Hickory City Schools
Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan
Effective 2019-2022

Approved by local Board of Education on: 13-MAY-19
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Hickory City 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, Hickory City Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Hickory City Schools Vision for local AIG program: Hickory City Schools strives to meet the cognitive and affective needs of gifted students with the provision of high quality educational opportunities. We believe that a partnership among the school system, parents, and community fosters the potential of gifted students across all cultural groups and socioeconomic levels.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Funding</th>
<th>Local Funding</th>
<th>Grant Funding</th>
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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: Rationale:
Based on stakeholder feedback as well as recommendations from NC Department of Public Instruction's Division of Advanced Learning, it is evident that Hickory City Schools need clearly defined identification, referral and identification procedures which are communicated to personnel, parents/families, and the community-at-large.

Screening: All students will be screened in 4th Grade with the CogAT in the fall. All CogAT scores will be reviewed by AIG Specialists.

Referral:
- Students who have a composite score of 90% or above on CogAT will move through the screening process to be considered for additional testing if needed. Parents/Guardians will be notified and asked for permission to give further testing for AIG identification.

- Students with an EOG score of a Level 5 and overall yearly "A" average will also move through the screening process.

- If a student transfers into the district during the 4th grade or later and hasn't been given an aptitude test, that student can be given the CogAT or a nationally normed aptitude test.

On-Going Screening/Referral:
- Students who do not meet the criteria but are close will be placed on a "watch and wait" list.
- Teachers at all grade-levels can request screening by filling out a referral form if they observe AIG characteristics in a student.

Communication of Screening Procedures:
- Identification criteria will be placed on the district website.
- Translate placement information into the native language for the community.
- Distribute information at the elementary and middle school-level about gifted students to help understand eligibility and the spectrum of AIG services.
- High School would be on a no

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:** Rationale: The district uses multiple criteria for identification of an AIG student; however, after analyzing district AIG data, it is evident that Hickory City Schools is above the traditional 3-5% of identified academically and intellectually gifted students. In order to accurately identify intellectually and academically gifted students, Hickory City Schools will utilize two pathways for identification.

AIG Identification K-3 grade:

- Administrators and teachers may request testing for AIG identification after the AIG Leadership Team has reviewed student data.

- Students must achieve cumulative above-grade-level scores on all state and local assessments such as (K-2 Assessments, l-station/mClass, NC-ENSI, Check-ins, BOG, etc..)

- KTEA, teacher rating scale, and state released benchmark assessments will be used as normed assessments to identify K-3 students as well as
  - If the test administered has a percentile score, students must score at or above the 98th percentile.
  - If the test administered does not have a percentile score, students must score at least two grade-levels above.

- Parents can contact their child’s principal and/or teacher to begin the dialogue about possible identification.

- Hickory City Schools will also review individual psychological testing from licensed psychological practitioners using a Nationally Normed Achievement or Aptitude test. This additional testing is the financial responsibility of the family.

- Students transferring from within another North Carolina district with AIG identification will be granted placement while students transferring from another state will need to be assessed using current criteria expectations.

AIG Identification 4-8th grade:

- In the fall of each year, the district will administer a universal screening instrument, Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAt), to all 4th graders which will be used in the identification process.

There are two pathways for gifted identification placement:

Pathway 1:
- Intellectually Gifted (IG)-full scale composite aptitude score of 96% or above on a nationally normed test
- Academically Intellectual (AI)-Full scale composite aptitude score of 96% on a nationally normed test AND EOG scores of 96% or above in reading and math.
Pathway 2:
  Academically Gifted in Reading and Math (AG)
  Must meet both of the following criteria:
  - 93% or higher composite score on any nationally normed aptitude test
  - Level 5 on EOG's in reading and math
  AND
  Must meet one of the following criteria:
  - Yearly average of A in reading and math
  - Meets gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist

Academically Gifted in Math (AM)
Must meet both of the following criteria:
- 93% or higher composite score or quantitative/non-verbal subtest on any nationally normed aptitude test
- Level 5 on EOG's in math
  AND
  Must meet one of the following criteria:
  - Yearly average of A in reading and math
  - Meets gifted criteria on a teacher observation checklist

AIG Identification: Grades 9 - 12
- Administrators and teachers may request testing for AIG identification; AIG Leadership Team will review student data.
- Students must score at or above the 96th percentile on a standardized achievement test.
  - A composite score accepted for PSAT, SAT, or ACT
  - EOC (English II, Math I) and 8th-grade EOG (Reading and Math)
- Students must score at or above the 96th percentile on a nationally normed aptitude test.
- Parents can contact their child's principal and/or teacher to begin a dialogue about possible identification.
- Hickory City Schools will also review individual psychological testing from licensed psychological practitioners. This additional testing is the financial responsibility of the family.
- Students transferring from within another North Carolina district with AIG identification will be granted placement while students transferring from another state will need to be assessed using current criteria expectations.
  Early Kindergarten Admission Criteria:
To be considered for early entry to Kindergarten, the following criteria must be met:
- Aptitude Test Scores or Achievement Test Scores of 98th percentile
- Student work showing outstanding ability in a subject.
- Two letters of recommendation documenting the child's physical and social maturity. A child care
worker, teacher, pediatrician or another professional with direct knowledge of the child.

-If these criteria are met, school administrators will request an interview with the child and parent, using additional school data. The principal decision is final.
-Testing must be completed by a licensed psychologist and is the financial responsibility of the parent.

K-2 pull-out/enrichment services criteria:
- mClass results must be two grade levels above
- Individual student data must be above-grade-level on state and local K-2 assessments.
- Teacher recommendation form complete

K-2 Grade Acceleration Criteria:
- 98% on Standardized Achievement Test
- Teacher Recommendation
- AIG Specialist Support
- Principal Recommendation
- Parent/Guardian Support

3rd Grade pull-out/enrichment services criteria:
- mClass results are 2 letters above grade-level expectations
- Level 5 on BOG
- Must have a Good-Cause exemption
- Other Guiding Data: state and local assessments, teacher recommendations

3-6 Grade Acceleration Criteria:
Must meet the following:
1. 98% or above on EOG
2. 98% or above on a nationally normed aptitude test
3. 98% on BOG
4. AIG Specialist Observation
5. Principal recommendation
6. Parent support

Content Acceleration for Middle Grades Subjects will include a review of:
- Current and previous EOG scores (96th percentile or higher)
- EVAAS prediction data
- Classroom performance
- Local testing data
- Assessment of next grade-level standards
- Principal review

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:** Rationale: Hickory City Schools will use culturally fair and nationally normed assessments to ensure students, from all backgrounds, are appropriately screened for the gifted program.

-Specialists can use the TONI-Test of Nonverbal Intelligence and Slocumb Payne Teacher Perception Inventory as a non-traditional method for screening underrepresented students in the district.

-AIG Specialists will analyze testing data to identify students who meet criteria in Hickory City Schools.

-Teachers will use the referral process (including data from mClass, Check Ins, iReady data) for recommending students to be screened for potential AIG identification.

-AIG Specialists will monitor and analyze a variety of data to ensure populations of students that are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English Learners (EL's), highly gifted, and twice-exceptional are assessed for potential AIG placement.

-Specialists will partner with the Exceptional Children's Department and English as Second Language teachers at each school to best recognize and serve traditionally underrepresented populations for AIG placement.

