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

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LEA Superintendent’s Name: Jonathan Williams
LEA AIG Contact Name: Cassie M. Hoffman
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Columbus 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, Columbus County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Columbus County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Columbus County Schools recognizes that some students have the potential, or are capable of possessing, exceptional learning abilities and/or outstanding talent. Because these students are considered gifted, they demand experiences apart from but connected to, the regular classroom.

It is our responsibility to provide diverse, suitable, ongoing learning experiences and learning environments that integrate the academic, psychological and social needs of students. (Eckert and Purcell, pp. 18 and 19) We believe that the AIG program should be designed to challenge and stimulate the AIG student through a multi-dimensional teaching approach involving special curricula, enrichment opportunities, and the acceleration of course content. The AIG program at all levels should provide experiences that distinguish the regular non-gifted program from gifted services. Columbus County Schools further recognizes that outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups across all economic circumstances, and in all areas of the human enterprise. Gagne, in his "Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talented," offers the idea that natural abilities, like excelling in academic fields, are gifts, which must be developed to become talents.

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: THE SCREENING PROCESS

A broad-sweep screening will occur annually for every third-grade student. Informal screening is available K-12. This screening procedure ensures equal opportunities/access for all students, including minority students, students with disabilities, and students who are economically disadvantaged. Information collected at screening should lead to either automatic placement, further assessment, or to a decision that the student does not require differentiated services.

K-2 SCREENING SHOULD BE CONDUCTED AS FOLLOWS:

● CCS recognizes K-2 students who exhibit AIG potential through talent spotting and behavioral observations. Each student receives differentiated instruction. The Pfeiffer and Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scale can be used to document a pattern of gifted behavior. Teachers will utilize U-Stars Plus TOPS observational tool to recognize outstanding potential in children. CCS will provide programming services which may include a compacted curriculum, accelerated curriculum, and grade level acceleration as needed. K-2 student's talents are developed by teachers and data is utilized in an effort to document behaviors that reflect advanced learning, motivational characteristics, creativity, leadership, and adaptability. K-2 students served in the talent development program will be monitored from year to year and receive exposure to STEM and advanced materials. The watch list will be given to 3rd grade AIG specialists for monitoring and consideration.
● AIG Specialists and primary teachers use a variety of strategies to differentiate and meet the needs of students performing above grade level in literacy and/or math task assessments. Cluster grouping and small groups are utilized.
● If a transfer student has been served in a talent development program previously, that student will immediately be placed in CCS Talent Development Program.

3-8 SCREENING SHOULD BE CONDUCTED AS FOLLOWS:

● Columbus County Schools will conduct a general screening of aptitude of all third-grade students. Students scoring 90% or higher on this assessment will be placed in the student screening pool.
● Grades 3-8 are given the NC Grade 3 BOG/End-of-Grade Assessment in reading and mathematics. Students scoring 92% or above on the 3rd grade BOG, or 92% or above on the EOG for two consecutive years will be placed in the Student Screening Pool. Underrepresented populations with academically gifted potential, 85% or greater on screeners, will be individually tracked by the AIG Specialist.
● If a transfer student has been identified as AIG in another school, that student will be placed automatically.
● The School Review Team will accept teacher, parent, community, peer, and self-nominations. The School Review Team will hold the right to test based on a review of evidence. Placement data will be valid for two calendar years. No evaluations will be repeated on the same student during this two year period.

9-12 SCREENING SHOULD BE CONDUCTED AS FOLLOWS:

● Students scoring 92% or higher on standardized tests such as the End-of-Grade/End-of-Course will be placed in the Student Screening Pool.
● If a transfer student has been identified as AIG in another school system, that student will be placed accordingly.
● The School Review Team will accept teacher, parent, community, peer, and self-nominations. The School Review Team will hold the right to test based on a review of evidence. Placement data will be valid for two calendar years. No evaluations will be repeated on the same student during this two-year period.

Students must meet screening criteria to be considered for 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:** IDENTIFICATION PROCESS:

(At least 4 out of 6 with one being aptitude or achievement)

1) 90% or above on standardized aptitude test
2) 92% or above on the 3rd grade BOG, or 92% or above on the EOG for two consecutive years
3) 92% or above on classroom performance
4) A score of 92% or above on the Pfeiffer & Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scales® (grades 3-8); Score of 109 -120 on the Renzulli-Hartman Gifted Behavior Scale (grades 9-12)
5) Score of 92% or above on the Pfeiffer & Jarosewich Motivation Scales® (grades 3-8); Score of 24-27 on Renzulli-Hartman Motivation scale (grades 9-12)
6) Documented interest survey (Students must meet at least 4 of 6 criteria, one of which must be aptitude or achievement)

Automatic qualifiers include:
98% or above in achievement (Student will be identified AG in Reading and/or Math.)
98% or above in aptitude (Student will be identified IG.)

In the K-2 setting, CCS develops potential in students who exhibit gifted behaviors. Each student receives personalized instruction. Services may include a compacted curriculum, accelerated
curriculum, grade level acceleration, as needed. Students are pulled out of the classroom once weekly for enrichment and critical thinking learning tasks.

Primary students may be identified as gifted in grades K-2 if there is a body of evidence that indicates a need. The primary student should demonstrate an extreme need for differentiation before being considered for identification.

Primary students must meet the minimum requirements in all the following:
Demonstrated extreme need for differentiation as documented through the PACE Talent Development Program and regular classroom performance.
- 96% or above on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test administered by a licensed psychologist
- 98% or above in achievement for reading and/or math on a nationally normed test administered by a licensed psychologist
- Work samples and state assessments demonstrating mastery in reading and math
- Teacher and AIG Review Team recommendation

In grades 3-12, CCS uses six criteria to assess and to develop a comprehensive profile for each student who is being evaluated. Multiple standardized measures, both traditional and nontraditional, that are based on current theory and research are used in the identification process. CCS uses both verbal and nonverbal assessments when measuring aptitude. These tests are the Cognitive Abilities Test®. The CogAT is made up of three sections: the Verbal Battery, the Quantitative Battery, and the Nonverbal Battery. These batteries are designed to assess specific reasoning skills in each area that correlate strongly to academic success. It measures cognitive development, the ability to learn new tasks, and problem-solving abilities. Because much of its content is nonverbal, the CogAT is also very useful for testing students who are not native English speakers. The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test-Second Edition® (NNAT2) can be used for underrepresented populations. The SAGES, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills® (or the ITED at the high school level) and/or the Woodcock-Johnson IV® (WJ IV) are administered as alternate achievement tests.

