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

Approved by local Board of Education on: 04-JUN-19
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Richmond County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide LEAs to develop, coordinate and implement thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs.

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

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

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

Richmond County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Richmond County Schools believes in AIG "All day- Every day!" Our vision is that, "All students in Richmond County Schools will receive a 21st Century education, empowering them to lead productive lives in a complex and changing world. Our mission is to partner with families and community to produce graduates who are able to create, communicate, collaborate and think critically.

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

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<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:** Richmond County Schools is determined to provide our community and stakeholders with relevant ongoing information about our policies and procedures for AIG identification and placement.

The AIG Specialists, in conjunction with the coordinator, disseminate information so that established processes and procedures are concisely communicated to stakeholders. We realize information needs to be provided to the stakeholders through multiple means such as a website, our phone connect system and brochures. Events spotlighting gifted learners are posted on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Our Public Information Officer consistently provides information to our local newspaper. In addition to these forms of communication, we highlight activities and data about our gifted program at our local Board of Education meetings, which are televised to our community.

AIG Specialists provide parents with an informational packet that articulates the referral and identification processes, as well as the differentiated service options that are implemented in Richmond County Schools. The AIG Specialists are at the open house meetings to provide information to parents about the AIG program; they are also visible in schools on our two parent teacher conference days.

Materials are available in the students’ native language. The ESL Coordinator works closely with the AIG Specialists to ensure that parents are supported in their native language in regards to paperwork and meetings. Specialists use the school ESL translator for parent meetings, as needed.

**Screening Procedure:**

AIG Specialists provide ongoing screening of all RCS students. Students who are screened and demonstrate potential giftedness are placed on the Screening Roster for further evaluation.

Data for all students who are screened and referred is reviewed by the AIG Needs Determination Team. If the data supports the need for testing, parental permission for evaluation is secured and appropriate test/s will be administered.

**Data Includes:**

- Grades K – 2
- Middle of Year and End of Year mCLASS data for Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) assessment and Middle of Year and End of Year math assessment.
Students who score at the following levels or above on mCLASS are screened for identification and receive talent development opportunities with the AIG Specialist.

• Kindergarten: TRC Level I
• 1st Grade: TRC Level M
• 2nd Grade TRC Level Q

Students who score level 5 on our K – 2 math middle or end of year math assessment are screened for identification and receive talent development opportunities with the AIG Specialist.

Grade 3 – AIG Specialists create a "screening pool" of students using the following criteria:
• top 20% of TRC from mClass or
• 76% or higher on the third grade Beginning of the Grade (BOG) test and
• proficiency on the second grade math assessment

In grades 3 – 12, all students scoring a level 5 on the reading, math, or science EOG / EOC will be screened for identification.

Grades 4 – 8 - Richmond County Schools conducts sweep screening for grades 4-8. Potential screening measures include 89% correct or higher on the NC Check-Ins, grades, CORE assessments universal screener, off grade-level testing like the PSAT or SAT, etc.

Grades 9 -12 – Students are screened per teacher/guidance counselor referrals and/or ACT, SAT or PSAT results.

Referral Procedures:
AIG Specialists accept referrals at any time from students or peers, parents, educators, school staff, and community members.

The AIG Specialist will gather information on the student referred and present the referral and data to the Needs Determination Team. The team will examine the data and determine what additional information needs to be collected. Once information is collected and evaluations are complete, the AIG Specialist will meet with the appropriate people to complete the referral and identification procedures.

Communication Procedures:
AIG Specialists inform all teachers and administrators about the screening, referral and identification process through a mandated meeting with an informational PowerPoint presentation during the first nine weeks of each academic year. In addition to this meeting, newsletters and a packet to faculty and staff with AIG information will be disseminated.
Not only do we provide information through a variety of social media avenues for parents, we collaborate consistently with classroom teachers and school administrators. At these PLC meetings we discuss the needs of students and examine ongoing data that is used by the AIG Specialists to determine the needs of our diverse learners.

**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:** Richmond County Schools realizes that students can be academically, intellectually or academically and intellectually gifted. Having students with these varying needs requires a strong understanding of the gifted learner.

Explanation of Gifted Designations:
Students achieving gifted designations show potential in academic endeavors. These students demand rigorous academic experiences that create learning opportunities with complex materials. Students that are Academically Gifted (AG) (high achievement in reading and math) or Academically Gifted in Reading or Math (AR or AM) show potential in academic endeavors. They excel academically and often find the work easy and enjoyable. These students traditionally understand curriculum quickly and need curriculum compacting to ensure they grow as learners. These students may be strong in reading, math or both which is evidenced by the achievement scores on assessments.

Students that are Intellectually Gifted (IG) often have high intelligence scores, but may not achieve in content areas. These students may have difficulty with tasks like organization, time management, cooperative collaboration, etc., that cause them to struggle academically. AIG Specialists often need to advocate for these students with classroom teachers because they are often weak academically.

Students that are Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) have high intelligence based on ability assessment scores and succeed academically with high achievement assessment scores.

This comprehensive profile using multiple criteria allows our AIG identification to align with the potential and strengths of the learner. The evidence collected helps to better align service options with students.

Below is the criteria from the Decisions about Identification form that indicates the appropriate designation:

**Academically Gifted in Reading (AR) Criteria:**
The criteria to receive the designation of AR is to have an 89% or higher on a reading achievement test and 89% or higher on an ability test.

**Academically Gifted in Math (AM) Criteria:**
The criteria to receive the designation of AM is to have an 89% or higher on a math achievement test.
and 89% or higher on an ability test.

Academically Gifted (AG) Criteria:
The criteria to receive the designation of AG is to have an 89% or higher on a reading and a math achievement tests and an ability test.

Intellectually Gifted (IG) Criteria:
The criteria to receive the designation of IG is to have 98 – 99% on a composite score of an ability test.

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) Criteria:
The criteria to receive the designation of AI is to have 98 – 99% on a composite score or partial battery of an achievement test and a composite of 98 – 99% on an ability test.

Identification:
Realizing our gifted population is comprised of diverse needs and varying abilities, the RCS process for identification includes a comprehensive assessment of ability levels, achievement scores, referrals, portfolios and observation from teachers. We exercise flexibility by building on the strengths of our students through sub-test and composite scores across multiple quantitative and qualitative criteria.

Pathway 1 addresses the designation of Intellectually Gifted (IG) and Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI). For the IG designation, the student is expected to score 98-99% on an ability test. To receive the designation of AI, the student is expected to have a composite score of 98 – 99% on ability and achievement assessments.

Another trajectory for identification is Pathway 2. This addresses the designation of Academically Gifted (AG), Academically Gifted in Math (AM) or Academically Gifted in Reading (AR). A student is identified with a composite ability score of 89% or higher and an achievement score of 89% or higher.

Pathway 3 utilizes multiple criteria to identify a student as either AG, AR or AM. Three points are awarded for a test score of 97-99%, two points for a test score of 93-96% and one point for 89-92%. Qualitative data receives one point for each criterion that exhibits exemplar ratings on our rubric. A maximum of two qualitative points are allowed. A total of six points required to be identified for one of these gifted designations.

Qualitative Data

Ability Tests:
AIG Specialists may administer the following ability tests for identification. Composite and/or battery scores will be utilized to provide data on the Decision About Identification form.

The ability tests used are:
Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT/NNAT2)
Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)  
Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)  
Torrance Test of Creativity Thinking (TTCT)

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) – Qualifying scores can be from composite arrangements or individual batteries.