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

**District Response:** Rationale: In order to ensure all students are treated fairly, the referral and identification process will be consistent across the district.

-The AIG Specialist assigned to the school should be responsible for completing identification placement through the use of the criteria.

-Students will be given a universal screener (CogAT) in 4th grade. AIG Specialists will review the results and refer students for further testing if needed for identification.

-Teachers can submit AIG referral for screening directly to the AIG specialist assigned to their current school for processing.

-School-based AIG team will review new students placed in the program to monitor identification process.

-AIG specialists will provide training modules for all certified staff members for consistency in referrals
across the district.

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

District Response: Rationale: Hickory Public Schools recognize the need for transparency with the screening, referral and identification processes for the AIG Program for all stakeholders.

- All AIG screening, referral and identification processes will be posted on our website as well as maintain a copy of the AIG Plan at each school.

- This information will be explained to teachers during faculty and PLC meetings at the beginning of each school year.

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: Rationale: Hickory City Schools recognize the need to maintain documentation that will ensure validity of services and placement across the district for the gifted program.

- Hickory City Schools will use the AIG Profile Sheet that is consistent across the LEA and clearly communicates a student's AIG identification procedures and the outcomes for students.

- Schools will provide all identified gifted students with a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP), or Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) that explains how the identification matches the service options for an individual AIG student. This will also be shared with the classroom teacher and parents.

- Elementary and Middle AIG Specialists will meet with classroom teachers and parents yearly to discuss and review identified student's DEP's. High school counselors will meet with identified students regarding performance and course selection on an annual basis.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Hickory Public Schools moved the testing date of Winter of 3rd grade to fall of 4th grade to reduce the amount of testing for third graders.
Purchasing a new edition of CogAt Aptitude testing. Teachers can request gifted screening if they observe AIG characters in a student for placement. Changed our identification percentage to 96% for IA & IG in the identification process to utilize Stanine 9.

Utilizing composite and sub-scores for AM & AR Identification, to increase the diversity in the AIG program.

Reconstructed placement forms to meet new identification requirements.

Hickory City Schools will no longer be providing IB diplomas and coursework; therefore IB services were removed from our current plan.

**Sources of Evidence:** AIG Advisory Board Meeting
Surveys to Elementary Parents and students
Middle and High School Student Interviews
Analyze past and present demographics, CogAt and EOG data.
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: Rationale: Article 9B states "Academically or intellectually gifted students require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program." Gifted learners require instruction that meets their needs in all classes throughout the entire school day.

Hickory City Schools will use a system for data analysis to determine the best method of service delivery that will meet the needs of AIG students throughout the district.

Specialists will use lesson plans, PLCs, DEPs, and data boards to ensure all aspects of student development (academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs) are addressed within each grade level, classroom environment, and setting.

Hickory City Schools will:
• Provide all teachers, specialists, and school counselors with access to information on student DEPs.
• Provide services and offerings for students that focus on the development of interests and special talents of students.
• Provide services for students that encourage the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and other 21st century skills.

AIG Specialists and administrators will work to shift the mindset from offering a gifted program to offering programming for gifted learners to provide a full continuum of services.

Elementary:
-Students are exposed to above-grade-level math activities in concepts beyond the regular classroom. ---

-Students may participate in Perennial Math competitions, Math Olympiad, and math quiz bowls during pull-out sessions, math talks, math seminars and online math websites to continually expand their mathematical thinking.

-Students are involved with Product Based Learning (PBL) opportunities in the regular classroom as
well as during time with the specialist.

-Students are exposed to a variety of classic, age-appropriate literature to study in-depth and create differentiated products.

-Gifted students use Google Classroom to communicate with classmates and AIG specialist. This format provides a way for assignments, comments, and reminders to be shared among students and teachers.

-Elementary students have the opportunity to participate in Battle of the Books, Science Olympiad, Robotics, Beta club, Spelling Bees, Chorus, Boys and Girls Club, Running Club, Dance Teams, Safety Patrol, Student Council, Fire and Safety Competition, Duke TIP., GEMS (Girls Engaged in Math and Science) and Junior Beta Club.

Middle:
-HCS offer advanced classes (designed to be more rigorous and in-depth than regular classroom) in ELA and Math as one means of adapting the NCSCOS.

-HCS offers an advanced Math class in 8th grade, as well as Math 1 as an option for acceleration. In the advanced classes as well as the regular classroom, the NCSCOS can be enriched through the use of differentiation strategies, seminars, problem-based learning, GRASPS assessments, tic-tac-toe boards, menus, Math Talks, learning contracts, curriculum compacting, simulations, tiered assignments, philosophers chairs, Problem Based Learning, word stems, Breakout EDU activities, and high levels of questioning. Students also participate in makerspace activities, STEM projects, and coding.

-Middle school has an enrichment that provides activities such as a BreakoutEDU activities, Seminar, competition groups, Genius Hour and STEM projects.

-Content acceleration and the use of online programs for acceleration will be offered will also be offered for select gifted students.

-Students also have the opportunity to participate in Mathcounts, Duke TIP, Battle of the Books, STEM club, Running Club, Art Competitions, Band and Orchestra Competitions, Junior Beta Club, Chorus Competitions, and Writing Competitions.

High School:
-The NCSCOS in high school is enriched through course options and offerings such as Advanced Placement Courses classes through Catawba Valley Community College., Dual Enrollment through Lenoir-Rhyne University.

-Honors teachers differentiate the curriculum while adhering to the NC Essential Standards. The differentiation that occurs in honors courses follows DPI’s rubric. AP teachers provide instruction in college level courses.
-High school students also have the option to attend Hickory Career Arts Magnet School in HCS or go to Catawba County's Challenger Early College, or Newton Conover's Discovery High Schools.

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

**District Response:** Rationale: All AIG students do not learn at the same rate or in the same way. As a result, the curriculum must be enriched, extended, and accelerated to accommodate a wide range of ability levels. After analyzing student data across the district, specific service criteria is necessary to appropriately meet the needs of all gifted students.

-HCS will consider a variety of strategies for providing rigor, depth, complexity, sophistication, and abstractness for differentiating in the AIG and regular classroom.

-Administrators and teachers will use cluster grouping strategies according to the students' data (ie.. benchmarks, Schoolnet, EVAAS, achievement, aptitude scores)

-Specialists and teachers will utilize student interest to offer additional courses, enrichment activities, and/or independent projects. (ie...Science Olympiad, Math Olympiad, Duke Tip, Perennial Math, Battle of the Books, Robotics, Beta club, Student Council, Math Counts, STEAM club, and SGA).

-Specialists and classroom teachers are able to extend, enrich and accelerate the NCSCOS and provide additional curricular resources to better meet students' needs.

-Each elementary school has a licensed AIG teacher to provide student services and assist classroom teacher with differentiation in the regular classroom. Consideration is given to the modification of content, process, products, and learning environment as they relate to differentiated gifted instruction.

-Specific instructional strategies that will be utilized include: differentiated lessons or units, individual study/contracts, curriculum compacting, learning center activities, seminars, simulations, research and multimedia projects, tiered assignments, and choice boards.

-Each middle school has a licensed AIG Specialist to facilitate a rigorous curriculum through advanced classes and professional development for the teacher. This person will support the middle school teachers by working collaboratively with them through providing resources, team teaching, and/or facilitating model lessons. The specialist will work collaboratively to design curricular units that are aligned with, but also extend and enrich, the NCSCOS.