Columbus County Schools AIG Program may use the following when identifying AIG students:
- Pfeiffer and Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scales® (Includes motivation component) (grades 3-8) / Renzulli-Hartman Rating Scale (Includes motivation component) (grades 9-12)
- aptitude scores
- achievement scores (EOC, EOG, BOG)
- classroom performance
- Student Interest Inventory (Normed)
- motivation scale

**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:** Columbus County Schools AIG Program uses a variety of screening measures
to assist with identifying underrepresented populations. These measures include the NNAT2, the Pfeiffer and Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scales® (grades 3-8) or the Renzulli-Hartman Rating Scale (grades 9-12), a motivation scale, and observations of teachers and other stakeholders. A mass screening of third graders is conducted annually to ensure the consideration of all students. The district currently uses a six criteria identification process which includes a verbal and a nonverbal assessment for aptitude as well as teacher input. The School Review Team will conduct an intentional review of testing data in order to give consideration to underrepresented populations. The team will make a decision on placement.

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

**District Response:** AIG Specialists provide training using AIG procedure professional development to ensure consistent implementation across the LEA. Across the district, criteria are the same. Screening for AIG takes place in third grade with the CogAT. Referrals are accepted from stakeholders and processed according to AIG procedures. The AIG Specialists compile a student pool at each school that includes all available data for the consideration of the AIG Review Team. A concerted effort is made to include underrepresented populations. Student pool and nomination records are kept for reference throughout the school year. Student identification and placement records are compiled along with documentation of decisions made by the AIG Review Team. Parent rights and due process are detailed in Standard 6: Practice J.

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

**District Response:** Columbus County Schools maintains an online website that may be accessed by school personnel, parents, and the community-at-large. Comprehensive information about all processes and procedures are contained within the AIG website along with various AIG resources. AIG brochures are available throughout the schools and district office. The AIG Specialists provide professional development to school personnel that overviews the entire screening, referral, and identification process. Special attention is given to communicating with parents during the process. Teachers discuss ideas/concerns during weekly PLCs. Stakeholders address ideas/concerns during the annual AIG Showcase, DEP conferences, parent meetings, school improvement meetings, etc. Meetings of the AIG Advisory Committee (made up of various stakeholders including parents, teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, community members) are held to discuss any issues/ideas that may need to be addressed.

**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:** Service matching for AIG students is reviewed at the beginning of each school year. New DEPs/IDEPs are then created for students. During scheduled conferences, AIG Specialists review the annual DEPs with parents to ensure service matching options are appropriate. Parents are provided with the AIG brochure. AIG specialists in each school are responsible for conducting initial placement and annual review parent meetings. They are also responsible for all AIG folders to ensure proper documentation of meetings, permissions, due process, and other actions. AIG Specialists monitor AIG folders to ensure that processes have been followed and properly documented, at least twice annually for the fall and spring headcount.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**
We will continue to monitor testing to ensure our program is meeting the needs of our stakeholders. We are dedicated to identifying underrepresented populations and teachers will continue to refer students for testing. We would like to add an additional AIG Specialist position, dependent upon funding.

**Sources of Evidence:**
District AIG website
Professional development for teachers and principals
Student Identification and Placement Record
Informational Brochure
"Invitation to Conference" letters
Pfeiffer and Jarosewich Gifted Rating Scales® (Includes motivation component)(grades 4-8)
Renzulli-Hartman Rating Scale (Includes motivational component)(grades 9-12)
Student Interest Survey
Differentiated Education Plan/Individualized Education Plan (DEP/IDEP)
Achievement, aptitude, and performance scores
NC EOG, WJ-IV, ITBS/ITED
CogAT
NNAT2
Professional Development Prior Approvals
Literature/ Other nonverbal testing materials
School Record of Decision Making for Student Pool and Nomination
DEP/IDEP
School Review Team meetings
AIG Specialists' Professional Learning Communities
Monthly newsletter
Stakeholder surveys
Pretest letter
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: Columbus County Schools delivers comprehensive services for identified students. Their academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs are served in the following ways:

- Post the local AIG plan on the Columbus County Schools website
- Provide information relating to the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners to stakeholders (Newsletters, websites, meetings, call-outs)
- Incorporate topics that address social and emotional concerns into lesson plans and review lesson plans during PLCs and grade level meetings
- Collaborate with school counselors in order to meet the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners
- In K-2, several service delivery options are offered. These include heterogeneous grouping and flexible grouping within the classrooms. Subject acceleration, cross-age grouping, and grade acceleration are also options that may be accessed.
- In 3-5, identified students have access to resource support (AIG Specialists provide services through AIG enrichment programs and/or support services), technology-based instruction on an advanced level, Project-Based Learning, concept-based teaching, integrated units, differentiated units, tiered assignments, and seminars at the teacher's discretion. Based on defined levels of performance, curriculum compacting, challenge packets, or independent study may be provided. As defined in SB 500, any students scoring a level 5 on EOG/EOC will be offered advanced math learning opportunities. Social and emotional issues are addressed by collaboration with AIG specialists, classroom teachers, parents, students, and school counselors. IG students receive mandatory counseling. Heterogeneous and flexible grouping within the classrooms will be utilized as well as subject acceleration, cross-age grouping, and grade acceleration.
- In 6-8, identified students are cluster grouped and placed in classes with AIG certified teachers. High school classes are offered for students who meet the district criteria. Intervention time is used to provide extra enrichment based on interest surveys. Middle school subject acceleration is offered which results in credits for high school courses. As defined in SB 500, any students scoring a level 5
on EOG/EOC will be offered advanced math learning opportunities. Heterogeneous and flexible grouping within the classrooms will be utilized as well as subject acceleration, cross-age grouping, and grade acceleration.

● In 9-12, identified students have access to resource support and certified AIG teachers that provide additional support to students as needed. Honors Courses, English and Math courses with AIG clustering, Advanced Placement Courses, Online courses, College and Career Promise are also available at this level. As defined in SB 500, any students scoring a level 5 on EOG/EOC will be offered advanced math learning opportunities. Academic advisement is available for all AIG students. Heterogeneous and flexible grouping within the classrooms will be utilized as well as subject acceleration, cross-age grouping, and grade acceleration.

● Extra-curricular opportunities for gifted learners are offered such as Battle of the Books, Beta Club, National Honor Society, FFA, service projects, field trips, etc.

● Credit for Demonstrated Mastery is offered in grades 6-12 for all content areas.

● Grade acceleration will be determined by the School Review Team and other stakeholders based on all evidence provided.

