first time in the 2019 school year offer a digital resource library for classroom teachers with access to materials specifically aligned to AIG social, emotional and learning goals.

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

**District Response:** K-3 student services will include adapted instruction, resources and materials and a focus on cluster grouping with pull-out services as needed. In addition, our K-3 students are nurtured through a talent development program where an AIG specialist works with students and teachers to develop Higher Order, Creativity and Critical Thinking skills to cultivate a love of learning and to inspire our student's intellectual curiosity. Utilizing programs such as Primary Education Thinking Skills, and early digital learning, citizenship, coding and robotics programs to challenge students to think creatively and to develop a wide array of soft skills needed for future success.

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

**District Response:** Through our districts systematic integration of MTSS, an AIG representative will attend, provide data, and offer support for the specific differentiated needs of our students during quarterly school-level MTSS meetings. Working with curriculum, digital teaching and learning, and the exceptional children's department, AIG provides funding for substitutes and organizes opportunities for our teachers to develop their instructional and pedagogical skills as related to academically and intellectually advanced and gifted students.

Our professional development goals are to work with and support Curriculum, Exceptional Children, Digital Teaching and Learning and STEM in their PD efforts both through goal setting, topic recommendation and by providing financial means to support teachers ability to attend training. For
the 2019 school year, AIG has purchased a district account for <study.com>. This resource provides self-guided, online, just-in-time professional development for teachers. Some examples of course options include: "Using Differentiated Instruction in the Classroom," "Teaching Gifted Students," "Implementing Competency-Based Education," "Using Data for Improvement," and 73 other multi-lesson, just-in-time course options. In addition, we have worked with our Technology Department to provide an online resource library through the "OverDrive" application. This resource allows the AIG department to purchase text resources in a virtual environment. These resources are available to teachers at all of our 13 schools.

**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:** AIG will maintain student identification documentation and support information via the PowerSchool AIG Program documentation. We will increase our communication footprint with classroom teachers through Learning Plan notes included in the SchoolNet Student Profile. The SchoolNet Learning Plan section allows teachers and AIG personnel to share specific student strengths and potential barriers as well as shared goals and comments regarding students learning needs and interests. Specific student information will guide instruction and academic support and can be printed and/or be digitally shared with parents through the PowerSchool Parent application.

**Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:**
- Improve communication with teachers between various grades and subject by creating a district practice of utilizing SchoolNet Student Profiles. Common practice and shared communication methods lead to clear expectations. Housing student information and documentation in a common easily located digital space will help to reinforce the practice of recording this information and will help teachers to gain insight into the needs of the student.

- Focus more on "push-in" services and co-teaching opportunities rather than pull-out groups. Push-in and Co-teaching strategies allow for an increase in high impact instructional strategies including explicit instruction and collaborative learning opportunities. In addition, with more time spent in the regular classroom, AIG teachers can make a greater impact on student learning as they can pull from prior learning to activate prior knowledge and make connections to real-world learning opportunities (information the teacher may not be aware of if they are not in the classroom with students).

- Continue to advocate to be included on district curriculum committees and to serve as active participants on school MTSS committees. Since AIG students are likely to perform in the upper range of proficiency on state assessments it is important to have a voice for our academically advanced students when the curriculum and instructional decisions are being made so that our students are reaching the apex of their ability and
not simply progressing year to year with minimal academic growth.

**Sources of Evidence:**
- PPRC Framework
- SchoolNet Learner Profiles
- Academic Achievement by Proficiency Groups
- CCS District Meeting Minutes
- AIG Liaison Meeting Agendas
- MTSS regional meeting attendance records
- Curriculum programming
- CCVS Documents and programming
- OverDrive Content
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 current AIG Director/Coordinator was appointed full-time in the 2019 Spring semester. The director holds a Masters Degree in Executive Leadership, a K-12 principals license and will complete AIG certification in the Fall of 2019. The Elementary AIG Coordinator holds a Masters Degree and a K-12 principals license. Currently, the district requires an advanced degree in educational leadership and a principal's license to serve as the AIG Director/Coordinator but encourages and provides resources for an individual to earn AIG licensure.