**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:** Rationale: Susan Winebrenner's research shows that AIG students work best with their intellectual peers. Because of this, it is important that specialists, teachers, and administrators use flexible grouping practices to ensure the individual's needs are met.

- Gifted students are recommended to be grouped in homerooms based on their identification. AIG identification also drives the grouping for acceleration, pull out and inclusion classes.

- Specialist use data to provide flexible grouping and instruction based on grade-levels, pre and post assessments, benchmark data, informal observations, teacher collaboration.

- Specialists will monitor a variety of existing local and statewide assessment data to determine the effectiveness of current grouping practices.

- Specialists will provide professional development for administrators and teachers (including regular education and AIG Specialists) and counselors to understand the following:
  - Importance of data analysis
  - Various multi-age and multi-grade grouping practices will allow for more growth intellectually and socially of gifted students.
  - Share instructional strategies that are effective with groups of advanced learners

- Consider the growth of all students during collaborative planning conversations with teachers, instructional support staff (including AIG Specialists) and administrators.

- Group students flexibly based on a variety of factors, such as readiness, interest, talent, and learner profile.

Middle school students are grouped by learning need in their enrichment/remediation groups that occur during Advisory time.

**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:** Rationale: Partnerships are established when the teachers, administrators, and support staff are knowledgeable about all the components of the AIG program. The partnership can better support AIG students and their parents.

- Hickory City Schools will integrate program standards, legislation and regulations around gifted programs into locally offered PD, administrative meetings, and site team meetings.

- A copy of the AIG plan can be found in each school, on the Hickory City Schools Website, and at the administration building.
- AIG specialists will communicate the practices and services of AIG program to all personnel.

- Specialists will participate in PLCs to share information regarding the AIG plan as well as instructional strategies. They will also discuss instructional services and programs for gifted learners during grade level, team, and on-site staff meetings. AIG specialists will offer differentiated activities for classroom teachers to use with AIG students.

- Specialists will meet with regular education teachers about students on the "watch and wait" list to discuss academic and social/emotional growth.

- Specialists will develop and use a common powerpoint (or other presentation) when sharing about AIG programs and services within the school district.

- The AIG team will use the district and school websites to disseminate information (newsletters, contests, summer enrichment opportunities, TIP program) about the local AIG program.

- The middle school AIG specialist will post strategies on schools' websites, speak at PLC's, grade level, and content meetings.

- Extensions have been added into pacing guides to help teachers create and plan lessons that engaged them in higher order thinking skills. The specialists also work with teachers to deliver model lessons.

- The Elementary and Middle School AIG programs will have a separate website to keep parents up-to-date of upcoming events as well as strategies to work with their students.

**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:** Rationale: Cooperation and communication among teachers, specialists, counselors, and administration at key transition points are critical for effective and consistent delivery of AIG services.

- Specialists will provide yearly notification of services to teachers and schools. Invite "receiving" teachers to "feeder" grade levels/schools to review program and student goals and services at next level.

- Specialists will provide transition visits from feeder schools to the middle school and high school level where changes in services are discussed.

- Specialists will offer quarterly site team meetings to discuss services within the school.

- At transition points, specialists will develop a system of sharing student data regarding student eligibility, screening and identification, transitions and special concerns between schools to ensure effective continuation of services.
-Specialists will conduct transition meetings between grade spans to develop student DEP’s. School counselors, administrators, AIG Specialists, and regular education teachers will be included.

-Specialists and teachers will track student data. Data walls will be posted and identified students will be marked on the wall. These data walls will track Common Formative Assessment data, EOG scores, benchmark data, and classroom grades. A separate data log will be kept to track longitudinal data that consists of EVAAS predictor scores, historical EOG scores, and grades.

-A meeting will be held with teachers to discuss the DEP.

**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:** Rationale: Often, it is assumed that gifted students never have any issues; however, this is often not the case. Being gifted causes its own set of social and emotional issues. Counselors, teachers, and specialists must work together to ensure that all gifted students understand their talents as well as how to cope with these social and emotional issues so that they can be successful.

-Specialists plan to work with counselors to develop clear programming options to support the social and emotional needs of gifted learners. Specialists will attend counselors meetings to remind them of the social and emotional needs of gifted learners.

-Hickory City Schools will establish an AIG support team within the system/school. Establish DEP meetings at the school level, inviting key stakeholders (teachers, counselors, elective area teachers, instructional support staff, and administrators) to focus on the holistic needs of gifted learners.

-The AIG team will utilize existing district level meetings with other departments to problem solve issues around supporting the holistic development of gifted learners. These departments might include the Curriculum & Instruction team, Student Services Team, or Exceptional Children’s Department.

-The AIG team will also utilize existing collaborative team structures, like PLCs, to share tools and resources that support the social/emotional development of AIG students, with teachers and other staff. Based on the discussions in the meetings Specialists will pass on needs to counselors and work with counselors to help meet me the social and emotional needs of gifted students.

**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:** Rationale: Not all AIG students have the same needs. Because all of the
students are different, Hickory City Schools will implement an array of opportunities to meet the needs of the gifted student individually.
For students that show mastery of their current level acceleration is an available option. Students can be accelerated through a single subject or through an entire grade level. The following guidelines have been created around which students are eligible for this opportunity:

Early Kindergarten Admission Criteria:
To be considered for early entry to Kindergarten, the following criteria must be met:
1. Aptitude Test Scores or Achievement Test Scores of 98th percentile
2. Student work showing outstanding ability in a subject.
3. Two letters of recommendation documenting the child’s physical and social maturity. A child care worker, teacher, pediatrician or another professional with direct knowledge of the child.
-If these criteria are met, school administrators will request an interview with the child and parent, using additional school data. The principal decision is final.
-Testing must be completed by a licensed psychologist and is the financial responsibility of the parent.

K-2 Talent Development Criteria (pullout services & enrichment):
• mClass results must be 2 grade levels above
• Results must be above grade level on state and local K-2 assessments

K-2 Grade Acceleration Criteria:
• 98% on Standardized Achievement Test
• Teacher Recommendation
• AIG Specialist Support
• Principal Recommendation
• Parent/Guardian Support

3rd Grade Talent & Development Criteria:
• mClass results are 2 letters above grade-level expectations
• Level 5 on BOG
• Must have a Good-Cause exemption
• Other Guiding Data: state and local assessments, teacher recommendations

3-6 Grade Acceleration Criteria:
• Must meet the following:
  1. 98% or above on EOG
  2. 98% or above on a nationally normed aptitude test
3. 98% on BOG
   4. AIG Specialist Observation
   5. Principal recommendation
   6. Parent support

Content Acceleration for Middle Grades Subjects
- Will include a review of:
  1. Current and previous EOG scores (96th percentile or higher)
  2. EVAAS prediction data
  3. Classroom performance
  4. Local testing data
  5. Assessment of next grade-level standards
  6. Principal review

-High school students are able to show knowledge of a course by Credit by Demonstrated mastery.

-Middle school students that are accelerating to Math 1 as a 7th grader will take Math 2 as an 8th grader through NCVPS.

-Students that can be accelerated through certain classroom content or do not want to participate in subject level acceleration can use resources such as Edgenuity to have acceleration within the regular or advanced classroom.