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

District Response: The Columbus County Schools AIG Program:
● Incorporates research-based material
● Places students in the appropriate AIG category based on identified needs
● Conducts annual reviews of each identified AIG student with parents and students
● Updates DEPs/IDEPs annually to reflect any necessary changes in service
● Provides students with instruction and resources for the identified area of giftedness (AR, AM, AG, IG, AI)

AR/AG/IG/AI - Differentiated instruction and enrichment in ELA. Students are given access to additional resources and materials above/beyond their grade level. Book clubs and Battle of the Books are utilized to challenge gifted readers. Connexus offers personalized instruction and support for accelerated curriculum, allowing qualifying students to facilitate their own learning.

AM/AG/IG/AI - Differentiated instruction and enrichment in math. Students are given access to additional resources and materials above/beyond their grade level. STEM activities are utilized to challenge gifted students. Tinker Crates, Sphero, MakeyMakey, Lego Robotics, math competitions, Khan Academy and SAT prep, ACT Academy, and are some of the resources used regularly in AIG classrooms. Connexus offers personalized instruction and support for accelerated curriculum, allowing qualifying students to facilitate their own learning. According to SB 500, advanced learning opportunities in math are offered to all students scoring a level 5 on their EOG/EOC.
• Collaborates with school counselors in order to meet the social and emotional needs of gifted learners
• Works with and provides information about gifted instruction, strategies, and resources with classroom teachers
• Utilizes funding to employ AIG certified specialists
• Focuses on an alignment to the school and district's mission and vision.

**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 promotes collaboration and communication within the system. District personnel gathers data from EOG scores to appropriately group students according to proficiency. AIG teachers, regular education teachers, assistant principals, and principals participate in professional learning communities (PLCs) to develop expectations for all students. This platform allows AIG teachers the opportunity to advocate for the personalized needs of their students. Cluster grouping allows for homogeneous instruction. This research supported grouping allows teachers the opportunity to plan for differentiated instruction and supplemental enrichment activities while challenging other advanced learners in the classroom. These groups are crucial to the social-emotional needs of our students. Flexible grouping allows administrators flexibility in the design of intervention/remediation/enrichment time. Fluidity in groups and schedules allows for individual movement depending on need/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:** Columbus County Schools has an AIG link on the district website. The current AIG plan is available to all stakeholders. AIG Specialists provide professional development concerning the identification process and service delivery options each fall to all certified staff. AIG Specialists provide support with differentiated instruction in the regular classroom. Teachers sign annual DEP/IDEPs and receive lists of AIG students, which are now identified on PowerSchool. Monthly district meetings inform administrators and other central office staff about AIG regulations and the current program. Each year principals are given NC AIG Program Standards, AIG information packets and the process is reviewed. Flow charts are utilized to outline the identification process and programming.

**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:** Columbus County Schools are provided with the same service delivery options as described in Standard 4: Practice A. Records are transferred as necessary in June of transition years in order for the receiving AIG Specialist to have adequate time to review and make appropriate plans. Transferred records are promptly processed. This ensures the appropriate continuation of all services.

When AIG students transition from one school to another (ex: From elementary to middle), transition days and nights are held for students and parents. Schools choose one day in the spring to offer tours and provide information about the school. Students and parents are invited to go to the transition school, complete activities and meet personnel. Annual professional development is provided for teachers during district-wide professional development and weekly PLCs. AIG specialists work with students continually to prepare students for transition years. Counselors assist students and help with the social/emotional needs of students during these key transition points and support teachers with appropriate professional development.

**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:** The AIG Program ensures collaboration to address the social and emotional needs of AIG students by:

- Participating in professional development opportunities that are related to the social and emotional needs of AIG students
- Preparing and utilizing specific lesson plans and methods of instruction directed to address the unique needs of AIG students
- Developing AIG surveys for/with school counselors, students, teachers and parents in order to accurately identify and address the needs of the AIG students
- Conferencing about academic and/or behavioral issues AIG students may be experiencing and developing intervention plans.
- Holding conferences with parents/families to discuss the needs of their gifted learner

**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:** AIG policies and procedures are developed by a district AIG team. Stakeholders come together to advocate for students and develop policies to best serve our students. Meetings are held to review current policies and procedures and if changes are necessary, they are taken into consideration based upon NC AIG Standards and best practices. AIG Specialists work with classroom teachers to develop and implement a talent development program with K-2 students. The AIG Specialists serve both AIG identified and certain high performing (nominated but did not place, underrepresented showing potential but did not place) 3-5 students for enrichment and AIG identified 3-8 students for enrichment and challenge activities. Subject acceleration is an option available for
students who score 98% or above on standardized achievement testing, have mastery of all subject area skills for a specific grade level, and a teacher recommendation. Cross-Age grouping and grade acceleration are also options with ≥ 98% on both standardized achievement testing and aptitude testing, mastery of all subject area skills for the specific grade level, and a teacher recommendation. The School Review Team, Curriculum Specialists and Superintendent must approve grade acceleration. General education teachers and AIG Specialists modify the content of the current curriculum to meet the needs of gifted learners. Lesson plans and DEPs/IDEPs reflect these modifications. Credit for Demonstrated Mastery is offered in grades 6-12 for all content areas.

**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:** The LEA has identified English language learners, economically disadvantaged, highly gifted (AI), and twice-exceptional students. The identification process for AIG students in Columbus County involves multiple indicators of giftedness. The AIG program uses both verbal-based and non-verbal aptitude tests in order to overcome both cultural and language barriers. Performance levels, as well as teacher observations and recommendations, are considered. In order to be identified, students must meet four of the six criteria, one of which must be aptitude or achievement. The initial student pool allows an opportunity for underrepresented populations with a minimum score of 85% to be intentionally monitored for academically gifted potential. The exceptional children's program and AIG program work together to identify twice-exceptional students. EC, ESL, and regular education teachers intentionally nominate under-represented populations for AIG. Each year traditional measures are also used to review and "catch" underrepresented populations, for example, Istation, EOG/EOC, BOG, and classroom grades. Each school strategically groups potential students according to achievement level and identified strengths. This flexible grouping allows teachers to better meet the needs of students.

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

**District Response:** The AIG web page updates extra-curricular program opportunities for AIG students on a regular basis. As mailings for opportunities and events are received at individual schools, they are shared with other specialists and then with AIG students. In addition, contests, seminars, online events, etc. are made available to students. Each school has opportunities such as Battle of the Books, Robotics, etc. Duke Tip is utilized for elementary, middle and high school students. Westward bound, Governor's School, and local school/community organizations are utilized to promote extra-curricular opportunities for high school students. AIG students participate in weekly enrichment which allows them to investigate their interests during the school day.
Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

- Research and identify additional, appropriate extra-curricular opportunities for AIG students.
- Strengthen knowledge base of the AIG program, AIG standards, and resources for all certified staff.
- Provide and advertise AIG updates via email and AIG website.