Below are arrangements for possible points:
Composite scores are derived from a combination of the following subtests:
  Verbal, quantitative and nonverbal
  Verbal and quantitative
  Verbal and nonverbal
  Quantitative and nonverbal

Individual subtest scores may also be used to determine student eligibility.
  Verbal
  Quantitative
  Nonverbal

Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) - Qualifying scores can be from composite arrangements or individual batteries

Composite scores are derived from a combination of the following subtests:
  Verbal and nonverbal

Individual battery scores may also be utilized to determine student eligibility.
  Verbal
  Nonverbal

Naglieri (NNAT/NNAT2) – Nonverbal score
  Nonverbal ability score

Torrance Test of Creativity Thinking (TTCT)
  Verbal Score
  Figural Score

Achievement Tests- The following achievement tests may be used for identification. To ensure that one score will not prevent a student from accessing gifted services, partial batteries, total achievement scores or subject composite scores will be utilized as supporting data to make Decisions About Identification.

North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG)/ North Carolina End-of-Course (EOC) / NC Check-Ins
  Beginning of Grade Reading
  Reading
  Math
Science

and

North Carolina Check-Ins
89% correct on two Check-Ins in the same subject area will receive 1 point to be added to the point(s) from EOG.

Stanford 10 Achievement Test
Total Achievement
Partial Battery
Reading Total
Math Total

IOWA Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)
Total Achievement
Reading or ELA Total
Math Total (with or without computation)

Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test (WJNU)
Total Achievement
Reading Total
Math Total

In developing the quantitative part of our identification process, ability test scores are comprised of any combination of composite scores and/or any subtest scores. The achievement test data should reflect a total score in a subject area and/or total achievement.

Qualitative Data
Multiple Evaluation Tools to support qualitative data

Tool 1
Referral documents are provided to parents, teachers, community members, peers or self-nominating students. A maximum of one point will be awarded for referrals on the AIG Decisions about Identification.

Parent Referral
The parent referral options provides an opportunity for a parent to nominate their child for gifted services. The parent referral will include written responses that provide evidence of giftedness citing specific examples, a checklist and a learning style inventory.

Teacher Referral
A teacher may refer a student based on collected evidence that supports gifted behaviors and a need for differentiated services. Teacher referrals may be submitted after the first nine weeks of the academic year. Referrals consist of three components: a checklist, a portfolio that contains samples
of exemplary student work indicating giftedness and a brief summary that justifies and cites specific examples of gifted behaviors.

Peer Referral
A student may refer another student. The referring student will write an essay that specifically explains and provides examples of gifted behaviors and academic qualities that would justify their recommendation for gifted services. A peer referral packet will be provided upon request.

Self-Referral
A student may refer him or herself for gifted services. The self-referral will include a checklist and a written analysis that explains differentiated needs and cites specific examples.

Tool 2
Teacher Observation Profile
A maximum of one point will be awarded on the AIG Decisions about Identification if the profile indicates a strength in 8 of the 12 areas on the Twelve Traits of Giftedness.

AIG Specialist Observation Profile
The AIG Specialist will observe and evaluate a student’s performance on a portfolio activity to assess gifted attributes.

*Twelve Traits of Giftedness Profile from the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented and Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman.

Tool 3
Gifted Rating Scale
The AIG Specialists will utilize a gifted rating scale to determine strengths in areas like ability, application of knowledge, creative thinking and motivation. Student must be evaluated by 3 adults who are not related to the student, but know the student well. Students will receive a maximum of one point if they score 12 – 16 points on the rating 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: Headcount data reflects that Richmond County Schools is disproportionate with the identification of underrepresented populations. Current data reflects that the AIG program is serving 28% nonwhite students when the total enrollment population is 56% nonwhite students. This data has been about the same, for the last four years.

The AIG Specialists and Coordinator monitor and track screening and referral data to ensure that we are working to identify our underrepresented populations.
During AIG PLCs, we discuss and evaluate the data and put steps in place to ensure that we are screening students in our underrepresented groups. Our schools also track student's scores from NC Check-Ins, common assessments, and CORE Reading Universal Screener. We examine the data for students who demonstrate increased scores that reflect strengths in specific areas. Then, students who need talent development in a specific areas, based on this data, are pulled for differentiated small group guided reading or math instruction.

Once subgroup data is available from the state accountability reports, the AIG Coordinator and the AIG Specialists examine these reports to determine how we can better identify our underserved population. We examine the School Performance Grades by subgroups. This report shows the grade for achievement and growth of each subgroup and then assigns a letter grade based on state accountability measures. We also look at the Long Term Goals outlined by ESSA to examine achievement gaps in subgroups and determine strategies to decrease these gaps.

The identification practices under Pathway 3 allows for multiple criteria. Pathway 3 is flexible with data by allowing composite or individual battery scores to be used. This also allows students to demonstrate a need for differentiation through qualitative measures. The flexibility in this pathway provides more access for our traditionally under-served populations.

In addition to consistent screening of all students, we also provide professional development on topics that impact our subgroups in an effort to create understanding of the diverse learners we have in our schools. All beginning teachers receive training on how to deal with students of poverty. The purpose of this training is to develop an awareness of the hidden rules between poverty and middle class. Another professional development that all teachers are receiving professional development to build Resilient Learners. We are working to equip our teachers with strategies to help students who need supports academically and behaviorally. These help our teachers to understand our diverse learners and identify potential talent.

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

District Response: The fundamental expectation that screening, referral and identification processes are consistent is paramount in the RCS gifted program.

In an effort to develop consistency in our screening, referral and identification processes, AIG Specialists have resources on Canvas with clear procedures. Adherence to these guidelines is substantiated, with documentation presented, at PLC meetings. Resources on Canvas allow AIG Specialists quick access to all forms, PowerPoints, and other AIG materials. A checklist for screening, referral and identification is provided to ensure consistent procedures.

Compliance and consistency is monitored through random visits to the site school by the district coordinator. The coordinator examines the AIG folders and the folders of students that were screened but did not qualify. For qualified AIG students, the folders are examined for the current DEP that has appropriate signatures and services provided. The folders for students who do not qualify are examined to ensure that a parent meeting was held, test results were explained and provided to the parents, and the Decisions about Identification form is completed.
In an effort to ensure that screening and identification practices are consistent, AIG Specialists submit screening rosters to the AIG District Coordinator annually. The screening roster requires the AIG Specialists to provide the origin of the referral; parent, teacher, screening pool based on test data, etc. This monitoring informs screening, referral and identification processes that need to be strengthened. It also assist with addressing our underrepresented populations.

AIG Specialists also train their Needs Determination Teams in the screening and identification process. This ensures that each school team is clear about expectations for screening students.

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

**District Response:** Communicating policies that protect and inform our parents and students is critical. Richmond County Schools maintains documentation that explains the identification process and service options available to the students in our district. The parent packet articulates the various paths to identification, service options available to our gifted population and provides a Review to Disagree document concerning placement.

AIG resources are on Canvas. All program documents are located on this Canvas site to ensure that AIG Specialists are consistent across the district.

AIG Specialists work closely with the school data managers to review data of newly enrolled students to determine if the students qualify for AIG services or further evaluation is needed. All new students to the district are screened for AIG services.

Parents and the AIG Specialists will review the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) annually. This review will provide the parent with an explanation of services and include the Review to Disagreement procedures.