-AIG Specialists will provide resources and support for administrators, teachers, and families to better understand acceleration options and make informed acceleration/placement decisions.

-Specialists will use an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) based on student needs to support acceleration

**Practice H**
Implement intentional strategies to broaden access to advanced learning opportunities for underrepresented 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:** Rationale: It is necessary for the AIG Department to provide programs, services, and classroom support to develop and discover the potential in all students. At times there may be barriers, such as language, economic situations, and other exceptionalities, that keep gifted students from demonstrating academic or intellectual abilities.

-Hickory City Schools and AIG Specialists will provide PD on recognizing and providing services that respond to the traditionally underrepresented populations.

-AIG Specialist will work with K-3 teachers to identify students that may need enrichment with these
traits. These students can be noted for identification once in 4th grade.

- AIG Team will communicate service options to English Language Learners, Exceptional Children's teachers, Title 1 and other teachers who have a specialized student focus and partner with these teachers for effective programming and efforts.

- AIG Specialists will work with ESL students to build relationships with them and help teachers identify any gifted traits within these students.

- AIG team will create opportunities for teachers and students of underrepresented populations to discuss service options outside of traditional services. This population of students may show potential that needs enriching and nurturing beyond the classroom instruction.

- AIG team will use the DEP and IDEP to designate student service needs when warranted.

- HCS will implement a change in placement criteria. This will help with recognizing underrepresented AIG population. The Otis-Lennon will be used to assess this group of students.

- AIG Specialists will consider mentorships, job shadowing, curriculum compacting for interest based exploration, and other services to respond to the needs of the students.

- AIG Team will focus on early K-3 programs to cultivate the potential of and address the needs of underrepresented populations.

**Practice 1**
Encourages extra-curricular programs and events that enhance and further develop the needs and interests of AIG students.

**District Response:** Rationale: AIG students have needs and interests that must be addressed outside the classroom setting.

AIG Specialists will incorporate descriptions, timelines, and other pertinent information on webpages, newsletters at all levels. We will nurture academic and intellectual activities that are of interest or need to enhance the services for AIG students.

- The district will provide service projects and/or clubs across all grade spans.

- Specialists and regular classroom teachers will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate some of the interests explored during the school year.

Hickory City Schools provides a wide-variety of extracurricular activities such as:
- Elementary - Battle of the Books, Science Olympiad, STEM, Jr. Beta Club, Chorus, Drama, Running Club,
  Maker Girls, Girls and Boys Club, GEMS.
• Middle School- Mathcounts, Duke TIP, Battle of the Books, STEM club,, Art Competitions, Chorus, Band and Orchestra Competitions, Spelling Bee, Writing Competitions and many sports opportunities.

• High School- Beta Club, Interact Club, Key Club, National Honors Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Art Club, DECA, English National Honors Society, ETA Sigma, Fly Fishing Club, French Club, Juniorettes, Latin Club, Literary Club, Quill Writing Club, Quiz Bowl, Science National Honors Society, Spanish Club, Student Council, and Mu Alpha Theta and many sports opportunities.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** Hickory Public Schools is working toward providing more technology access for strategies and information to our parents on school websites.

Hickory Public Schools will continue to work at communicating with all stakeholders about gifted student needs, classes and opportunities.

**Sources of Evidence:** -Hickory Public Schools will be updating teacher and district websites.
-Feedback from stakeholders meeting, elementary parent surveys and middle/high School student interviews will guide future aspects/discussions within the AIG program.
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: Rationale: Based on NC Article 9B, gifted students require differentiated services and learning opportunities based on their intellectual and academic abilities. Based on survey data, research, and focus group conversations, Hickory City Schools recognizes the need to provide a range of services allowing for individual challenge that ensures growth.

- HCS will provide pull-out, push-in, and online opportunities and resources for AIG students in grades 4 and 5, according to criteria.

- Specialists will meet often with classroom teachers through professional learning communities (PLCs) to collaborate on services.

- In grades 4 through 8, students of similar identification can be clustered together for AIG services. This will allow principals, if practicable, at each school to address current legislation regarding advance courses in mathematics.

- HCS will provide coaching support and instructional resources for classroom teachers to adapt the NCSCOS for AIG students.

- AIG specialists and classroom teachers will meet to review the DEP’s (Differentiated Education Plan) for gifted students.

- HCS will provide opportunities for co-teaching with the AIG Specialist and classroom teachers. District-wide staff development will be provided for teachers to meet the needs of gifted learners.

Elementary:
- Students are exposed to above-grade-level math activities in concepts beyond the regular classroom. Students may participate in Perennial Math competitions, Math Olympiad, and math quiz bowls during pull-out sessions, math talks, math seminars and online math websites to continually expand their mathematical thinking.

- Students are involved with Product Based Learning (PBL) opportunities in the regular classroom as well as during time with the specialist.

- Students are exposed to a variety of classic, age-appropriate literature to study in-depth and create differentiated products. Students are exposed to public speaking, paideia seminars, high-level
questioning, critical thinking, higher-level vocabulary, execution of verbal skills and creative problem-solving.

-Gifted students use Google Classroom to communicate with classmates and AIG specialist. This format provides a way for assignments, comments, and reminders to be shared among students and teachers. Elementary students have the opportunity to participate in Battle of the Books, Science Olympiad, Robotics, Beta club, Spelling Bees, Chorus, Boys and Girls Club, Running Club, Dance Teams, Safety Patrol, Student Council, Fire and Safety Competition, Duke TIP, GEMS (girls engaged in math and science) and Junior Beta Club.

Middle School:
-HCS offer advanced classes (designed to be more rigorous and in-depth than regular classroom) in ELA and Math as one means of adapting the NCSCOS.

-In 8th grade, HCS offers an advanced Math class as well as Math 1 as an option for acceleration. In the advanced classes as well as the regular classroom, the NCSCOS can be enriched through the use of differentiation strategies, seminars, problem-based learning, GRASPS assessments, tic-tac-toe boards, menus, Math Talks, learning contracts, curriculum compacting, simulations, tiered assignments, philosophers chairs, Problem Based Learning, word stems, Breakout EDU activities, and high levels of questioning. Students also participate in makerspace activities, STEM projects, and coding.

-Middle school has an enrichment that provides activities such as a BreakoutEDU activities, Seminar, competition groups, Genius Hour and STEM projects. Content acceleration and the use of online programs for acceleration will be offered will also be offered for select gifted students.

-Students also have the opportunity to participate in Mathcounts, Duke TIP, Battle of the Books, STEM club, Running Club, Art Competitions, Band and Orchestra Competitions, Junior Beta Club, Chorus Competitions, and Writing Competitions.

High School:
-The NCSCOS in high school is enriched through course options and offerings such as Advanced Placement Courses, classes through Catawba Valley Community College, Dual Enrollment through Lenoir-Rhyne University, honors class options, and online courses.

-Teachers of honors classes differentiate the curriculum while adhering to the NCSCOS. The differentiation that occurs inhonors courses follows DPI's rubric. AP teachers provide instruction in college level courses.

-High school students have the option to attend Hickory High School or apply to attend Hickory Career Arts Magnet School in HCS. Students can also apply to Catawba County’s Challenger Early College, Newton Conover’s Discovery High School, or North Carolina School of Science and Math.
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: Rationale: All AIG students do not learn at the same rate or in the same way. As a result, the curriculum must be enriched, extended, and accelerated to accommodate a wide range of ability levels. After analyzing student data across the district, specific service criteria is necessary to appropriately meet the needs of all gifted students.