AIG Director/Coordinator:
> Provides leadership and organizational structure, at all levels, for the needs of AIG learners
> Monitors, supports, and evaluates staff in the implementation of the program goals
> Participates in regional and statewide professional development opportunities to support gifted learners
> Develops systems and processes for screening, referral, and identification of gifted learners
> Provides guidance for maintaining documentation of student identification, differentiation needs, and services
> Provides professional development and resources to engage and support educators, at all levels, ability to meet the needs of advanced learners
> Develops partnerships with stakeholders both school and community members
> Develops, monitors, and evaluated the success of the AIG program

Practice B

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

District Response: CCS AIG has three types of staff. Director/Coordinator, Teacher, and Liaison.

The Elementary Coordinator is certified in Elementary education and has served as a classroom teacher, K-5 principal, and the Pre-K coordinator. The coordinator serves our K-5 student population and offers talent development and pull-out services for our K-5 students as described in Standard 2, Section A of the plan.

The AIG Teacher for the county is a licensed AIG teacher. The teacher is currently responsible as the AIG test coordinator and serves our 6-8 student population. The teacher serves our 6-8 student population and offers talent development and pull-out services for our 6-8 students through co-
teaching/push-in services as described in Standard 2, Section A of the plan. The AIG Teacher responsibilities are outlined in the AIG Teacher Expectations Document (see attachment).

The AIG Liaisons (at least one per school) serves as a support for students, parents, teachers. The liaison is the point person in each school for the AIG teacher and for the Director/Coordinator. The AIG Liaison's responsibilities are outlined in the AIG Liaison Expectations Document (see attachment).

**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:**
CCS requires all staff who work with AIG students to attend quarterly staff meetings.
Staff meetings include three elements:
1. Reporting of AIG events and upcoming opportunities
2. Student Data and Growth, successes and concerns
3. AIG Booster Shot

AIG Staff are charged with participating in student data meetings at the school level.

**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:** CCS AIG staff works with the school administration to enable a schedule that will allow effective AIG services. AIG encourages the administration to create cluster grouping for AIG and Talent Development groups that will ensure time together for academic exploration and that will offer the most effective academic instruction. Liaisons and counselors are encouraged to highlight our advanced course offerings and provide academic guidance for our AIG students to help match students to the most appropriate academic offerings and services. AIG staff, including liaisons, are required to provide quarterly reports and teachers are required to provide a schedule for school and district-level administration. Student placement and progress will be monitored through the school MTSS teams on which and AIG representative will serve.

In efforts to increase student access to needed services, AIG liaisons and other qualified teachers are encouraged and provided resources to pursue AIG certification. Newly certified staff will be recognized in the superintendent’s report during the board meeting month following certification.

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

**District Response:** AIG works in collaboration with other academic departments including curriculum, digital teaching and learning, exceptional children, and CTE, to offer professional development opportunities that strengthen our district's strategic goals. These goals include:

> Building competence with reviewing, reflecting and appropriately responding to student data,

> Building competence with the delivery of updated standards, curriculum, and high impact teaching standards,

> Developing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and improving our positive behavior reinforcement strategies, especially those that will empower students to develop capacity and to take ownership of their social and emotional well being.

For the 2019 school year, AIG has purchased a district account for <study.com>. This resource provides self-guided, online, just-in-time professional development for teachers. Some examples of course options include: "Using Differentiated Instruction in the Classroom," "Teaching Gifted Students," "Implementing Competency-Based Education," "Using Data for Improvement," and 73 other multi-lesson, just-in-time course options. In addition, we have worked with our Technology Department to provide an online resource library through the "OverDrive" application. This resource allows the AIG department to purchase text resources in a virtual environment. These resources are available to teachers at all of our 13 schools. AIG is also actively involved with the district leadership team for planning and implementing our District Improvement Plan through Indistar, the North Carolina planning program that guides leadership teams to evaluate and plan for effective educational practices. As part of this team, AIG collaborates with other leadership departments to lead, plan, and design professional development resources and events that align with both the district and AIG PD initiatives and goals. AIG also has a representative on the district MTSS team. During MTSS meetings AIG will continue to provide PD to each school-level MTSS coordinator to present and use as guidelines for support for teachers and instructional staff.