Sources of Evidence:

Lesson Plans CCS websites
DEPs/IDEPs of identified students
Student Identification and Placement Records
Student identification profile matched to service options
Professional development schedules of opportunities aligned with district goals
Sign-in rosters and agendas of PLCs
Documentation of participation in related professional development opportunities
Surveys for school counselors, students, teachers, and parents
Copies of "Invitation to Conference" letters that were sent home to parents/families
Documentation of student participation in extra-curricular programs, service learning, inquiry-based projects, mentorship programs, etc.
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: The LEA requires regular classroom teachers and AIG Specialists to maintain lesson plans which include standards from the NCSCOS. AIG Specialists follow the NC AIG Standards when modifying/differentiating lessons to ensure appropriate personalized instruction. CCS has implemented Gifted Curriculum Standards and has shared them with AIG Specialists and classroom teachers to ensure "AIG All Day, Every Day!" Principals review regular classroom teachers' and AIG Specialists' lesson plans to ensure that they are comprehensive and meet the needs of all learners. The district provides enrichment, acceleration, compacting, and tiered lesson plans correlated to the NCSCOS for AIG students and students with advanced learning needs. Connexus offers personalized instruction and support for accelerated curriculum, allowing students to facilitate their own learning. The program differentiates for students as they work through the NCSCOS and provides teachers with additional resources based on revised Bloom's taxonomy for problem-based learning. According to SB 500, advanced learning opportunities in math are offered to all students scoring a level 5 on their EOG/EOC. In addition to the AIG classes, enrichment opportunities are provided daily during the scheduled intervention time for students. The district offers professional development to all teachers using NCDPI's Booster Shots and other research-based material. AIG Specialists attend professional development throughout the year and share with teachers during PD and PLCs.

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: Lesson plans that reflect diverse instructional practices across the spectrum of sensory learning are maintained. These plans are created based on the abilities and interests of the students in order to address various learning needs. Entry, advanced and extension level learning tasks are utilized based on student need. Tiered learning, planning lessons and/or units at different tiers are used to differentiate for students. Creating deep and complex activities for high ability students is an objective. The activities chosen for cluster groups and AIG enrichment classes will be selected in order to ensure that a wide range of learning styles are addressed, i.e. auditory, hands-on, visual, etc. Teachers are encouraged to employ strategies such as: Compact the curriculum by offering the most difficult first way for high ability students Pre-test before teaching the material Present material and have a choice board, depending on how a student does they move on to
another level working through Bloom's taxonomy
Tailoring to student interest
Investigate for the whys
Enable gifted students to work together to challenge each other
K-2 regular classroom instruction is differentiated based on Istation data and individual student needs. 3-8 regular classroom instruction is differentiated based on formative, benchmark, classroom assessments and individual student needs. 6-12 students will be offered Credit for Demonstrated Mastery. 6-8 will be offered available high school classes. 9-12 will be offered AP, Honors, College and Career Promise classes along with academic advisement. According to SB 500, students in grades 3-12 will be offered advanced learning opportunities in math depending on EOG/EOC scores. Teachers help students to understand that failure is an important part of learning. Students must learn to work with everyone, therefore, providing learning opportunities through heterogeneous grouping, Think-Pair-Shares, Clock buddies, and season teams is imperative.

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

**District Response:** CCS uses a variety of rigorous materials that are research-based and enhance curriculum and instruction. AIG Specialists and regular classroom teachers employ challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum by implementing research-based practices and strategies. An accelerative research-based curriculum that infuses higher order thinking processes, conceptual reasoning that explores problems and current issues, critical and creative thinking skills, and inquiry/discovery opportunities is being built by AIG Specialists. A rigorous thought-provoking curriculum that utilizes Problem Based Learning and Project Based Learning is being used. CCS believes inquiry is vital to encourage critical thinking and investigation. Analogies, antonyms, cognates, idioms, etymology & Greek and Latin Roots, Math games, in-depth book studies, science projects, etc. are just a few items woven into our curriculum to encourage diversity of ideas and creativity of thought. Wordly Wise, Education City, Reading Eggs, Math Seeds, EdSphere, Jacob's Ladder, and William and Mary units are widely used. Connexus offers personalized instruction and support for accelerated curriculum, allowing students to facilitate their own learning. New research-based materials appropriate for gifted learners are gathered from professional development conferences, online research, and catalogs continually.

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

**District Response:** When developing lessons, consideration is given to the "real-world" issues and advanced technologies of the world today. Teachers are encouraged to embed creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration in learning experiences. Student work reflects the use of project-based learning. PLC discussions emphasize teaching that promotes, flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability. AIG Specialists create an environment that promotes leadership and responsibility. Rocket design, robotics, and modern computer programming are
examples of curriculum units. Creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills are consistently integrated into lessons. Problem-based learning projects are used to connect students to real-world problems while incorporating technology and activating prior knowledge, extending their learning at an advanced level. AIG lessons are built to target skill sets that are not targeted during content area instruction in the regular classroom.

Gifted Education Curriculum

Advanced Communication and Research Skills – Gifted students will develop advanced communication skills in order to enhance their abilities to communicate and work with others and to share their learning effectively. Gifted students will develop advanced research methods and independent study skills, which allow for in-depth academic study.

AC.R.1 – The student uses written, spoken, and technological media to convey new learning or challenge existing ideas.
AC.R.2 – The student produces written and/or oral work that is complex, purposeful, and organized and includes relevant supporting examples from a variety of sources and communicates expertise to a variety of audiences.
AC.R.3 - The student anticipates and addresses potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations in communication with others.
AC.R.4 - The student participates in discussions to argue persuasively or reinforce others’ good points.
AC.R.5 - The student supports and defends his/her own opinions while respecting the opinions of others.
AC.R.6 – The student can clearly articulate their own thinking to a variety of audiences.
AC.R.7 - The student selects appropriate research tools and methodologies to conduct research.
AC.R.8 - The student develops and uses systematic procedures for recording and organizing information.

Creative Thinking and Creative Problem Solving Skills - Gifted students will develop and practice creative thinking and creative problem-solving skills with a variety of complex topics within an area of study in order to generate original ideas and products.

CT.CPS.1 - The student formulates original questions and ideas about a specific topic.
CT.CPS.2 - The student designs, applies, evaluates, and adapts a variety of innovative strategies when problem solving.
CT.CPS.3 - The student incorporates brainstorming and other idea-generating techniques to solve problems or generate new ideas.
CT.CPS.4 - The student develops original ideas, presentations or products.
CT.CPS.5 - The student tolerates ambiguity and assumes risk as a necessary part of problem solving.