-HCS will consider a variety of strategies for providing rigor, depth, complexity, sophistication, and abstractness for differentiating in the AIG and regular classroom.

-Administrators and teachers will use cluster grouping according to the students' data (ie.. benchmarks, Schoolnet, EVAAS, achievement, aptitude scores)

-Specialists and teachers will utilize student interest to offer additional courses, enrichment activities, and/or independent projects. (ie...Science Olympiad, Math Olympiad, Duke Tip, Perennial Math, Battle of the Books, Robotics, Beta club, Student Council, Math Counts, STEAM club, and SGA). Specialists and classroom teachers are able to extend, enrich and accelerate the NCSCOS and provide additional curricular resources to better meet students' needs.

-Each elementary school has a licensed AIG teacher to provide student services and assist classroom teacher with differentiation in the regular classroom. Consideration is given to the modification of content, process, products, and learning environment as they relate to differentiated gifted instruction. Specific instructional strategies that will be utilized include: differentiated lessons or units, individual study/contracts, curriculum compacting, learning center activities, seminars, simulations, research and multimedia projects, tiered assignments, and choice boards.

-Each middle school has a licensed AIG Specialist to facilitate a rigorous curriculum through advanced classes and professional development for the teacher. This person will support the middle school teachers by working collaboratively with them through providing resources, team teaching, and/or facilitating model lessons. The specialist will work collaboratively to design curricular units that are aligned with, but also extend and enrich, the NCSOS.

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

District Response: Rationale: Hickory City Schools should acquire research-based strategies and resources that are created for a gifted students' learning needs. These materials help to strengthen teacher's lesson content and exposure to a variety of materials.

Suggested list of resources:
- Google Classroom
- Duke Tip Digest
- NCDPI: Standards of Learning
- "How to Teach Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom" by Susan Winebrenner
- DPI developed units in SchoolNet.
- Junior Great Books
- William and Mary Center of Gifted Education
- Superstars
- Words Their Way
- Jacob's Ladder

- Coordinator and/or specialists will attend local and regional AIG round table meetings, NCAGT, and NAGC when resources allow to gather materials and new research-based resources to support gifted programming.

- AIG Specialists will provide regular classroom teachers with resources about differentiated lessons. They will also assist them in using other published resources, such as School Net to find rigorous lessons and materials.

- HCS will provide teachers and specialists with AIG materials in the professional library. Provide newsletters to staff on current AIG topics, trends and issues.

**Practice D**

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

**District Response:** Rationale: In order to prepare students for top tier colleges and universities, teachers and specialists must provide 21st century learning opportunities at each student's readiness level. Hickory City Schools must ensure teachers and specialists are providing students the opportunity to reach their full academic potential. The goal of HCS is to make sure that all individuals are exposed to educational opportunities that are available.

- HCS will support the development of global awareness, civic and economic literacy, health awareness, critical thinking and problem solving. Development of these skills will take place through communication, collaboration, applied information, media literacy, seminars, and opportunities to apply learning in real life contexts through problem-based learning.

- The middle schools will provide curriculum acceleration through advanced classes and online programs.

- The AIG team will analyze and evaluate current courses offered at the middle and high school level to ensure they provide rigor related to innovative, career, and technological skills. Develop Advanced Placement to ensure academic success and opportunities with other advanced courses and programs. Promote future ready skills in the classroom through partnerships with community organizations, by using the following: real world scenarios, community service projects, mentoring, job shadowing, and/or apprenticeships with local businesses.
- AIG Specialists, classroom teachers, and counselors will share opportunities for enrichment with gifted students as well as students on the wait list such as: School of Science and Math, Governor’s School, North Carolina Virtual Public High School (NCVPHS), Summer camps, scholarships, etc.

- Develop Advanced Placement to ensure academic success and opportunities with other advanced courses and programs. Promote future ready skills in the classroom through partnerships with community organizations, by using the following: real world scenarios, community service projects, mentoring, job shadowing, and/or apprenticeships with local businesses.

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

**District Response:** Rationale: Data must be used to design lessons to make sure students are appropriately challenged. Pre and post-test data should be used so that students are advanced deeper into concepts or accelerated through curriculum when they have reached mastery of the concept.

- The AIG team and classroom teachers will use research-based tools and/or assessments such as local benchmarks, formative and informal assessments, EVAAS data, pre-and post-tests on specific subjects.

- AIG Specialists will use online programs to enhance student learning opportunities.

- The AIG team will use ongoing assessments and district established criteria to analyze student data for readiness and to identify for specific services.

- The middle school AIG Specialist and classroom teachers will serve gifted students through advanced classes and cluster groupings.

- During Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Administration, Classroom teachers, and the AIG Specialist will analyze data to direct student instruction in elementary and middle school. This group will use research-based tools and/or assessments such as local benchmarks, formative and informal assessments, EVAAS data, common assessments, pre-and post-tests on specific subjects to drive instruction and provide differentiation.

- AIG Specialists will analyze data to develop content modification for the DEP, direct student instruction, as well as guide placement, and school-wide Professional Development. In middle school, the data will guide the students’ remediation/enrichment group as well as class placement. This data assists specialists and teachers in determining what skills need to be strengthened.

**Practice F**
Addresses the social and emotional needs of AIG students through affective curricular and instructional practices.
District Response: Rationale: AIG students have a unique set of needs that require addressing through specific behavioral strategies and interventions.

-The AIG team will establish strong connections with other departments (ie...counseling department or student services department) to become more aware of the social and emotional needs of AIG students and develop strategies to better meet those needs.

-The AIG specialists will collaborate with the regular classroom teachers to align units with topics that address and are relevant to the social and emotional needs of gifted learners.

-In Elementary schools, the AIG students complete the unit on "What It Means to be Gifted." This leads into many discussions about social and emotional needs of gifted students and how they differ from their classmates.

-Middle School students will be monitored closely by the AIG Specialist, counselors and classroom teachers. Students may participate in a survey about underachievement, a multidimensional perfectionism questionnaire, and social coping questionnaire to help the specialist, teacher, counselor, and student better understand their social and emotional gifted needs.

-The specialist may provide individualized support to these students through bibliotherapy, use of the Individualized Differentiated Education Plan, and a parent newsletter that will provide strategies for coping with their giftedness. The specialist will post resources that address social/emotional needs and resources on the school website.

-AIG Specialist will discuss social and emotional needs of gifted students during individual DEP meetings with parents. Specific goals can be written to share those needs.

-The AIG team will consider special grouping at targeted grades or abilities to promote social and emotional well-being in gifted students.

-HCS will provide a lending library for teachers with curriculum materials that highlight best practices for meeting the social and emotional needs of gifted students.

-Specialists will provide newsletters and handouts to staff as well as parents on the social and emotional needs of gifted students. This information will also be included on the district website.

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

District Response: Rationale: Research proves that nurturing is best practiced in grades K-3, as well as a strong means of reaching underrepresented populations. Some students in primary grades in Hickory City Schools are currently working above grade level and are in need of an enriched curriculum or content acceleration.
The AIG team will develop criteria for talent development to recognize students of high-potential in grades K-3.