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

**District Response:** Quarterly meetings for AIG staff, MTSS team meetings, and weekly scheduled planning time for individual AIG teachers server to provide time for teachers to plan as well as for AIG staff to be included in school-level and district level planning sessions. AIG staff are also welcome and encouraged to attend all district driven professional development initiatives regardless of which district department sponsored the event. A professional development calendar is shared with staff and posted on the Cherokee County School website.

As previously stated, AIG is also actively involved with the district leadership team for planning and implementing our District Improvement Plan through Indistar, the North Carolina planning program that guides leadership teams to evaluate and plan for effective educational practices. As part of this
team, AIG collaborates with other leadership departments to lead, plan, and design professional development resources and events that align with both the district and AIG PD initiatives and goals. AIG shares a Google Drive folder with all AIG staff which houses professional development resources and information. This information is available for individual use or for group training.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:
- Increase the number of staff who are AIG certified.
  CCS currently has a shortage of staff who are AIG certified. We recognize that this is a need and we will work during this planning cycle to recruit and encourage more teachers and administrators to pursue certification.

- Increase the presence of AIG focused staff in our schools.
  The implementation of the AIG liaison position this school year has helped to bring a focus back to our AIG students. We would love to add an additional teaching position for the district.

- Advertise and invite principals to quarterly meetings.
  Having principals attend AIG meetings would help to bring greater accountability and increase our visibility.

Sources of Evidence:
- Indistar District Improvement Plan
- Training Sign-in Sheets
- CCS District Meeting Minutes
- OverDrive Content
- Google Drive content
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: CCS AIG works deliberately to develop meaningful partnerships with stakeholders both within our school system and throughout the community.

We are working to implement a protocol with teacher and liaisons that will help guide the discovery of our student’s interest so that we can help facilitate opportunities within our community for our AIG and Talent Development students. We are excited about the growing partnership with the following individuals/groups:

- Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinator - project with planning and organizing a community outreach program to combat and provide aid to our local homeless population.

- HS and MS Career Coordinator and Advisor and Tri-County Community College Workforce Development Director - opportunities to grow our student numbers in the CTE Department and provide opportunities for internships. Help students explore some of the exciting new programs available in both our schools and in the local community college including aviation, culinary arts, mechatronics, and many more.

- 21st Century Afterschool Program and STEM Program Coordinator - create a STEAM/STAC or Robotics club that could meet during the afterschool program; this particular group would help us to better meet the needs of our underrepresented populations. We would also like to promote cross-grade-level interaction by encouraging our high school AIG and Talent Development students to become creativity coaches. These students would work with elementary and middle school students through a project-based curriculum.

- Parent Advisory committee - Help AIG to plan social events and opportunities for students from across the district to attend trivia nights, family nights, local plays, musical concerts, etc.

- Cherokee Chamber of Commerce - Provide opportunities for students to attend events and initiatives where students can learn from and interact with business and community leaders. Participate in the planning and organization of community events, learn about marketing and promotion, job shadow and learn about business/community leadership. Learn about business/social etiquette and the spoken and unspoken rules of professional practice and interactions.
**Practice B**
Shares with stakeholders, including all students' parents/families, information regarding the local AIG program, the local AIG plan, and other policies relating to gifted education.

**District Response:** The presence of AIG Liaisons has improved the communication network between the district, teachers, and schools significantly this school year and as the wider community becomes more aware of the liaisons and their role within the school community, we foresee an increase in contacts and our ability to remain present and active in the schools. AIG also has access to and utilizes our "alert-now" phone messaging service. Each liaison maintains their school's social media presence for the AIG program and that the liaison contributes to our district's quarterly update/newsletter for the AIG program. The program has also developed a guideline and flowchart that describes our screening, referral, and identification process. This information will be included in each newsletter updates and training events.

**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:** CCS stakeholders and the AIG parent advisory committee are invited to all quarterly meetings. Meetings include opportunities for stakeholders to reporting and discuss upcoming AIG events and opportunities, express successes and concern, and to take part in the ongoing development of the AIG program. CCS AIG welcomes participants from across grade-levels and stakeholder groups and makes efforts to hold regularly scheduled meetings to encourage participation. We also provide opportunities for feedback through our social media accounts and by publicizing our district contact information.