AIG Specialists inform groups about AIG in various formats. AIG brochures, webpage, PowerPoints are some examples of where parents and community can find information about AIG services. AIG Specialist also attend school opening meetings as well as parent/teacher conference days. The specialists are in central locations with AIG information at each school. Parents can also make appointments to meet with the AIG Specialist.

Schools also conduct information sessions on AIG identification and services. These sessions inform parents and students about upcoming events and supports for students. These support sessions range in topics from Duke Tip and study sessions for the ACT or SAT to high school four year planning and resources.

It is critical to inform teachers about the AIG procedures. Each September, AIG Specialist use a universal PowerPoint to explain screening, identification and services for AIG students. This session also informs teachers on how to advocate for leaners and explains the collaborative structure of the AIG program. Richmond County Schools has a motto, “Better Together,” and all stakeholders work together to ensure that our AIG students are growing and getting the services they need.
The district also has many community/parent events that the AIG Specialists attend. These events ensure that all parents know about AIG services and how students can be identified for services. These information sessions are tailored to the specific group that is in attendance. For example, the EL Director hosts two EL Parent Nights. The specialist attends and shares information packets in the groups native language. Translators are also present to assist parents with questions.

All AIG Specialists are integrated into all events that occur at the schools. This ensures consistent parent engagement with the specialists. The classroom teacher and specialist meet with parents together as well as support each other during community activities at the school such as Duke Energy Night. The collaboration ensures that AIG is an integral part of the school and shows that we are "Better Together."

**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:** All AIG students have a file that is kept in a locked filing cabinet at each school in the AIG or record room.

These files consist of the following:
- Referral Packet by educator, parent, peer, or student
- Consent to Assess form
- AIG Decisions about Identification
- AIG Identification Analysis
- Needs Determination Team meeting minutes
- Area of Identification
- Annual Differentiate Education Plans (DEP)
- Evaluation data to support identification
- Services Recommended

These forms document the procedure used for identification. Parents meet with the AIG Specialist to review all information collected throughout the identification process. Services and area(s) of identification are explained. Parents and the Needs Determination Team will sign documents. Parents are then provided with a copy of the initial DEPs and evaluation materials. Parents also receive a copy of the annual DEP.

Data is also put in PowerSchool by the AIG Specialist. The specialist completes the information under the tabs of "Identification Evidence" and "Program Services."

AIG Specialists update the annual DEPs during our fall parent conference time. This allows the specialist to share services and experiences that the student is provided during the school year.

An End-of-Year Record Transfer is used to transfer folders to the middle school and high school to ensure that records are maintained. This form requires the receiving AIG Specialist to verify that all folders are received and reviewed for all appropriate documentation.
**Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:** Examine local norms on test

**Sources of Evidence:**
- Information Packets
- Brochures
- PowerPoint
- Website link
- Phone Message
- CogAT
- NNAT2
- IOWA
- OLSAT
- Torrance Test of Creativity
- Stanford 10
- NC EOG/EOC
- NC Check-Ins
- Referrals: Parent, Teacher, Peer, & Self
- Decisions about Identification
- AIG Folders
- Checklist
- Screening Rosters
Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

The LEA provides an array of K-12 programs and services by the total school community to meet the diverse academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

Practice A
Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the needs of gifted learners across all grade levels and learning environments. These services are aligned to a student’s AIG identification.

District Response: Richmond County Schools realizes that AIG programs and services should be comprehensive, addressing needs of gifted learners at all levels and settings with alignment to AIG identification. Our goal is to promote student achievement by providing a continuum of services designed to appropriately differentiate and extend core curriculum for our advanced learners.

It is imperative that we value and nurture intelligence in children so that they reach their fullest potential and create opportunities for growth. All K-2 talent development students are monitored for future placement in the AIG program. Students in grades K-12 may be referred for possible AIG placement by administrators, parents, teachers, peers or self-referral.

AIG K – 12 Services:

Elementary School Services

K-3 Whole Class Talent Development
The AIG Specialists schedule a time to work with the whole class on critical and creative thinking activities. This component identifies, nurtures and develops talents and abilities in both intelligence and academics. Another key focus is to develop vocabulary by utilizing complex text and materials from Achieve the Core Read Aloud Project.

Enrichment Seminar
K-3 pull out classes focus on conceptual ideas and extend the NCSCS. Students participate in critical and creative activities that require reading complex text, writing and mathematical problem solving with multiple steps. AIG Specialists, classroom teachers and administrators utilize classroom evidences that recognize advanced learners who demonstrate a need for enrichment opportunities. This collaboration is on-going, which allows for the enrichment groups to be fluid, flexible and based on the needs of students.

AIG Consultative
Students are served in the regular classroom that have periodic pull-outs and small group instruction based on the needs of the student. Classroom and AIG teachers will discuss if additional focused sessions are needed to support the growth of the AIG student. Individualized conferences occur to support instruction or social and emotional development.
AIG Resource
Resource services support gifted learners with weekly pull-outs and/or inclusion with small group focused instruction on standards. Curriculum supports the future ready skills through differentiated conceptual units.

AIG Extension
Extension services support gifted learners with additional performance-based tasks that are built on individual interests. AIG Specialists and classroom teachers will collaborate to provide additional time to work on independent projects. This service option is for the highly gifted learner who demonstrates a strong need for additional services that meet individual interests and provide rigor.

Math Level 5 (HB 986)
Any student that scores a level 5 on the End-of-Grade Math assessment will receive small group instruction that utilizes differentiated advanced materials. Each teacher is provided materials for this advanced instruction. These materials compact the standards and allow for real world application.

Grade and Subject Acceleration
Students will be accelerated by subject or grade on mastery of the curriculum standards. We will utilize the North Carolina State Board of Education criteria for early entrance to kindergarten decisions. In addition to the early entrance, we will use the IOWA acceleration scale to examine any student who is working well above grade level.

Middle School Services

AIG Consultative
Students are served in the regular classroom that are based on the needs of the students through small group instruction. Classroom teachers and AIG Specialists will discuss the needs of the students to see if additional focused sessions are needed to support their growth. Periodic pull-outs and individual conferencing may occur to meet the needs of the gifted learners.

Seminars
Seminars that AIG students can attend by choice and interests will be provided by AIG Specialists. These sessions focus on social and emotional issues and curriculum topics (before school, lunch sessions or after school).

AIG Resource
Resource services supports gifted learners with pull-out and/or inclusion with small group focused instruction on standards are provided by the AIG Specialists. Curriculum supports the future ready skills through conceptual units.

AIG Extension
Extension services support gifted learners with additional performance-based tasks that are built on individual interests will be provided. AIG Specialists and classroom teachers will collaborate to provide additional time to work on independent projects. This service option is for the highly gifted learner who demonstrates a strong need for additional services that meet individual interests and provide rigor.

Grade and Subject Acceleration
Students will be accelerated by subject or grade based on mastery of the curriculum standards. We will utilize the North Carolina State Board of Education criteria for early entrance to kindergarten decisions. In addition to the early entrance, we will use the IOWA acceleration scale to examine any student who is working well above grade level.

Math Level 5 (HB 986)
Middle school students who have scored a level 5 on the NC End-of-Grade assessment will take advanced courses that compact the grade 6, 7, and 8 math NC Standard Course of Study. These students will take Math 1 in grade 8.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
Students will be allowed to demonstrate mastery of standards through Credit by Demonstrated Mastery. This process will allow students access to higher-level courses.