The talent development will address the needs of students through fostering creativity, curiosity, critical thinking and access to advanced content.

A structure will be developed for observing all primary students prior to formal identification process into place.

There will be collaboration between AIG Specialists and classroom teachers to provide resources and support.

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

**District Response:** Rationale: After analyzing surveys, research, and communications along with best practices, communication between all stakeholders, it is essential that classroom teachers and AIG specialists provide challenging and appropriate resources for gifted students.

- AIG Specialists will share research-based strategies as well current trends and issues involving gifted education.

- AIG Specialists will attend PLCs with regular education teachers to assist in the planning of differentiated lessons and units.

- AIG Specialists will maintain constant communication and collaboration among personnel throughout the school year to help meet the needs of advanced learners.

- Provide professional development opportunities for regular education teachers.

- Specialists will meet with classroom teachers at the beginning and end of the year to discuss their Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) which show modifications provided by 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:** Rationale: In an effort to hold all parties accountable for the learning needs of gifted students, the DEP or IDEP is a means of communication and documentation of the individual's learning needs.
- Every academically gifted student identified will have a DEP that documents the student's learning environment and content modifications. There will be an annual review of the DEP with parents and teachers, as well as throughout the school year as needed.

- The intellectually gifted student will receive an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP). It will also be reviewed with classroom teachers throughout the year.

- Parents/Guardians, teachers, and specialists will keep a copy of the DEP/IDEP.

- AIG Specialists may share lesson plans with administrators to ensure appropriate service delivery based on students' DEPs.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** Hickory Public Schools updated clubs and participating opportunities for gifted students within our plan. Hickory City Schools has updated technology and academic offerings for student enrichment opportunities within the classroom and other courses.

**Sources of Evidence:** HPS student and parent handbook
Dialogue among counselors, students and teachers for academic classes
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: Hickory City Schools employs three AIG specialists that serve the district who collaborate with district level personnel as part of the AIG team. The team will meet monthly to develop an action plan to implement and monitor the AIG plan.

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

District Response: Rationale: Gifted students need to be served by trained staff to ensure proper differentiation and services.

- AIG Specialists will provide services and resources that address the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of AIG students.

- Specialists' time will be allotted for each school based on the number of current identified AIG students.

- AIG Specialist will indirectly support students by providing services and resources to families and other school / district instructional staff.

- HCS will provide opportunities for AIG Specialists to develop leadership capacity and systematically improve programming efforts.

- AIG Specialist will review current professional articles and books to engage with other AIG specialists and instructional staff to continue learning about gifted learners.

- Specialists will collaborate with counselors at all levels to discuss and address the social and emotional needs of the gifted learner.
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: Rationale: Because the district has a small percentage of AIG certified teachers, it is necessary to provide updated gifted professional development to all stakeholders. After analyzing test data and surveys, individual growth is not occurring with our gifted students. The challenge of the AIG team is to ensure students are well prepared for the rigor and challenge of top-tier colleges and universities. In order to successfully meet this challenge, it is critical to have teachers trained in how to teach this level of rigor necessary.

- AIG Specialists will participate actively in professional development opportunities, including statewide initiatives to support gifted programs and advanced learners.

- AIG Specialist will provide targeted professional development modules, in a variety of formats for each of the various stakeholder groups, to help all personnel understand the needs of gifted learners and the local AIG program. This training may be adapted to the specific role of the stakeholder. These modules may include:
  - use of Booster Shots from DPI
  - annual professional development sessions provided by AIG specialists to a district wide audience through the HPS Curriculum Conference
  - trainings through online platforms such as Canvas or Google Classroom
  - trainings/seminars provided by professional AIG consultants
  - training / mini-PD sessions during PLC's or individual sessions based on teacher request

- AIG Professional Development sessions will occur throughout the year in PLC's, School Faculty Meeting, workdays, after school, summer sessions and off-campus locations (such as NCCAT).

- HCS will collaborate with accountability to provide teachers with Continuing Education Credits and ensure best practices in the classrooms with gifted students across the district.

- HCS will ensure direct AIG program services of identified AIG students are provided by AIG state licensed staff.

- Resources and tools to support the needs of AIG students will be provided

- HCS will utilize AIG Specialists to lead professional development sessions.

- HCS will utilize AIG/Curriculum funds to provide professional development from experts in the field to receive gifted PD.

- HCS will work towards the goal of teachers, counselors, and administrators of gifted students to work towards local and state AIG licensure or participate in the AIG Hickory City Schools PD within the next three years.
Hickory City Schools will provide the opportunity to receive regional licensure to teachers interested in attending PD through NWRESA with the given allotment for elementary and middle/high school teachers.

HCS will partner with other districts such as Catawba County and Newton-Conover to offer staff development in AIG.

AIG Director and specialists will analyze the district's AIG state allocations to look for creative ways to fund the gifted program.

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: Rationale: Because our district has a very small percentage of AIG certified teachers, we will work to ensure general education teachers are adequately trained to work with gifted students.

Research shows that AIG students benefit from being grouped with other AIG students for optimal growth to occur.

Administrators will schedule AIG students with general education teachers who have appropriate AIG credentials.

AIG specialist will partner with each school-based administrator to ensure effective AIG student placement.

Students can be clustered with other AIG students. These students will be in a class with AIG locally certified gifted education teachers or with those who have met the requirements of the AIG plan.

AIG Specialist will use a system of placement criteria to monitor regular classroom placement of AIG students.

It is HCS's expectation for teachers, counselors, and administrators of advanced learners to work towards state AIG licensure or participate in the Hickory City Schools AIG PD within the next three years.

Practice E
Aligns professional development opportunities with local AIG program goals, other district initiatives, and best practices in gifted education.
**District Response:** Rationale: Hickory City schools is implementing different district initiatives; therefore, the district must align the PD efforts with these initiatives.

- Teachers, specialists, and instructional support staff will work collaboratively to integrate best practices for gifted learners across PD settings and topics.

- AIG staff will research local certification programs (i.e. NWRESA) that cover a variety of topics such as Characteristics of Gifted Learners, Methods and Models for Gifted Instruction and social and emotional needs of gifted learners – using current research and models.

- AIG Specialist will consider ways to share resources when designing and delivering PD which will include finding ways to collaborate with neighboring school districts, partnering across a region, and/or utilize "Booster Shots" and other resources available NCDPI.

- AIG Specialist will promote opportunities for PD outside of the district to support best practices and state/national standards.

**Practice F**

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

**District Response:** Rationale: In order to provide adequate opportunities for collaboration, AIG specialists need a flexible schedule to be able to plan with other specialists and classroom teachers across the district so that they meet the needs of AIG students.

- Specialists will collaborate with regular classroom teachers during PLC's as well as planning times to give individualized assistance to teachers to support gifted learners.

- Specialists will use technology to share new ideas and review appropriate resources and materials.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** Hickory City Schools host an annual half-day curriculum conference. Gifted Specialist provide professional development opportunities to increase knowledge about AIG students and services.

Our local NWRESA will offer regional AIG certification opportunities.

**Sources of Evidence:** Curriculum Conference already schedule for the following school year via HPS email.

Surveyed teachers on interest for attending regional meetings to obtain AIG certification.
Attendance at PLCS and faculty meetings to discuss gifted services and needs.
**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:** Rationale: Partnering with the community opens doors for future opportunities with intentional and meaningful support to meet the academic, intellectual, and emotional needs of our AIG students.