Higher Order Critical Thinking Skills - Gifted Students will develop and practice higher order and critical thinking skills in order to extend their knowledge at an advanced level.

HOCT.1 - The student evaluates and uses data to make connections between learning and real-world problems and/or solutions.
HOCT.2 - The student conducts comparisons and evaluates decisions using criteria.
HOCT.3 - The student asks insightful and relevant questions.
HOCT.4 - The student responds to questions with supporting information that reflects in-depth knowledge of a topic.
HOCT.5 - The student uses and creates analogies, metaphors, and/or models to explain or illustrate complex concepts and relationship
HOCT.6 - The student separates one’s own point of view from that of others and examines an issue from more than one point of view.
HOCT.7 - The student evaluates conclusions based upon relevance, depth, breadth, logic, and fairness.

Personal Development and Interpersonal Relationships - Gifted Students will undergo personal growth and development in order to achieve their highest potential. Gifted Students will develop appropriate interpersonal relationships in order to collaborate effectively with a variety of audiences.

PD.IR.1 - The student accepts that their opinions, ideas and theories will change as they gain new knowledge.
PD.IR.2 - The student will set both short-term and long-term goals, personal and academic, and regularly reflect upon their progress.
PD.IR.3 - The student will strive to achieve high standards, especially in areas of strength and/or personal interest.
PD.IR.4 - The student predicts and understands consequences of decisions and responds appropriately.
PD.IR.5 - The student allows for and accepts differences of opinion.
PD.IR.6 - The student identifies stereotypes, biases, and prejudices in one's own reasoning and that of others.
PD.IR.7 - The student responds to contributions of others, considering all available information, audiences of all ages.
PD.IR.8 - The student will display persistence when faced with challenges.

Application of Knowledge - Gifted students will acquire and apply knowledge in order to advance their understanding.

AK.1 - The student uses concepts within and across disciplines to develop valid hypotheses, thesis statements, or alternative interpretations of data.
AK.2 - The student will transfer knowledge from one topic of study to another.
AK.3 - The student will make generalizations about events, people, things and ideas.
AK.4 - The student will make connections between basic information and broader concepts.
AK.5 - The student will synthesize information from a variety of sources and apply the knowledge to generate new and unique ideas.

Practice E

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

District Response: CCS will use data in a meaningful way to analyze and share, to improve programming and services and support student achievement and growth. Assessment criteria are continuously monitored and adjustments are made to appropriately differentiate instruction. Student portfolios, reading and math benchmark assessments, Istation, Schoolnet tests and classroom
assignments, AIG projects and classwork, EOG/EOCs etc., are monitored and levels are adjusted as needed by classroom teachers, AIG specialists and support staff. Each year, information is used to cluster group students throughout the school, fluidly group in individual classrooms, and group or individually serve in AIG classroom. Curriculum is modified based on both formative and summative assessments. Parents work with schools to ensure proper alignment for students.

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

District Response: The LEA’s AIG Specialists collaborate with school counselors and regular classroom teachers during PLC meetings in order to address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners. School counselors meet individually or in small groups with students identified IG to support their social and emotional needs and help him or her reach their maximum academic potential. Through school-wide enrichment and AIG problem based/project-based learning, students are allowed to choose content in which they are interested and in turn are motivated by their choices. AIG Specialists address social-emotional needs in a variety of ways. Small group instructions is used for students to come together to discuss thoughts and concerns. Learning through gaming has made an impact on AIG students by improving socialization skills and conflict resolution/management, which carries over into the classroom. Identified students are also encouraged to become involved in extracurricular activities such as Book Clubs, Jr. FFA/FFA, Chorus, Band, Student Government, and other organizations to enhance their social-emotional development while cultivating and pursuing outside interests and leadership opportunities.

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

District Response: In the K-3 classroom, students who have academically gifted potential receive talent development through creativity, curiosity, critical thinking and access to advanced content. Curriculum such as verbal analogies, picture analogies, logic puzzles and brain teasers stimulate high potential and advanced achievement. The AIG Specialist offers resources and specific strategies based on displayed mastery skills. Compacted lessons and accelerated subject matter are used as needed. Revised Blooms is utilized to make lessons more rigorous and relevant to students. Students participate in academically stimulating enrichment classes within the regular classroom. In some schools, needs based enrichment/intervention is offered to students. Small grouping is utilized to serve high performing students. They are challenged based on their academic level. CCS uses various methods to determine which students should be served. Teachers play a vital part in our talent development program due to their hands-on, daily interactions with students. The NCDPI math assessment and literacy data are formal methods used to determine which students should be served. Acceleration in subject and/or grade is possible based on the advanced level of the student. Curriculum compacting is used to foster the potential growth that is possible with K-3 students. Many students transition in and out of this program fluidly based on interest, ability, and performance.
Practice H
Develops and implements differentiated curriculum and instruction through collaboration among regular education teachers, AIG personnel, and other related instructional staff.

District Response: CCS utilizes collaboration to develop and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction as follows:
● AIG Specialists collaborate with the School Review Team which consists of regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors to develop the DEP/IDEP for identified AIG students. Stakeholders work together to ensure DEPs are carried out in the regular classroom as well as in AIG classes using the following guiding questions: Are my gifted students able to accelerate when needed? Do gifted student have regular opportunities to expand upon their areas of interest and strengths? Are gifted students encouraged to extend learning beyond the basic level of understanding? Do my students have an opportunity to NOT succeed with ease in order to develop their talent and potential?
● AIG Specialists meet with each other and the CCS Curriculum Directors to discuss differentiated curriculum and instruction as well as the resources used for curriculum delivery. Strategies for teaching gifted students are utilized during delivery.
● Differentiation is a strategic goal for the system and continuing PD has been developed and implemented for the system. Teachers continue to receive professional development on data analysis, data-driven instruction, data charts, etc. to ensure individual student needs are met.
● PLCs and professional development are used as continuing education pieces for all teachers.

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: The LEA collaborates with the School Review Team and parents to develop an initial DEP or an IDEP for identified AIG students. These documents are updated yearly to ensure that effective programs and services are continued. A new DEP or IDEP is developed at the beginning of each school year. This document is then reviewed with parents during scheduled conferences and approved or amended based on parent/student input. Any concerns or adjustments that need to be made are discussed and resolved during this process. This process ensures that the continuum of services is commensurate to the needs of the students.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Columbus County Schools has recognized the need to have professional development for all schools/teachers on differentiation. It was included in the system’s three-year strategic plan. Curriculum Specialists and AIG Specialists have worked together to provide PD throughout the system, Pre-K - 12. Lesson plans now include a place for differentiation. We will
continue to work towards creating a district climate of AIG All Day Every Day.