High Schools Services
Seminars
Seminars that AIG students can attend by choice and interests. These sessions focus on social and emotional issues and curriculum topics (Before school, lunch sessions or after school).

Honors Courses
High school honors courses will be offered in grades 9-12 to provide academic rigor and relevance based on established expectations that ensure that all students develop the capacity to master content that is complex and challenging. Instruction and learning must include commitment to a knowledge core and the application of that knowledge core to solve complex real-world problems. A student can self-select to participate in an honors course based on interests. These courses will provide challenging and differentiated assignments. Parents and students will be aware of the expectations in the honors classes.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses
Advanced Placement courses will be provided for students in grades 9–12. The AP courses provide students with differentiated curriculum that align with career and college readiness. Content is taught with an emphasis on critical thinking, inquiry, reasoning and communication skills. Students may self-select these courses based on interests.

Community College Classes (CCP)
Students who meet state set criteria are eligible to take community college classes in their junior and senior year.
Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
Students will be allowed to demonstrate mastery of standards through Credit by Demonstrated Mastery. This process will allow students access to higher-level courses..

AIG Specialists work with classroom teachers to support gifted learners in classrooms as well as in the AIG services. The collaboration assists us with meeting the academic and social and emotional needs. All information on services listed in the DEP are shared.

K – 12 Social and Emotional Seminars
AIG Specialists will offer a variety of seminars throughout the school year that focus on the social and emotional issues and curriculum topics that are relevant to gifted learners. These sessions will take place before school, after school, during enrichment blocks, and/or lunch as needed for all students who are identified in the AIG program. The current focus is on fostering resilient learners. All staff has received resiliency training in 2019 and how to provide the social and emotional support to learners. The resiliency training will continue in 2019 – 2020.

Through the services listed, we match the identification areas to services needed to provide rigorous instruction for our gifted learners.

A student who is Academically Gifted in Reading will have consultative or resource services in reading. Flexible grouping in classes will cluster these learners for instruction.

A student who is Academically Gifted in Math will have consultative or resource services in problem solving and critical thinking around real world problems. These students will also have options for math standards compacting in the consultative service option.

A student who is Academically Gifted in Reading and Math will have consultative or resource services in both areas. These students will receive differentiated conceptual units that provide rigorous academic challenges.

A student that is Intellectually Gifted (IG) or Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) will have opportunities to work in cluster classes for academic growth but will be assigned to AIG Magnet Services. This will require pull-out services as well as individualized learning units of study based on student interests.

Classroom teachers work with AIG Specialists when the annual DEP is developed. After each NC Check-In, AIG Specialists and teachers analyze data and determine instructional materials and methods to continue the growth of our AIG students.

In addition to the DEP development, AIG Specialists work in the regular classrooms to provide small group instruction. This ensures that AIG students receive rigorous, differentiated instruction that develops future ready thinkers. Small group instruction as well as digital support in Google Drive allow for comprehensive AIG support consistently. Small group and digital support help all teachers to
embrace "AIG all day every day!".

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

**District Response:** Richmond County Schools continue to provide services and program options that are integrated and connected to the overall academic and instructional programs. AIG Specialists follow the NC Standard Course of Study to ensure that gifted students are receiving relevant and rigorous instruction that extends and refines the curriculum. A strong collaborative effort is made to ensure that the needs of our gifted learners are considered at all levels: district, school leadership and classrooms.

The AIG program uses a variety of research-based instructional practices to provide differentiation for gifted learners. AIG Specialists collaborate with the regular education teachers via email, surveys, professional learning communities and professional development to ensure that we are supporting instruction for our gifted learners.

In addition to the collaboration, all district initiatives involve our AIG Specialists. As district leadership teams are formed, AIG Specialists are involved and expected to support the teachers and students with these initiatives.

We also work to ensure that our services align with classroom instruction. We want students to experience the connection between classroom and the AIG services they are receiving. The district focus on small group instruction ensures that gifted students receive differentiated instruction.

The AIG Coordinator is also a curriculum director. This role allows for representation of AIG to be in monthly administrator meetings, academic coach meetings, weekly curriculum meetings (all curriculum directors attend meetings), professional development meetings, School Board Meetings and technology meetings. This consistent collaboration ensures that AIG is integrated into all school and district initiatives.

In addition to organized meetings, the AIG Coordinator also collaborates closely with the English Learner Coordinator and the Exceptional Children's Director. Discussions are held on strategies and information to assist our twice exceptional learners.

The district professional development plan is a strength to support the AIG students. Classroom teachers by grade level come for facilitated planning sessions with the curriculum director. The AIG Specialists attend these planning sessions and gather resources in Google Drive for teachers to use to differentiate. These planning sessions also ensure that the AIG Specialists know the unit pacing and can continue to add instructional support for gifted learners.

**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:** Grouping practices are critical for ensuring that the needs of our gifted students are met. Richmond County Schools uses flexible grouping to support learning in our schools.

Cluster grouping our gifted learners and high achievers is a practice consistently done in our schools. This allows the AIG Specialists to better meet the needs of our advanced students. The AIG specialists will work in the classroom with the teacher to ensure flexible grouping and provide small group support. AIG Specialists also periodically pull-out students based on assessment data and EVAAS.

In addition to our cluster grouping practices, schools also have an Intervention and Enrichment block (I/E) of time in their schedule. Data from a variety of assessments are used to group students in the I/E block. This grouping is flexible and dependent on the needs of the students. Students that do not need intervention on standards receive enrichment opportunities. Some examples of enrichment are Problem-Based Learning Exploration, The Stock Market Game, Code.org, Blogging, Genius Hour, Duke TIP Independent Studies and Literature Circles, etc.

Middle schools group students for advanced reading and compacted math courses. This allows students to receive instruction at a rigorous pace and standards can be taken to a deeper more complex level with the resources utilized. The compacted math courses ensure that students receive rigorous math to prepare them for Math I in the eighth grade.

High school grouping is based on students’ self-selection of courses. Students work closely with teachers, counselors, and AIG Specialists to select courses and develop four year plans. We work with students to balance honor, AP and community college courses. We develop plans that optimize choices for meeting the needs of our AIG students.

**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:** Gifted students have different needs; therefore, teachers and other support staff must have knowledge and understand characteristics of gifted learners in order to play an active role in their education. Receiving information better enables the school community to fulfill its role in the AIG students overall educational program.

The District AIG Coordinator maintains ongoing communication with administrators, teachers and AIG Specialists. This communication allows for comprehensive gifted services and ensures consistent implementation throughout the district. A copy of the AIG plan is available for faculty and administrators.

AIG Specialists inform classroom teachers of identified AIG students and their matching service needs outlined in the DEP as well as “watch list” students being screened for services. Specialists attend PLCs and facilitated planning sessions. This increases support for gifted learners and provides
a team approach in meeting their needs.

Communication is critical for a student's success. Keeping all stakeholders informed requires multiple forms of communication. We will continue to increase communication efforts using a variety of formats. Collaboration with classroom teachers, administrators and support staff provide information regarding the AIG program services along with any regulations related to gifted education.

Examples may include:
- Newsletters
- District and School Websites
- Emails
- Meetings
- Professional Development

AIG Specialists provide professional development on the AIG plan. This is accompanied by presentation during the first nine weeks of school to explain the AIG plan and new legislation that requires gifted support.