**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 social media feed, school messenger automated calls and AIG program information contained on our website is hosted through a program that allows translation of our content in over 90 languages. We make every effort to provide parents information in a manner that is timely and convenient. School liaisons and teachers are directed to make regular contact with students and parents to discuss progress and possible 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:** Several CCS schools are nearly two-hours from the closest NC university, but as mentioned in Standard 5 practice A, AIG works deliberately to develop meaningful partnerships with our community college and we also encourage and provide opportunities for our students to attend events at two colleges in neighboring states, Lee University in Tennessee, and Young Harris College in Georgia. Both neighboring schools are significantly closer to our schools and provide access to plays, concerts and guest speakers within a more responsible distance.

**Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:**
- Make greater efforts to advertise and promote our program to parents and the community. We want our students to get to know their peers from across the district and we want parents to know how to find our information both in person and online.

- Form more intentional partnerships with institutes of higher learning. Although we attend events, we would like to provide opportunities for our students to be actively involved in the educational opportunities available including visiting classes and having opportunities to explore and use the facilities.

**Sources of Evidence:**
- Stakeholder meeting minutes and sign-ins
- Cherokee County Schools website and Social Media
- Field Trip attendance for College visits
- Correspondence with AIG partners
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:** CCS AIG strives to gather input from our various stakeholders. The first efforts to gather information during this planning cycle was to invest funds to send a representative to attend the statewide AIG meetings. With the need for a new director, it was imperative that CCS had a district representative to attend this valuable two-day training. After the initial state meeting, individual meetings were set with principals and liaisons in each school to review the current plan and processes as well as to gather input for a vision and to set new goals for the coming planning cycle. With this "focus group" information, a process to set goals and establish corrective practices began. Throughout the year our representative continued to attend various AIG regional meetings as well as the regional curriculum council, MTSS, CCES, and several Digital Teaching and Learning training. All in an effort to gain a comprehensive vision of the possible roles that AIG might fulfill in the academic and social/emotional lives of our students. Throughout the year, AIG representatives continued to work with school and district level staff. Participating in monthly district decision making meetings and school-level data meetings. In the early spring semester, a survey was shared with CCS stakeholders. Several questions allowed participants to provide open-ended responses. In a system with ~200 AIG students (~7% of our student population), we were extremely pleased to receive over 80 open-ended feedback responses. These responses were instrumental in the plan's vision and goals.

**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:** By hiring personnel to organize the program and to work with students at the school-level Cherokee County Schools district leaders, school-level leaders, and AIG staff work to ensure that the AIG program plan and standards are followed. MTSS data team meetings and quarterly AIG stakeholder meetings will ensure that program goals and student academic and social/emotional needs are being addressed. In addition, resources and classroom/teacher support needs will be noted and addressed during these times. Cherokee County School will continue to make AIG a priority by maintaining a staff including Director/Coordinator, Teachers, and Liaisons. The Director/Coordinator will monitor, support and evaluate the program and the implementation of the program by AIG staff.
**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:** PRC Funds are allocated and monitored by the district's Chief Financial Officer and provisioned as necessary to implement the AIG Plan. Cherokee County Schools receives from the state of North Carolina a four percent of ADM per pupil spending budget. The projected budget for the 2019/2020 school year based on past allocations is $168,479.00. CCS AIG allocates approximately seventy-five percent of our budget for district and school-level salaries and benefits, ten percent to resources and expenses related to professional development, and fifteen percent for materials, resources, and expenses related to student services (see appendix "AIG Projected Budget").

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

**District Response:** CCS strives to have an open and transparent relationship with our school and district data. Universal screening data is disaggregated and shared with district and school level teachers and leaders. AIG sub-group information is and will continue to be shared based on projections, actual test results and growth measures. Data is open and available in various forms to all appropriate stakeholders following FERPA guidelines. During MTSS team meeting and school-level and/or district leadership meetings data is viewed honestly and transparently. In addition, strategies to support success and close gaps for all students remains a high priority for our district. AIG will provide an annual review of current AIG student test results for schools to use as a guide for instruction. At-risk students will be noted in the report and strategies for support discussed during MTSS data review meetings.