Lesson plans
Student work samples
Field trips
Study units
Research projects and project rubrics
Student work samples
Documented participation in related extra-curricular activities
Flexible grouping within the regular classroom
Assessment data
Signed DEPs/IDEPs

**Sources of Evidence:** Lesson plans
Student work samples
Field trips
Study units
Research projects and project rubrics
Student work samples
Documented participation in related extra-curricular activities
Flexible grouping within the regular classroom
Assessment data
Signed DEPs/IDEPs
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: Columbus County Schools employs an AIG Coordinator that is AIG licensed. Licensed AIG Specialists meet with an advisory panel (variety of stakeholders) to guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program and plan.

Practice B

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

District Response: AIG-licensed specialists serve identified students according to their DEP. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with all AIG paperwork. They also design and implement tasks which address the whole child. They utilize professional development from national, state, and local experts in the gifted field. AIG specialists attend the NCAGT and UNCW conferences annually. Each time they hone their craft. Research-based teaching materials and strategies including problem/project-based learning, STEM projects, Connexus online learning, challenging literacy units, math problems, games, analogies, etc, are used in pull out or push in classes, depending upon need. All of these resources encourage and challenge AIG students by providing the complexity and abstract thought they require. Differentiated lesson plans are the result of collaboration with teachers and administration. Data is used to provide direction and isolate areas in which our students need to grow. Information about the unique needs of gifted learners is shared in various ways including PLCs. School personnel collaborates with counselors to meet the social-emotional needs of students. The AIG Directors communicates regularly with the AIG Coordinator and Specialists to ensure creative and challenging tasks are being provided.

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: Columbus County Schools actively seeks to align professional development opportunities with state and/or national teaching standards, so the needs of gifted learners are addressed in an ongoing and comprehensive manner. LEA currently maintains a system that
supports administrative classroom walk-through observations and peer observations to determine professional development needs. Online classes are also provided through the Home Base PD System, NC Educators, RESA and various other DPI sanctioned websites that support instruction on high yield strategies. The district has required differentiation professional development to be held for all faculty. Teachers are required to attend and log their CEUs. Additionally, AIG specialists assist in ongoing professional development through the use of PLCs. Student Services has required that counselors develop and submit an approved plan to monitor the social/emotional needs of all students. They work with the AIG specialists to address specific concerns. School administrators participate in and monitor these requirements. CCS also provides opportunities for AIG Specialists to attend state and/or national gifted conferences and provides professional development for classroom teachers, school counselors, and administrators involved in AIG programming and services. Local professional development is facilitated by AIG Specialists utilizing NCDPI's Advanced Learning Division website and Booster Shots. AIG strategies encourage AIG ALL DAY EVERY DAY!

**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:** All principals and teachers involved in the AIG process understand the characteristics of gifted learners and are able to meet their needs. Regular classroom teachers are encouraged to earn the AIG add-on license and are required to attend all professional development provided by AIG Specialists. AIG Specialists are currently available to regular classroom teachers to provide resources/assistance in differentiated instruction. AIG students are served by a combination of clustering, pull out and advisement by AIG certified teachers.

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

**District Response:** Columbus County Schools is knowledgeable about professional development opportunities and works to ensure that an appropriate selection of these opportunities is aligned with local AIG program goals and other district initiatives.

Columbus County Schools
- Provides information about professional development opportunities related to gifted learners
- Conducts professional development on research-based practices and strategies related to gifted learners
- Aligns professional development opportunities with the local AIG program goals and district initiatives.

Through collaboration among the community, school administration, and teachers, we can empower the students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become outstanding citizens and leaders in
tomorrow's global society.

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

**District Response:** Columbus County Schools provides opportunities during the instructional day for AIG Specialists and general education teachers to collaborate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to ensure that best practices related to gifted learners are being implemented. AIG Specialists and regular classroom teachers collaborate in order to meet the unique needs of gifted learners. New knowledge obtained from professional development is shared and ideas and information gained are incorporated into lesson plans and classroom practice.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**
- Research opportunities for grants in order to provide AIG professional development to administrators, school staff and regular classroom teachers
- Provide the opportunity for all teachers to participate in the AIG Booster Shots professional development
- Provide more direct and explicit professional development for AIG Specialists
- Add resources section on the AIG website
- Hold a parent/student involvement night focusing on social-emotional needs of gifted learners. Disseminate information on the Gifted Education Curriculum Standards

**Sources of Evidence:**
Annual AIG Showcase
Grade-level PLC minutes
AIG PLC Agendas
Lesson Plans
Student Work Samples
Professional development schedules
Prior approval forms
Presentations and hand-outs from staff development workshops and meetings
AIG website
AIG Specialist add-on license certificates
Sign-in sheets for PLCs
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: Annual DEP conferences are held to discuss the whole child. The school counselor collaborates with stakeholders to support the personalized social-emotional needs of AIG students. AIG teachers, classroom teachers, and support personnel collaborate to ensure challenging academic curriculum is in place. Parent/student surveys are sent home annually to help strengthen partnerships and provided services to the best of the district's abilities. Parents and community members are involved in various aspects of the CCS AIG program. Parents/families and community members serve on the AIG Advisory Council. Community members donate time to share their interests and to teach students. Classes are based on interest. High School AIG students work together and have various academic and community partnerships including, but not limited to, National Honor Society, FFA, Hospice House, Operation Christmas Child, Teen Court, Families First Women's Shelter and various internship programs. Career fairs are held at the elementary, middle, and high schools. College days are held at the high school. AIG students are targeted and encouraged to keep in contact with local businesses and institutes of higher learning. Local civic groups encourage students to participate in writing and speaking competitions (AR Ammons, DAR). By fostering these relationships, our students learn to network and practice 21st-century speaking and listening skills.

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

District Response: Information concerning the local AIG program and other policies related to gifted education is shared on the local AIG website. Copies of the local AIG plan and brochure are available at each school and on the district AIG website. An informational presentation is held at staff meetings when requested. AIG Specialists meet with the AIG Advisory Council throughout the school year to discuss current relevant issues in gifted education. Students and parents are provided with a complete program outline when placed and when any policy changes take place. The district's call system is utilized for messaging parents and students about any new or upcoming events. AIG specialists attend and provide an overview of the AIG program to school advisory boards. The AIG Director attends parent nights, monthly district meetings, AIG meetings, and AIG Advisory Council meetings to assure information is disseminated as needed.
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: The AIG Advisory Council is comprised of AIG specialists, community members, AIG parents and families, regular classroom teachers, principals, assistant principals, district directors, and school counselors. CCS is deliberate in maintaining a diverse population which includes, females, males, black, Hispanic, Native American, white and Asian representatives which reflect our diverse community population. The AIG Advisory Council communicates to share issues, plan activities, make decisions and assist in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG program and plan. Face to face, email, and google docs are utilized to communicate effectively and efficiently. The advisory group develops the local AIG plan while implementation and monitoring are the responsibility of AIG specialists, directors and other instructional and support staff.