Not only do the AIG Specialists work with schools utilizing a presentation, they also provide teachers with a AIG informational packet that explains how to refer students to the AIG program. This AIG informational packet is provided to all employees during the presentation. The AIG specialists are also equipped with a handbook for processes and procedures.

A parent informational packet exists to provide parents with information about the AIG program and how they can refer their child for services. In the informational packet, information is provided on characteristics of gifted learners, multiple criteria explanation and services offered within the district.

The district professional development plan provides all teachers two content session in K – 12 ELA, K – 12 math, 6-8 social studies, and 5 – 8 science. These professional development sessions focus on meeting the needs of learners in classrooms. Each session provides instructional expectation and models how to differentiate for AIG students. Standard Three in the NC Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program Standards are provided to teachers to explain what gifted learners need and how the district expects our AIG students to be supported.

**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:** The needs of our gifted learners are best met when there is a consistent dialogue among stakeholders. Smooth transitions of records, rosters of identified students and annual review decisions should be in place before the end of the academic year.

The AIG Specialists work closely with teachers to collaborate information about gifted students. This support informs teachers of the services each child is receiving and strategies to support the students
in the classroom. The annual review of the DEP provides time for us to communicate with teachers and parents to improve instruction for our gifted students.

At the beginning of each school year, the Director of Accountability provides schools with a historical data file containing student's EOG scores. AIG Specialists, administration and teachers get a copy of this information and create data graphs based on previous achievement. As students take common assessments and NC Check-Ins, data is tracked on these graphs. The AIG Specialists and classroom teachers hold conferences with students and discuss outcomes of these assessments. This communication ensures that AIG students are growing. If the data reflects gaps, the AIG Specialist and classroom teacher develop a strategic plan to increase achievement.

As students transition between schools, the AIG Specialists communicate pertinent information regarding the student population to ensure student success.

A major part of the transition from middle school to high school is the creation of a four-year high school plan and parent information session. It is our intent for parents to understand all high school requirements. These sessions may involve the AIG Coordinator, AIG Specialists, counselor and school administration. Discussion occurs on the following topics:

• GPA
• weighted and unweighted grades
• Advanced Placement
• exams
• community college
• required graduation course work
• College Foundation of North Carolina
• SAT and collaboration with Khan Academy
• High school schedule

These sessions inform parents about the many options at the high school level.

The AIG Specialists will collaborate with data managers when students transfer from private schools, charter schools and schools from another state or outside our school district. The specialists will determine what service the student needs based on data received from the previous location.

**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:** Continued collaboration among all stakeholders is important and essential to the success of gifted students. Parents, teachers, students, counselors and administrators are involved in making decisions about gifted learners. Social and emotional needs of gifted learners continue to be an area of concern and we are exploring more intensive and specific plans to address the varying needs of our students.
Through collaboration with parents, teachers, students, counselors and administrators a social and emotional curriculum is used from the Resources for Resilience. In 2019, all schools completed three modules of resiliency training. Training was provided to administrators who selected teams to train all school personnel. This training was also held at a District Title One night with parents. Additionally we hold meetings with community members and various agency leaders to view "Broken Place". The focus of this meeting will be how to work together in the 2019 – 2020 school year and help students who have experienced trauma and need tools to be resilient.

We will continue our resiliency training by reading, Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom and focus on teaching rapid reset techniques that build resilient learners.

AIG Specialists will identify and coordinate support groups designed to strengthen the social and emotional intelligence of the gifted population. Using the rapid reset tools, specialists will work with gifted students to teach these tools to help redirect attention and allow for learning to continue.

School counselors host support group sessions for students that are struggling socially and emotionally. These support groups provide a safe and nurturing environment where students can share issues and concerns.

The school psychologist and social workers also work with gifted students to address social and emotional issues. These support sessions occur weekly providing tools to address emotional behaviors.

Our schools also have mentor programs that work with students social and emotional behaviors. Volunteers from the community mentor students and support them emotionally. Richmond County Sheriff's Department officers collaborate with these programs and mentor students who have emotional trauma and need extra support.

Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). By utilizing PBIS, AIG Specialists will impact some of the emotional and social issues through positive support in all classes.

Not only does PBIS support behaviors, but we utilize the Student Support Teams (SST) to provide interventions for social and emotional needs. The team meets and discusses possible interventions for a student. The AIG Specialist is a critical part of this team when a gifted child is being discussed.

The Second Step School Program is being piloted to address the social and emotional learning needs in our school communities. We currently have three elementary schools and two middle school using the program. We plan to expand this program to all schools over the next two years.

In addition to Second Step, teachers will also receive trauma training using NeuroLogic materials. This training will develop knowledge in brain states, the impact of trauma, intervention and teaching strategies, classroom management and relationships.

We realize that many of our AIG students struggle with perfectionism, a lack of social tolerance, an increased level of stress, unrealistic expectations for themselves, lack of compromise and an inflexibility in their thinking and ideas. These emotional and social issues can impact the student academically and behaviorally. The AIG Specialists provide strategies in PLCs to support these
problem areas when displayed by the child. The Specialists also share information on how the problem is displayed in the AIG classroom. This collaboration is a critical part of developing the whole child.

**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:** Through policies and procedures, acceleration options are currently determined by appropriate evidences that indicate whether a student needs accelerated instruction/accelerated placement.

We realize that some gifted students have documented needs for acceleration through differentiation of curriculum and instruction. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss all plans for placement and services with the AIG Specialists. If acceleration is an option for a student, an Individualize Differentiated Education Plan will be developed that outlines the coursework and expectations. The acceleration placement will be closely monitored to ensure that the placements and services are appropriate.

**Math Curriculum Compacting:**
In an effort to provide students with rigorous math experiences, middle school math courses are compacted, which allows students to take Math I as an eighth grader. This math acceleration enables students to take a high level fourth math course in high school.

A school team examines data and determines students that will have successful experiences in compacted math in grade 6 and 7. This compacting teaches the math Standard Course of Study from grades 6 – 8, so that students have the skills necessary to be successful in Math I.

To meet the needs of our level 5 math students, modules will be developed each summer that align to the standards and provide rigorous, real-world, complex problem solving opportunities. Mindset Math materials and STEM activities will provide students acceleration and depth of math concepts.

**Early Admission to Kindergarten:**
In accordance with state law, early admission to kindergarten is considered for students who score at the 98th or 99th percentile on both achievement and aptitude tests.

Principals and other personnel conduct a screening interview with the student and parents to determine the maturity, motivation and developmental levels of the student.

Parents are responsible for obtaining and presenting this information to the principal.

The District AIG Coordinator may be contacted for additional information and will work with the principal to make the best possible decision for the student.
Grade/Subject Acceleration Process:
Parents or teacher(s) must present the request for acceleration to the AIG Specialist in writing. The AIG Specialist will notify the principal and the District AIG Coordinator.

The AIG Specialist will gather a team that consists of principal or designee, District AIG Coordinator, classroom teachers and guidance counselor. The team will examine data, prior testing results and work samples that demonstrate 2-3 years above grade level. The student will also have the opportunity to share projects showing above grade level skills. The team will decide if they are going to pursue the request using data and information provided.

The AIG Specialist and administrator or designee will meet with the parents and explain the decision of the team. If it is decided that acceleration services need to be explored, the AIG Specialist will explain the Iowa Acceleration Scale.