**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:** During this planning cycle, CCS AIG will provide demographic information and using EVAAS we will create a "students to screen" (those predicted in the 80th-90th percentile) and "students to refer" (those in the 90th percentile or above) recommendation to share with each school. Using this method, AIG has already identified 100 additional students to include in our talent development program and to screen for indicators of gifted behavior and 25 students who are not currently in our program whom we will recommend teachers screen and perhaps refer for testing. In the groups mentioned, 20/100 and 8/25 are minority students.

In respect to gender representation, CCS does quite well in consistency with district numbers. We
have a nearly 50/50 representation in both our overall population and in our AIG student population. Another area we want to be mindful of is our representation of our economically disadvantaged population. Although we do not have a 1:1 comparison, we know that CCS is a Title 1 district and that we consistently serve a student population of which 80% or above qualify for free or reduced lunch. Our recent efforts to work collaboratively with the 21st-century program will ensure that we make improved strides to provide enrichment and talent development opportunities to this targeted population. (See more Demographic Reporting and Comparison CCS v AIG 2018_2019 appendix).

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

**District Response:** Through our Human Resources department, AIG has access to a list of staff who currently hold AIG licensure. Cherokee County Schools maintains personnel records, provides opportunities to maintain active licensure through continuing education units (CEUs). By providing resources for successful endeavors, we encourage teachers to pursue AIG licensure.

**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:** CCS AIG welcomes feedback from various stakeholder groups and makes efforts to hold regularly scheduled meetings to encourage staff, leadership, family, student and community participation. We provide opportunities for feedback through our social media accounts, website, annual surveys and by publicizing our district contact information. We have recently added a "Join the AIG Family and Community Advisory Board" link on our website and we will share this opportunity at the beginning of each school year during open house events and throughout the year via our social media accounts. We have also added a suggestion/feedback link for our website to increase our opportunities to hear from students, families and community members. Most recent feedback for our AIG program suggests that we need to do a better job informing stakeholders about the AIG referral process and providing information to help teachers identify and support the learning needs of our students. Intentional efforts to provide clarity for teachers and parents about our processes for identifying and supporting students and creating a culture that recognizes and understands how to support the needs of all advanced learners are the foundational goals of this plan.

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

**District Response:** Through our district’s systematic integration of MTSS, an AIG representative will attend, provide data, and offer support for the specific differentiated needs of our students during
quarterly school-level MTSS meetings. School leadership teams and the AIG director will annually review student data to determine, for each grade level, which group of students should be provided with advanced learning support. Each school’s AIG Liaison should be included on the school’s MTSS team in order to review, refer and to reinforce the use of strategies that will support advanced learners. Universal Screening tools used by the district and individual school will supply our student data reports.

CCS AIG has proposed several new strategies for this planning cycle including different types of services (push-in / co-teaching) and new focus groups (talent development students). We have also revised our referral process and provided new rubrics to guide the process. During our quarterly MTSS meeting and during our stakeholder meetings we will discuss and review the effectiveness of our new strategies and the AIG Plan as a whole. We will also continue to request feedback and evaluate the success of our program through annual program surveys.

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

**District Response:** CCS AIG provides program plans and events to the superintendent. These plans are shared during the superintendent’s report during monthly board meetings. We have an open door policy for attendance to our stakeholder meetings and share meeting dates via our Google calendar. Information about the program including the AIG Plan, active surveys and forms, state reports, resources and guides are all available via our website or through our shared Google Drive folder. We will continue to strive to offer openness and transparency for our program and to provide resources to stakeholders as appropriate. Changes and updates to the program are shared at the school and district level as well as shared to our website and social media when appropriate.

**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:** CCS AIG protects the rights of AIG students through written policies, procedures, and practices. We provide the option to decline AIG services at any time as well as options to opt back should it be requested at a later date. Other safeguards for the rights of all AIG students and their parents/families include:

- Providing Informed Consent regarding the identification and placement of AIG students
- Acceptance of AIG designation from transfers from other LEAs with procedures for reassessment if needed
- Procedures for resolving disagreements

General Statute 115C-150.7(b)7 and 115C-150.8 provides guidance for the Review of
Disagreements. In addition, CCS AIG follows the Cherokee County Board of education grievance policy 1740/4010 to review and settle any disagreement that may arise.