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: Information relating to the AIG Program and its services is provided in a translated format to the community and parents as necessary. Materials relating to outside enrichment opportunities are translated and distributed as they become available. Classroom teachers, AIG Specialists, administrators, and the AIG Director disseminate information to students and parents. They also utilize the district website and AIG brochure to inform stakeholders of opportunities. ESL teachers translate forms and information for our Hispanic population. Various apps have been utilized to translate AIG information and materials into Mandarin and other languages as populations dictate. ESL Specialists are invited to attend meetings with students and families to provide translation services and a thorough understanding of the total screening, identification, and placement process.

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: The Columbus County Schools AIG Program currently partners with Columbus County Schools and various other IHE institutions such as UNC-Wilmington, NC Governor's School, Duke University, Southeastern Community College, and other state agencies. Programs such as DUKE TIP, Farmer's Market contests, DAR contests, AR Ammons Poetry, NHS, Beta Club, etc. allow students to participate in community activities with stakeholders and local businesses. These collaborative partnerships benefit gifted learners academically, socially and emotionally and allow
real-life experiences/opportunities. AIG Specialists participate in the NCAGT and the UNCW AIG conferences.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**
- Seek out other institutions and community partnerships
- All AIG specialists to present AIG overview to school advisory boards annually
- Provide and advertise AIG updates via email and AIG website

**Sources of Evidence:**
AIG website
AIG brochure
Surveys
AIG Advisory Council survey responses
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: Columbus County Schools maintains an AIG plan that complies with state standards and policies as set forth by state legislation. This plan is continuously revised by the AIG Advisory Board and approved by the Columbus County Schools Board of Education and then submitted to SBE/DPI for review. Regional meetings are held at the district RESA and attended by the Lead AIG Specialist to support plan development and improvement. State informational meetings and conferences are attended in order to stay abreast of current policies and instructional strategies. Whiteville City Schools and Columbus County Schools collaborate to develop an AIG plan that is fluid within the county. Students transfer between our districts throughout the year. Having an AIG plan that is consistent allows seamless transition between districts for both students and AIG Specialists.

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 Columbus County Schools AIG Program and plan are continuously monitored. Implementation of our AIG plan are made in accordance with current legislation and state policies. The state AIG consultant guides all school systems in plan development. The CCS AIG Specialists ensure that the AIG plan complies with current legislation and state policies. AIG Specialists currently research, compile, write, and review all elements of the local AIG plan. AIG Specialists ensure ongoing monitoring of the AIG program and plan by regularly meeting with classroom teachers during PLCs, the Curriculum Directors of the LEA, parents, and various stakeholders. Peer visits ensure CCS AIG program is focusing on the standards. The AIG Coordinator maintains and uses direct lines of communication with the state AIG consultant and the regional AIG coordinators. The AIG Coordinator also compiles and submits interim reports, attends regional meetings to gain information on current programming and implementation initiatives and then shares the information from these meetings with the AIG Specialists, principals, district leaders and other stakeholders as needed. Concerns, suggestions, and complaints are reviewed on an independent basis. AIG program revisions are made in instances of inconsistency.

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:** The Columbus County Schools AIG Directors and Lead AIG Specialist currently monitor the use of state funds allocated for the local AIG Program according to state policy. The Finance Director of the LEA prepares a budget that AIG Directors and Lead AIG Specialist use to fund salaries and purchase AIG materials.

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

**District Response:** The Columbus County Schools AIG Program will continue to maintain, analyze, and share student performance, growth and drop-out rate through Schoolnet reports with all stakeholders to guide practices and improvements and to help determine if AIG student needs are being met; taking into consideration the holistic needs of gifted children. The program will continue to monitor those under-served populations and strive for equitable education of all students. Graduation rates and dropout data will continue to be monitored. Historically, identified students have not been a part of CCS drop out data. The growth of the AIG population is shared with the district at the beginning of each year. This growth is used to drive instruction, service delivery, placement and instructional strategies at each school. Beginning in third grade, student achievement (EOG, EOC, AP, Honors, CCP, ACT, SAT) is placed into a method for tracking performance and is continually monitored on a student by student basis as well as the program as a whole, until graduation.

**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:** The AIG plan of Columbus County Schools monitors the representation, performance, and retention of under-represented populations in the local AIG program by:
- Monitoring the representation, statistics, and services of under-represented populations by the review of grades/participation/classwork during weekly data discussions in PLCs (with teachers, administrators, and AIG specialists).
- Ensuring AIG screening pools are completed and are used to aid in identification at each school
- Providing multilingual forms as needed
- Examining the AIG pool, screening, and AIG placement reports
- Creating DEPs/IDEPs when needed
- Consistently monitoring the performance of all current AIG students - tracking data throughout the year and on annual reviews
- Collaborating with regular classroom teachers, EC teachers, ESL teachers, school counselors, and other support personnel
• Continually monitoring BOG/EOG/EOC, benchmarks, grades, and outstanding performance via testing data, PLCs, teacher, and district meetings to identify and support under-represented populations
• Examining trends of representation and achievement of underrepresented populations.

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

District Response: The Columbus County Schools System has Curriculum Directors who supervise personnel issues. The LEA also employs a Human Resource Licensure Specialist who maintains licensure records and credentials. Personnel is encouraged to take advantage of different PLCs and workshops in order to become versed in the needs of AIG students. Those interested in assisting with these populations are encouraged to pursue AIG licensure. CCS offers tuition reimbursement.

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: Columbus County Schools uses the following to elicit feedback from all stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program: AIG Advisory Council, Parent, Teacher, Student and Community Stakeholder Surveys (available continuously on website), parent input (throughout year), Parent Nights (biannually), Parent/Teacher/Student conferences (3 times per year), and annual DEP conferences.

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

District Response: Columbus County Schools uses data consistently to monitor all facets of the district. The EOG historic audit is used to chart student performance and plan courses and teacher selection. Columbus County Schools also uses EVAAS data to monitor student growth and modify service delivery. Data is used to monitor underrepresented populations and revise the local plan accordingly. Survey data is used to improve the overall AIG program. EOG/EOC/EVAAS data has been used to develop the district plan and identify professional development needs such as differentiation. Survey data was instrumental in adding an AIG enrichment program for high school students. AIG Specialists monitor plan annually for any changes in policies that need to be suggested to the Director for revisions as the population/program dictates.