- AIG stakeholder committee is comprised of school administrators, school counselors, teachers, parents, community leaders and AIG specialists. This team meets to discuss information regarding decisions for the

- AIG program. They analyze survey data at all levels to look for strengths and weaknesses across the district.

- Hickory City Schools will communicate through means including but not limited to: district and teacher websites, social media, School Messenger district telephone system, emails, parent meetings, DEP meetings, open houses, report cards, weekly student folders, parent/teacher conferences, local newspaper articles, student performances, and award ceremonies

- Hickory City Schools will continue to have a partnership with Lenoir-Rhyne University and other local colleges. This will include offering summer camps and competitions for gifted learners, provide staff for local events held within the district, and field trips to the colleges.

- Students have the opportunity to attend or participate in the NC School of Science and Math, Governor’s School, and dual enrollment at various colleges, Lenoir Rhyne Scholars Academy, and Career and College Promise.

- HCS will continue to have a partnership with the Science Center and other local businesses that can support programming options and services for gifted learners.

- HCS will support family involvement with community events and enrichment activities to increase partnerships with families and engage AIG students.

- AIG team will continue to share information on the district AIG website with parents and staff about community events and programs that are designed for gifted children.
**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:** Rationale: It is our goal to keep everyone informed of the AIG program, plan, and policies to ensure accountability occurs at all levels. It is imperative that Hickory City Schools advocates for our AIG population of students.

- AIG specialists will ensure that families and district employees are aware of the location of the district AIG plan; it will be available on district website as well as at each school and the administrative building.

- AIG specialists will meet once a year with 4th-grade parents to inform them about AIG programming, placement, and policies.

- Specialists will keep parents, staff, students, and stakeholders informed via emails, teacher websites, social media, and the district's AIG website.

- The district uses a phone system to deliver messages to parents and staff to share information and upcoming events.

- Hickory City Schools will inform stakeholders through teacher webpages and district AIG website which outlines information regarding the plan and policies related to gifted students.

- Hickory City Schools will utilize Hickory Daily Record as well as district website, Twitter feed, and individual school's Facebook pages to "share the good news" about student accomplishments to improve perception and community relations.

- Specialists will meet with school personnel to provide information on the AIG program and referral process.

- AIG specialists will present AIG information to the Board of Education and at Principals' meetings when needed.

- Specialists will host a parent meeting at the beginning of the school year to share information about the AIG program and expectations for the school year. They will also meet with parents about specific content modifications that are shown on the Differentiated Education Plan and explain how their child will be enriched during the school year. At key points of transition, there will be transition meetings to help prepare students and parents for expectations and program goals in middle and high school.

- During High School registration, Hickory High, HCAM, Challenger High School, and Discovery High school provide a parent night and open house to learn about the school and educational styles.

- NC School of Science and Math will visit middle schools annually to provide information about onsite and online opportunities.
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: Rationale: Hickory City Schools has an AIG Advisory Board that is diverse in cultures and ethnically balanced. Because the board is made up of school administrators, instructional and support staff, teachers, counselors, parents and community members, it provides us with a wide variety of experience levels across the district. The advisory board is there to analyze survey data, review program standards and provide support and feedback to the AIG program for the district.

-AIG team will meet and keep the advisory board informed through emails to stakeholders who are representative of the district's populations. This is a diverse group of community members, AIG parents and families, AIG teachers, administrators, and instructional support specialists.

-AIG team will provide the a advisory board with updates from DPI, share feedback received on the plan, as well as provide them with the documentation of how progress is coming on meeting the goals of the plan. The Advisory board will provide feedback and guidance as the best way to move forward with these goals. The AIG team will share how the new plan will be implemented into the schools.

-AIG team will meet with the advisory board as needed so that the advisory board can assist with developing the local AIG program and plan, monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the AIG program and plan, and discuss AIG programming for the district. The Advisory Board will work collaboratively with the school district to monitor the AIG program.

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: Rationale: It is our goal to keep all stakeholders updated on AIG policies and the AIG program. Hickory City Schools wants to be able to reach out to all families by providing information in various languages.

-Specialists will inform parents, staff and students of community opportunities through emails, letters, and teacher and district websites.

-Information will be translated into students'/families' native language.
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:** Rationale: It is our goal to expose gifted students to all future opportunities, locally and nationally, that would allow students to develop their gifts through academics and the arts.

- AIG Specialists will continue our partnership with local colleges, universities, and local businesses. This could include but not limited to field trips, camps, guest speakers, intern/mentorships, service learning, etc.

- Specialists will contact these resources for support during district activities. AIG team will reach out to other local business to partner with the gifted program for activities and service projects.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** In the fall, Hickory City Schools will have a parent meeting with Dr. Ric Courtright from Duke TIP to discuss social and emotional needs in gifted students.

Hickory City Schools has partnerships with Lenoir-Rhyne University to offer the HS Scholars program.
HCS has partnered with Catawba Valley Community College to offer college classes to our HS students through dual enrollment.

HCS will update gifted information on school and district websites for parents and school faculty.

Gifted specialist will continue to attend PLC’s and faculty meetings to update staff on AIG changes.

Partnership will the School of Math and Science and NC Virtual Public Schools.

**Sources of Evidence:** Studnet/Parent Handbook
School & Teacher Webpages
Parent Transition meetings between elementary to Middle, Middle to High.
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: Rationale: To ensure that Hickory City Schools is educating AIG learners, a local plan will be developed that follows state legislation.

-Hickory City Schools has and will continue to develop a written AIG plan describing the AIG program in accordance with state legislation.

-HCS will follow the guidelines set forth by state legislation, Article 9B, as well as best practices in gifted education.

-HCS plan will be submitted to the Local Board of Education in May of 2019 and once approved will be submitted to the Department of Public Instruction by July 15, 2019.

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: Rationale: Hickory City Schools will monitor the implementation of the AIG Plan to ensure fidelity of the program.

-Hickory City Schools will continue to follow the program accountability guidelines set forth by the state legislation, Department of Public Instruction, and the local School Board policies.

-The EC/AIG Director, building administrators, and AIG Specialists will monitor the implementation of the AIG plan to evaluate the progress and success of the program practices

-Building and central office staff will conduct classroom walkthroughs and observations to ensure that differentiated, challenging, and rigorous instruction is taking place.

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:** Rationale: Hickory City Schools will utilize state funding appropriately to support the local AIG program according to state directives.

-Specialists and district directors will have input on managing the state allotment for AIG funding in our district to ensure that funds are appropriately expended.

-AIG team will seek opportunities for grants and additional funding streams to enhance programming.

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

**District Response:** Rationale: Data for AIG students will be analyzed for students' growth and achievement to ensure the validity of the AIG program.

Hickory City Schools:
-Use data to evaluate student growth and performance to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged.

-Analyze and share information to stakeholders as it relates to student performance and our progress toward graduation.

-Review ACT information as it relates to students enrolled in Math 1 and Math 2.

**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:** Rationale: Hickory City Schools will purchase testing materials to ensure that underrepresented populations are receiving tests that showcase their abilities.

-AIG Specialists will use nationally normed aptitude and achievement tests, local assessment and classroom performance data.