PROCEDURE TO RESOLVE DISAGREEMENTS
In the case that parent/guardian do not agree with Cherokee County Schools' decisions that a student not be identified as academically/intellectually-gifted or if the AIG service(s) offered are not considered by the parent/guardian to be appropriate, the following procedure will be utilized to resolve disagreements:

1. The parent/guardian may request a conference with the school-based committee to discuss concerns. The school-based committee will review records and gather any additional information as needed. This conference will be within five days.

2. If the disagreement is not resolved through the committee conference, the parent may make a written request for a conference with the principal. The principal will review the recommendation given by the committee and responds in writing to parents within five school days.

3. The parent/guardian may appeal the principal's decision in writing to the AIG Coordinator within five days of receiving response. The AIG Coordinator will review the decision and respond in writing within five days of receiving the appeal.

4. The parent/guardian may appeal the AIG Coordinator's decision in writing to the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent within five days of receiving response. The Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent will review the decision and respond in writing within five days of receiving the appeal.

5. If the disagreement is not resolved after appeals at both levels, the parent/guardian may appeal to the Board of Education.

RE-EVALUATION/EXIT CRITERIA Cherokee County Schools seeks to appropriately identify and place eligible students in the AIG program. However, the program may not be appropriate for all who qualify. A parent may decide that their child will be exited from the AIG program by requesting a conference with the school based committee. If the child is exited from the program, he/she will be deleted from the AIG headcount. If, at a later date, the parent requests that the student be reinstated, the screening, referral, eligibility, placement, and services options must begin anew.

TRANSFER STUDENTS Any student who transfers into Cherokee County School who has participated in a program for academically or intellectually gifted students will be review by the school based committee to determine local eligibility. Placement of students is based on the individual student's need for differentiated education and follows general placement procedures. Every effort shall be made to obtain appropriate records from the previous school to complete a study of eligibility requirements.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:
- Continue to advocate for the hiring and placement of AIG staff in each of our schools
More personnel would help our district to build a stronger program. Differentiation specialist could be
an asset for more than just the AIG program.

- Build structures to better measure qualitative data
  Developing focus group questions that could be shared and reviewed in different locations and meetings across the district could help to measure our qualitative data

- Support the discussion and use of data that improves the district's ability to personalize learning

**Sources of Evidence:** - EOG/EOC, NCFE, Check-in, ACT, WorkKeys, Benchmark results and reports
- Shared student data and data resources
- AIG Projected Budget
- AIG Meeting materials, minutes and certificates
- CCS Policy Handbook
- Demographic Data
- AIG Survey Results
- CCS Website and Social Media
Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):
CCS AIG Placement Rubric and Referral Process - Google Docs.pdf (Appendix - Standard 1)
Demographic Reporting and Comparison CCS v AIG 2018_2019.pdf (Appendix - Standard 1:2:3)
CDM Documentation.pdf (Appendix - Standard 2)
Considerations for Subject Acceleration.pdf (Appendix - Standard 2)
Academic Achievement by Proficiency Group.pdf (Appendix - Standard 2:3:6)
Critical Thinking Skills and Blooms - Google Docs.pdf (Appendix - Standard 3)
PPRC Framework - Google Docs (1).pdf (Appendix - Standard 3)
PPRCloccallygrown.pdf (Appendix - Standard 3)
District AIG Lead Teacher .pdf (Appendix - Standard 4)
Elementary AIG Liaison - Job Descriptions.pdf (Appendix - Standard 4)
Secondary AIG Liaison - Job Description.pdf (Appendix - Standard 4)
AIG Projected Budget.pdf (Appendix - Standard 6)
AIG Plan Board Signature.pdf (Local Board Approval Document)
CCS AIG Placement Rubric and Referral Process - Google Docs.pdf (Other Forms)
CCS Blended Learning Model.JPG (Other Forms)
Demographic Comparison CCS v AIG 2018_2019.pdf (Other Forms)