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

**District Response:** Upon receipt of the latest evaluation of the Columbus County Schools AIG Program from the NC Department of Public Instruction, AIG commendations, AIG student achievement data is disseminated to the public via board meetings, local media outlets, emails, and district meetings as well as at the school level. The AIG website and brochure is updated to include this information. The fact sheet that is disseminated at BOY PD meetings will be updated annually and distributed to stakeholders.

**Practice J**
Safeguards the rights of all AIG students and their parents and families through established written policies, procedures, and practices. The LEA plan includes: informed consent regarding identification and placement, reassessment procedures, transfers from other LEAs, and procedures for resolving disagreements.

**District Response:** All academically/intellectually gifted students, ages five through graduation, must be provided with a free appropriate public education. Free appropriate public education means that differentiated services will be provided for the academically/intellectually gifted student (1) at no expense to the parent, (2) according to the guidelines of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the Columbus County School System's Academically/Intellectually Gifted Program, and (3) according to the student's DEP (Differentiated Education Plan) or IDEP (Individual Education Plan).

To be included in Screening, Referral, and Evaluation, certain criteria must be met. The process is as follows:

**SCREENING**

- A general screening of aptitude of all third-grade students occurs annually.
- AIG School Review Team will meet and evaluate the data provided.
- Students performing 90% and above on the CogAT are placed in the student pool.
- BOG/EOG/EOC, benchmarks, historical data, and EVAAS data are used to identify additional students for the student pool.

**EVALUATION**

- If further testing is required; parents will be notified and must give written permission before any further evaluation has begun. (Ex: Full-Scale CogAT, Naglieri, and BOG/EOG/EOC - Testing and evaluation materials will be selected and administered with equity, so as not to be biased. Selected tests include those that measure educational achievement and aptitude. Underrepresented populations may require a nonverbal assessment.)
- Parents will be notified via Evaluation Results AIG form 3 if no placement is needed. The AIG School Review Team will determine those students meeting the aptitude/achievement criteria, and will continue the evaluation process which includes the following non-traditional pathways: Classroom performance, GRS, student interest survey.
Parents will be notified of placement recommendation. If services are needed, an invitation to the conference (AIG 11) will be sent home. If parents do not respond after three attempts, a copy of the DEP and Student Identification/Placement Recommendation/Acknowledgment - AIG 4 will be sent to the home. Services will not be provided until required signed documentation and acknowledgment is received by the AIG Specialist.

An annual review of services will be conducted. In addition to this general screening, stakeholders may refer a student by completing the AIG Referral Form.

REFERRAL

When a stakeholder feels that a student is academically/intellectually gifted and may need differentiated educational services, he or she should complete an AIG Referral Form – AIG 1. The referral should be given to the AIG Specialist.

After a child has been referred, in order to determine his/her need for differentiated services in the Academically/Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program, the AIG Specialist will discuss the referral with the classroom teacher. Grades, BOG/EOG/EOC, Classroom performance, and student motivation will be considered.

The person making the referral will be notified if the AIG Team deems a need for evaluation. Student progress will be reviewed annually. A differentiated education plan (DEP) or an individual education plan (IDEP) must be written. Such a plan will reflect student strengths and include the options considered by the AIG School Review Team as appropriate to meet the student's educational needs. Recommendations of service delivery options for the current grade level will be reviewed at that time.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with any decision(s) of the AIG School Review Team regarding referral, identification, or services, the following procedures will be followed:

RE-EVALUATION

Test results will be valid for two calendar years. After two calendar years, students may be reassessed if requested by the parent/guardian.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Columbus County Schools will accept transfer AIG students. Parents shall request entry into the CCS AIG program. The AIG School Review Team will evaluate student records and placement will be based on transfer records. All required paperwork must be completed and signed by a parent before the transfer student will begin receiving services.

RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

If parents do not agree with the school's decision concerning eligibility, they have the right to submit the results of an independent educational and intellectual evaluation. A qualified examiner, who is not employed by the educational agency responsible for the child's education, must give this evaluation. Measures of intellectual aptitude and achievement are only two of the criteria used in determining eligibility; therefore, independently conducted additional measures do not necessarily guarantee placement in the district's AIG Program although those results will be considered.

The school system does not pay for independent educational and intellectual evaluations.
1. The parent/guardian should submit a request in writing requesting a conference with the AIG
School Review Team.
2. If the parent/guardian still disagrees with the committee's decision, the parent/guardian may appeal the decision by making a written request to the principal within 10 school days of the initial/placement notice. The principal will review the decision of the team and grant the parent/guardian a conference within 10 school days of the parental request. After the principal and parent/guardian have met, the principal will meet with the AIG School Review Team and will, together, make a final placement decision. She/he will provide the parent/guardian a written decision within 10 school days of the conference.

3. If the final placement decision fails to resolve the disagreement, the parent/guardian may appeal in writing to the AIG Director. The appeal must be made within 10 school days of the final placement decision. The AIG Director will review the appeal and then respond in writing to principal and parent/guardian within 10 school days.

4. If the AIG Director's decision fails to resolve the disagreement, the parent/guardian may appeal to the superintendent. The appeal to the superintendent must be made within 10 school days of receiving the AIG Director's response. The superintendent will review the appeal and respond in writing within ten school days.

5. If the superintendent's decision fails to resolve the disagreement satisfactorily, the parent/guardian may appeal to the Columbus County Schools Board of Education. The appeal must be made in writing within 10 school days of receiving the superintendent's response. The board will confer with the AIG Director and offer a final written decision within 30 school days.

6. If the board's decision fails to resolve the disagreement, the parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The hearing will be limited to consideration of (1) whether the local school unit improperly failed to identify the student as academically/intellectually gifted or (2) whether the local plan of services for the student has been implemented appropriately. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge will make a decision based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law. The decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on all parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. Attorney fees are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:
Tracking of scholarships, internships, college acceptances, and successful AP/CCP completion rates.
Place suggestion box on the website.

Sources of Evidence:
AIG PLAN with CCS School Board Approval
AIG Team Meeting Minutes/Agendas
AIG Budget
Quarterly Benchmark Reports
State testing reports
Percentage of underrepresented population - changes AIG licensure information AIG Surveys for all stakeholders PD packet for AIG processes and procedures Flow Chart and Information Brochures AIG Website CCS AIG Processes and Procedures Consent for service DEP/IDEP forms with signatures