Once parents have signed the permission to test, both the AIG Specialist and the District AIG Coordinator will complete the required tests.

If acceleration is recommended, an Individual Differentiation Education Plan will be developed to best meet the needs of the student. This plan will outline the transition process and a timeline for review of performance.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery:
Parents may make a written request to the school if they think their 6–12 grade child has an understanding of the content.

Richmond County Schools will follow the procedures outlined in the DPI Implementation Guidelines for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery.

Process for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM):
Step 1: Parent or student request in writing that they are requesting credit by demonstrating mastery for a specific course.
Step 2: Parent completes an application for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery.
Step 3: The School CDM meets and discusses the application and begins the process.
Step 4: Work with the testing coordinator to determine when testing can be completed for EOC or NC Final assessment.
Step 5: Provide the assessment in a secure location.
Step 6: If the student scores between a 97 – 99% on the assessment, the student will continue to Phase II: Artifact Development.
Step 7: The student will be provided a deadline for submitting the artifact. The artifact must demonstrate a deep understanding of the content and skills. The artifact must include writing, research and analysis of documents related to the content. The student will be required to have an oral presentation. This presentation will be presented to the school CDM team and teachers from the content being mastered. The student will have questions about topics during this presentation.
Step 8: The school CDM team will examine the artifacts utilizing a rubric.
Step 9: The school CDM team will determine if the student has demonstrated the mastery for the
course.
Step 10: The parent(s) and student will be notified of the team’s decision in writing within two weeks of the artifact submission.

If credit is awarded, the CDM team will follow the Powerschool guidelines to award credit. If the credit is not awarded, the student will be enrolled in the course.

North Carolina Virtual Public Schools will be utilized in our middle schools for our advanced students. This will allow our AIG students to be advanced in a subject and earn high school credit while in middle school.

The Parent Packet explains options and the process for acceleration. Not only do we have these options for acceleration, but we have a strong relationship with our community college. We offer community college courses to our high school students under Career and College Promise. Our enrollment in these community college courses continues to increase each semester. In addition, Richmond Community College has secured a grant allowing any senior with a GPA of a 3.0 to attend the community college for free. High school counselors work with students to communicate this information.

Not only have we increased our enrollment of community college classes, we have also increased our AP offers through North Carolina Virtual Public High School. This acceleration provides students with rigorous course work and skills in how to navigate an online environment.

To ensure that the AIG students are successful, an IDEP (Individualize Differentiated Education Plan) will be developed that outlines the acceleration and the support the student will receive. Periodic conferences will occur to discuss the AIG student’s progress. The parents, student, school administrator and teacher should be present at these conferences. The AIG Specialist will develop and monitor the IDEP.

**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:** Richmond County Schools has a very diverse population. Due to our diversity, we have a strong awareness and commitment to the needs of typically under-represented populations in gifted programs. Current data reflects that the AIG program is serving 28% nonwhite students when the total enrollment population is 56% nonwhite students.

Over the past three years, we have provided Ruby Payne training that focuses on children in poverty. This training has assisted with developing understanding about the students we teach and their specific needs. Our K – 8 schools range from 77% to 90% poverty status from our most recent Title I assessment.
In order to better identify our under-served populations, we will provide training on gifted behaviors in our under-represented groups. This training will bring awareness to the needs and characteristics of our diverse learners.

We also have K – 3 talent development classes to support and develop our under-represented groups. These classes will support the hidden curriculum (thinking skills and strategies to process information).

In middle school we also have talent development groups. Administrators group underrepresented students in with AIG clusters. When the AIG teacher works with these classes, all students are exposed to differentiated curriculum and the AIG Specialists work with students in small group instruction.

Under-served populations have gained access to Honors and AP courses since all pre-requisites, like grades, have been removed. This removal has increased the diversity in our honors and AP courses. It also has increased our under-served representation with NC Governor's School.

In addition, to better understanding strategies to identify under-represented populations, increased communication between the EL and EC departments has occurred. This communication has assisted us with identifying twice exceptional students.

The District AIG Coordinator requires submission of semester screening rosters. These will be reviewed during monthly AIG meetings to see if we have increased referrals and identification in our under-served populations. We also annually monitor AIG headcounts and report the trends identified in our under-served populations.

A minimal increase has occurred over the past several years with AIG identification, but we realize that we need to continue to focus and research a variety of intentional procedures to assist us with our discrepancy.

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

**District Response:** Richmond County Schools encourages student participation in extra-curricular programs that develop the needs and interests of our gifted learners. Many of our schools provide opportunities for students in academic endeavors that extend the NC Standard Course of Study.

Many schools offer extra-curricular academic and creative opportunities including a variety of academic competitions and contests such as Science Olympiad, Battle of the Books/Books and Beyond, MathCounts, Beta Club, Duke Talent Identification Programs (TIP), writing contests, visual/performing arts opportunities and Summer Enrichment. These activities address academic, intellectual and socio-economic needs for our gifted learners.

Locally we promote a program called TechyKids. This program provides K – 8 students with week
long summer enrichment opportunities. Students can access as many of these courses as they wish. Some enrichments in this summer opportunity is a collaborative effort with Discovery Place Kids. All enrichments are technology based. An example of one of the enrichments that Discovery Place Kids is offering for middle school students is a computer programming class. This enrichment experience will benefit our students over the summer. These courses cost only $10.00 and the fee is waived for any student who receives free lunch.

Another locally supported extra-curricular activity is our Richmond Community STEM offering summer classes to explore a variety of STEM topics. Richmond Community College is a partner with our school system and provides summer STEM classes for our students at a minimal cost. For parents who cannot afford the program, the fee is waived so any student who wants to attend these camps is eligible. Some courses offered this summer are Coding I and II, 3D I, GIS, Art of the Polygon, Introduction to Drones, etc. This partnership provides exciting, engaging and challenging experiences for our students.

In addition to these local clubs, we have also changed our middle schools Battle of the Books to Battle of the Books and Beyond. The teachers and coaches felt that the Battle of the Books questions did not promote higher level thinking for our students. They created Battle of the Books and Beyond to ensure critical thinking and promote leadership. The Battle of the Books and Beyond requires the students to read 10 to 12 books of various genres. The Battle of the Books and Beyond has been a great event supports higher level thinking and enhances student experiences.

Sociable Art is another extra-curricular activity provided to our students. Twice a year the AIG Specialists organize a sociable art event. This allows our students art experiences and provides a social time for students to work together and collaborate in a fun atmosphere.

Not only do we support local extra-curricular events, we also work with students to get them to apply for endeavors like Summer Ventures and NC Governor's School. All 10th grade students are screened for eligibility. In the fall of each year, the AIG Coordinator provides an overview of these programs to all eligible students. Students receive information on how and where to register for these summer endeavors.

All of the elementary schools have projects that allow students to explore their interest. A variety of projects occur throughout the year to ensure that students develop interest in many areas. From drama club to running clubs, students have many activities to participate in both during and outside the school day.

**Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:** Ensure that all stakeholders are aware of AIG services
Continue to examine data on the under-represented groups and how to identify more students for services
Continue to work with resiliency to assist social and emotional needs

**Sources of Evidence:** DEPs
IDEPs
Program descriptions
Description of service options
AIG Comprehensive Profile
AIG student folder
K-2 Enrichment Seminar Referral
Course Guide
Student Sign up
Honors Guides
Advanced Placement Syllabus
District and school newsletters
Emails
Meetings
Staff Development
Notification of AIG Students form
Regularly scheduled meetings with AIG Specialists
District and school websites
Teacher Information Packet
Class Rosters
Meeting Agendas
Schedules of Professional Development and AIG Specialists meetings
Logs of AIG Specialists collaboration contacts with colleagues
Focus Group
School AIG Team
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: Richmond County Schools addresses differentiation through alignment to the NCSCOS. AIG Specialists design differentiated instruction that enriches and extends North Carolina Standard Course of Study and Essential Standards to ensure they are relevant and accommodate all gifted learners.

The AIG Specialists collaborate within the whole school to design quality instruction based on the NCSCOS. This is evident through teacher training and support provided by the AIG Specialists within the learning community setting.

AIG Specialists use the collaborative coaching model to work with classroom teachers on differentiated strategies. The coaching model allows specialists to provide instructional support for teachers that assist them with meeting the needs of our gifted learners more sufficiently. This support can be in the form of co-teaching a lesson to model differentiated strategies, observation of a lesson done by the classroom teacher with follow-up to discuss how to strengthen the strategies utilized or modeling a lesson in the teachers’ classroom to allow the teacher to observe the strategies implemented.

The AIG Specialists assist classroom teachers with unit plans that infuse differentiated strategies. The specialists provide rigorous complex resources in all content areas that the classroom teacher can use to provide challenging learning opportunities. In the middle school with all content teachers to implement reading in the content area through a computer program, Actively Learn. Actively Learn provides teachers with rigorous text that is assigned to students. The assignment embeds higher order questions that students answer as they read the article.

Not only do we support differentiation in the classrooms, but AIG Specialists also provide differentiation for AIG students in several formats.

The K-5 module includes pull-outs, where AIG students meet with the AIG Specialist on a weekly basis. The consultative model is also implemented in certain elementary schools to meet the needs of our gifted population. Conceptual units are taught that integrate all NC Standard Courses of Study. Small group instruction is provided in classrooms by the AIG Specialists. The small group instruction ensures that AIG students receive rigorous materials that are challenging like research, extended reading of complex text on a topic of interest, etc.

The middle school setting addresses differentiation through the consultative model which includes
individual conferences, collaboration with classroom teachers, co-teaching and periodic pull-outs. Small group instruction is provided in classrooms by the AIG Specialists. The small group instruction ensures that AIG students receive rigorous materials that are challenging. When the AIG Specialists are co-teaching in the classrooms providing small group instruction, they extend the NC Standard Course of Study by adding complex text, writing and research, or compacting information. To supplement the conceptual curriculum units, literature circles are utilized to differentiate the text.

In high school, we offer differentiation through Honors, Advanced Placement and Community College classes. Increasing our Honors options has been a focus in our high school and currently we have many arts and CTE courses that have added differentiated units to create an Honors option for students. Not only are advanced courses offered, but curriculum materials are delivered in a one to one environment. Teachers differentiate by utilizing Canvas for their courses. Modules are developed and assigned based on the needs of the learners in the class.

The conceptual units are created in the summer by teachers who work with Academic Coaches and AIG Specialists. These conceptual units include pacing, anchor and supplemental text, resources, strategies, unpacking curriculum documents, etc. The units are currently stored on Canvas. As teachers create these units, they will include materials that assist with differentiation.

To ensure math course rigor units are developed in K – 5 to extend math concepts. The classroom teacher and the AIG Specialist work with students by designing real world experiences using the math NCSCoS.

To ensure math course rigor in 6 – 8, the math NCSCOS is compacted to teach Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth grade math in grade 6 and 7. This allows all level 5 students and other based on need to take Math 1 in the Eighth grade.

In high school, the partnership with Richmond Community College allows our math students to have high level math and receive college credit. We expect our high level math students to complete Math III as a 10th grader. Then students will take CCP Math 171, 172, 271 at the community college.

**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:** Richmond County Schools is conscientious of meeting the needs of our diverse gifted learners. We utilize multiple inventories that incorporate interests, multiple intelligences, Habits of Mind and learning styles to develop profiles of our gifted learners. AIG Specialists attend to the needs of the gifted learners and advocate for them to receive differentiated, rigorous tasks in classes. The AIG Specialists are aware and encourage their diverse learning modalities with our curriculum units. Through these endeavors, we are able to better understand the diverse needs of our students and we will utilize instructional practices that augment their interest learning styles and abilities.

The AIG program uses a variety of research-based instructional practices to meet the needs of our diverse gifted learners. We align all instruction to the NCSCoS and ensure that differentiated
experiences occur in our gifted and regular classrooms. We design instruction for our gifted learners through conceptual based units. In these units we also use a variety of instructional practices that meet the needs of our learners such as, tasks that utilize multiple intelligences, problem-based learning, Paideia seminars/Junior Great Books and literature circles. Unit design allows for real world experiences and provides choice with projects. The AIG Specialists facilitate the learning opportunities gifted students are provided in the AIG classroom.

Elementary
AIG Specialists facilitate real-world learning experiences through units such as The Stock Market Game, Genius Hour, The Economy, Financial Literacy activities and The Million Dollar Project. In addition to rigorous conceptual units, the elementary schools collaborate with Discovery Place for Kids and Camp Millstone 4-H Camp to provide hands-on, learning experiences. STEM activities are also utilized to ensure future-ready students.

Middle
AIG Specialists provide a variety of opportunities to enrich student interests and readiness levels. For example, Duke TIP, Independent Studies, Interest-Based Blogging, Code.org, The Stock Market Game, and InvestWrite are infused into the middle school curriculum.

Math in the middle school is compacted to allow students the opportunity to take Math I in the Eighth grade. This supports the students that have a mathematical intelligence.

In the ELA classes, literature circles are completed every six weeks. The students select the book they want to read and engage in collaborative book discussions. Anchor text used in the classrooms to teach the NCSCoS are also differentiated for the AIG students.

Summer Enrichment Opportunities
Our elementary and middle school students also have summer enrichment camps. A range of activities are offered and students select based on their interests.

Courses may include:

1. Green Screens, Website Creation, QR Codes, OH MY!
2. Coding with Techno Magicians, Princess Coders, and Code Warriors
3. The Wonders of Water
4. Forensic Investigator
5. "If you Give a Kid a Spatula...."

Not only do students have LEA Summer Enrichment Opportunities, we partner with Richmond Community College to offer STEM courses. These courses occur on the community college campus. Students can learn to fly drones, robotics, Advanced Electrical Engineering, Energy Explorers, etc.

High School
To prepare our middle school students for high school, we have parent / child meetings that discuss high school options and develop possible four year plans. These plans are created based on areas of
interest. Students articulate a possible career interest and college choice. Then we plan with the student explaining courses that will assist them in being successful with their interest.

Each year after the plan is developed, students will meet with the AIG Specialists and Guidance Counselor. This meeting will discuss grades and plans for the upcoming school year. From these meetings, a high school schedule is developed.

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

**District Response:** Richmond County Schools believes that using evidence-based resources ensures that our AIG Program continues to provide rigor and relevance to our gifted learners. A conscientious effort has been made to guarantee that evidence-based materials are aligned to the standards, ensuring that this maintained practice is being implemented in all schools, so that we support the instruction for our gifted learners.

Discovery Education provides our educators with resources to support curriculum and instruction. This is used in all classes. In middle school classrooms, we also use Actively Learn, a reading platform, to differentiate for our learners. These supplemental resources provide blended learning experiences and strengthen instruction.