-Specialists will work with the ESL teachers to identify English Language Learners.
-Specialists will work with special education teachers to identify students who may have dual exceptionalities and offer accommodations to ensure them successful learning experiences.

-The AIG team will offer accelerated services such as grade and/or content acceleration, AP Coursework, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, etc. for highly gifted students.

-AIG specialists will encourage students to participate in extra-curricular opportunities that support academic excellence such as Battle of the Books, Math Counts, Governor’s School, Science Olympiad, Talent Identification Program (TIP), etc.

-AIG Specialists will work with ESL students to build relationships with them and help teachers identify any gifted traits within these students.

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

**District Response:** Rationale: In order to serve AIG students appropriately, Hickory City Schools must employ personnel who have had formal training in gifted education.

- In order to ensure we have appropriately licensed teachers serving AIG students, Hickory City Schools' Personnel Department along with the Curriculum and Instruction Department maintains documentation for personnel that work with AIG students.

**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:** Rationale: Hickory City Schools welcomes all feedback for the use of recommendations and commendations for the effectiveness of the local AIG program.

Hickory City Schools meets with AIG stakeholders annually. The purpose of this group is to solicit feedback and discuss issues as they relate to gifted education. This group includes the following people:

- EC/AIG director
- AIG Specialists-- elementary and middle
- Teachers
- Principals
- Parents/Guardians
- Community Member

-Hickory City School surveys students, teachers, and parents to provide the opportunity to share feedback about the program.
- Hickory City Schools hosts district wide meetings for AIG parents to learn about gifted traits, trends in gifted education across the state, and the local AIG program.

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

**District Response:** Rationale: The AIG plan is a "living, breathing" document that should be reviewed using various types of data to evaluate the comprehensive program.

-Hickory City Schools will use data to review and revise the local AIG program and Plan. This data can include:

- Annual parent/teacher/student surveys
- Annual stakeholder meetings
- Disaggregated EOG and EOC scores
- EVAAS predictor data
- AP enrollment and scores
- Individual Student Records

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

**District Response:** Rationale: The AIG department recognizes the need to disseminate program evaluation data to the general public.
The AIG team will share all program evaluation data with the following groups:
Stakeholders:
- Principals
- District Personnel
- School Staff working with AIG students
- Local Board of Education

**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:** Rationale: Hickory City Schools AIG program has policies in place to protect all AIG students as well as a process to communicate these policies with stakeholders. It is necessary
that these processes are followed accurately in order to ensure confidentiality of student records.

-Due process is a guaranteed state and district requirement. Hickory City Schools will abide by state laws and guidelines to ensure that the rights of AIG students are protected through Hickory City Schools' policies and procedures.

-While Hickory City Schools hopes to resolve any concerns or disagreements regarding AIG identification and program services at the local level, clearly established procedures are in place for a parent/student following the event that an agreement cannot be reached.

Due process procedures can be found on the district's AIG website. These procedures are also available in the local schools as a procedural reference document and found below.

Due Process Procedures
-Hickory City Schools continues to seek ways to make our schools quality-learning environments. A collaborative effort between the home and school is necessary to achieve quality-learning environments.

-Hickory City Schools' Gifted Education Program goals, objectives and service options should be clearly communicated to parents. In the event that a parent/guardian disagrees with a decision, it is hoped that the concerns may be resolved at the local level. The following procedures should be followed to resolve any disagreements.

STEP I: Appeal to the School Gifted Site-Based Identification Team and Principal
• The parent/guardian may request a conference with the Gifted Identification Team and the child's school principal together. This request must be in writing as soon as possible but no later than 30 days of the grievance. The parent/guardian must provide the following information in writing: (1) the name of the school system employee or other individual whose decision or action is at issue; (2) the specific decision(s) or action(s) at issue; (3) any Hickory City School board policy, state or federal law, state or federal regulation, or State Board of Education policy or procedure that the parent or guardian or student believes has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated; and (4) the specific resolution desired. The Gifted Identification Team should be given 5 business days to convene all members and the principal together for a conference.

-At this conference, the individual student profile will be examined and discussed. Information used to determine eligibility for service delivery options shall be reviewed with the parent/guardian. If needed the child's teacher may be asked to provide further documentation concerning student characteristics and achievement by the Gifted Identification Team.

-At this conference, all information is shared with parent/guardian and minutes are recorded on minute's forms and signatures are obtained from those involved.

-Following the conference, the Gifted Identification Team and principal will respond together to the parent's concerns in writing within 10 business days of the conference.
STEP II: Appeal to the Superintendent

- The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the School Gifted Identification Team and principal to the superintendent in writing within 5 business days of the decision. Appeals should be addressed as follows:

  Superintendent
  Hickory Public School
  432 Fourth Avenue, SW
  Hickory, NC  28602

  - The superintendent may review the written documents and respond or the superintendent may schedule and hold a conference with the grievant, principal and any other individuals the superintendent determines.

STEP III: Appeal to the Local Board of Education

- If the grievant is dissatisfied with the superintendent's response to his or her grievance but has not alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local board of education policy or procedure, then within five days of receiving the superintendent's response, the grievant may submit to the superintendent a written request for a hearing before the Hickory City School Board of Education.

  - If the full Hickory City School board will be meeting within two weeks of the request for a hearing, the board will decide at that time whether to grant a hearing. Otherwise, the Hickory City School board chairperson will appoint a three-person panel to review the request and determine whether to (1) deny the appeal; (2) review the superintendent's decision on the written record only; or (3) grant a hearing. The panel will report the decision to the Hickory City School board. The Hickory City School board may modify the decision of the panel upon the majority vote at a board meeting.

  - If the Hickory City School board denies the appeal, the decision of the superintendent will be final and the grievant will be notified within five days of the board's decision.

  - If the Hickory City School board decides to grant a hearing, the hearing will be conducted pursuant to policy 2500.

  - The Hickory City School board will provide a final written decision within 30 days of the decision to grant an appeal unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

STEP IV: State-Level Grievance Procedure

- Once all efforts have been exhausted within the system, the parent/guardian may file a petition for
a contested case hearing in accordance with Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the Administrative Procedures Act of North Carolina.

-The issues for review shall be limited to:
  1. Whether the local system improperly failed to determine eligibility for services within its gifted education program.
  2. Whether the local system implemented and provided those services specified within the differentiated gifted education plan.

-Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall serve the final decision. The administrative law judge shall give a copy of written findings and the decision to the parties and to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

_Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:_ Hickory City Schools will incorporate ACT information as it relates to Math I & II in middle school. Hickory City Schools will continue to monitor data as it relates to proficiency with EOC/ACT/SAT and EVAAS data.

_Sources of Evidence:_ NC School Report Card Monitoring of local school data
Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):
Criteria Sheet for Placement.doc (Appendix - Standard 1)
DEP Elementary 2019.docx (Appendix - Standard 1)
DEP K-3 2019.docx (Appendix - Standard 1)
DEP Middle School excursions 6.docx (Appendix - Standard 1)
IDEP 2019 (1).docx (Appendix - Standard 1)
Placement form.docx (Appendix - Standard 1)
teacher referral form (2).docx (Appendix - Standard 1)
Due Process Procedures 2019 (1).docx (Appendix - Standard 6)
Board Approval 001.jpg (Local Board Approval Document)
AIG Plan Revised Board Approved April 16 2020.pdf (Other Forms)