On Canvas, all content areas have Curriculum and Instruction Support Documents that provide resources for teachers. Each nine weeks has an explicit weekly curriculum map that provides detailed information of the unit and resources to use aligned to NCSCoS. The units are revised each summer by teachers based on the data from the End-of-Grade assessment. Teachers also reflect on the units and provide feedback that drives changes. New materials are added based on the feedback. Materials are provided for whole and small group instruction. These documents allow our AIG Specialists to assist and collaborate with teachers on resources to meet the needs of the gifted learners. When teachers come for their facilitated planning sessions, AIG Specialists also attend. This allows the AIG Specialist to plan for small group instruction with the classroom teacher.

The district expects teachers to have lesson plans that contain the following: I can statement, activators, collaborative pairs / numbered heads, assessment prompts, summarizers, etc. Lesson plans also include small group instruction that promotes differentiated instruction. AIG Specialists have access to the lesson plans through Google docs and make suggestions to ensure that gifted learners have rigorous instruction.

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

**District Response:** Richmond County Schools will continue to focus on Future-Ready content and skills. We currently have professional development sessions on integrating these skills into lessons. At this time real-world applications, critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving are incorporated into the conceptual curriculum units.
In addition to the professional development, we expect these skills to be evident in lesson plans. AIG Specialists work in PLCs to design work for our gifted learners that integrate Future-Ready skills with complex content.

The AIG Specialists infuse Future-Ready content and skills at an advanced level in unit and lesson plans. A variety of complex resources are utilized to allow students opportunities to develop Future-Ready skills.

To ensure that high school teachers are using critical thinking skills, summer advanced placement training is provided for teachers. These training sessions provide them with content and instructional practices that incorporate Future-Ready skills.

Students in Ninth grade also get an experience to learn about Future-Ready skills by participating in the Chamber Career Fair. The Richmond County Chamber organizes a career fair. The students then have seminars with individuals who have a particular career. They attend two seminars that expose them to the skills necessary to be successful in that career. For example, this year a real estate broker discussed with the students about selling and listing homes. She discussed how this career required her to have excellent people skills and be motivated. She explained that she only makes money if she sells a house. She explained to the students that she had to be a good listener and communicate well in both speaking and writing. Experiences like this allow students to understand the relevance of Future-Ready skills.

Another opportunity to explore Future-Ready skills occurs in our middle schools. We have changed our Battle of the Books to Battle of the Books and Beyond. The coaches did not feel that Battle of the Books provided students with higher order thinking skills. Battle of the Books and Beyond ensures critical thinking and promotes leadership. The Battle of the Books and Beyond requires the students to read 10 to 12 books of various genres. Each school then chooses two titles to facilitate a discussion. The students create discussion questions for the books and prepare to lead the analysis of the book. In addition to the discussion, they arrange a guest speaker to come and provide information based on the topic from the book.

Middle schools also hold career fairs. Community members host sessions about careers that exist, degrees needed for these careers, and what types of activities are done in this career. Students obtain exposure to careers from journalism to chicken farming.

**Practice E**

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

**District Response:** Richmond County Schools will continue to use formative and summative assessments as a means to differentiate instruction for all gifted learners.

A district initiative is using distributed summarizing. This method of formative assessments allows teachers to constantly check for understanding in order to guide instruction and modify assignments as needed. Lesson plans must show distributed summarizing through collaborative pairs and
assessment prompts. Teachers chunk their instruction to allow for this summarizing which occurs in many ways. Some strategies that are used are:

- Think – Pair – Share
- Summary Point Writing
- Ticket out the Door
- The important thing is….
- GIST
- Reciprocal Teaching

Teachers are expected to differentiate based on this formative assessment data.

The district also expects teachers at all levels to use a variety of instructional methods. We utilize the four primary methods of instruction to differentiate. The methods are small group instruction, work stations, whole group instruction and cooperative groups. In professional development sessions, teachers receive training on how to utilize formative and summative data to group students using these methods.

To ensure that these district initiatives are being used in classrooms, district walk-throughs occur in the fall and spring. Central Office staff visit each school and examine classrooms for implementation of the district initiatives. After the walk-throughs, observations are shared with the administration at the school. The administration also completes a rubric that explains how pervasively and consistently they observe the district initiatives in their school.

Recently adopted formative assessments include the following: Google Forms, Actively Learn, IXL, Read Theory, Moby Max, Reading Plus and CommonLit. Schoolnet is also used to create common assessments to measure the mastery of standards.

Check-IN data is a pivotal assessment tool to delineate differentiation and small group instruction. Academic coaches at the schools submit data reports to the Curriculum Directors. These reports require coaches to examine the data and determine which students are not proficient in the standards and how they are going to revise instruction to ensure that the students gain understanding in the areas where they are struggling.

AIG Specialists will work with classroom teachers to analyze academic skills of our gifted learners. The data analysis informs curriculum decisions. By working with the classroom teachers, AIG Specialists will provide support for gifted learners by determining their needs and suggesting acceleration opportunities.

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

**District Response:** To support the social and emotional needs of our gifted learners, we must understand what these needs are and how to develop strategies to support them. The AIG Specialists
utilize units of study on social and emotional issues that often confront our gifted learners. One method utilized is bibliotherapy through the lens of literature circles to intentionally support the social/emotional development of AIG students. Sample titles include but not limited to the following: The One and Only Ivan, Crenshaw, The View from Saturday and A Wrinkle in Time.

AIG Specialists will also work closely with guidance counselors to support our gifted learners. AIG Specialists will continue our resiliency training by reading, Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom and focus on teaching rapid reset techniques that build resilient learners. The specialists will work with counselors and teachers on how to better meet the needs of gifted students.

In conjunction with the guidance department and classroom teachers, AIG Specialists will offer learning opportunities that promote self-awareness, positive peer relationships and intellectual experiences, leadership and talent development. Professional resources include the AIG Booster Shot Series to support the gifted learners’ social and emotional development.

During the school year, AIG Specialists work with the gifted students during the Intervention / Enrichment block. The units allow the AIG students to work with similar ability students and explore topics that promote their social and emotional well-being.

Summer Opportunities for Gifted Students
Locally, we promote a program called TechyKids. This program provides K – 8 students with week long summer enrichment opportunities. Students can access as many of these courses as they wish. One enrichment opportunity is a collaborative effort with Discovery Place Kids. All enrichment opportunities are technology based. An example of one of the enrichment opportunities that Discovery Place Kids is offering for middle school students is a computer programming class. This enrichment experience will benefit our students over the summer. These courses cost only $10.00 and the fee is waived for any student who receives free lunch.

Another locally supported extra-curricular activity is our Richmond Community College STEM Camp offering summer classes to explore a variety of STEM topics. Richmond Community College is a partner with our school system and provides summer STEM classes for our students at a minimal cost. For parents who cannot afford the program, the fee is waived so any student who wants to attend these camps is eligible. Some courses offered this summer are Coding I and II, 3D I, GIS, Art of the Polygon, Introduction to Drones, etc. This partnership provides exciting, engaging and challenging experiences for our students.

These summer opportunities allow our gifted students unique experiences that are not costly. Many of our gifted students continue to explore topics beyond the camp experiences. An example of this is two gifted students continued with courses to receive their licenses to fly a drone.

**Practice G**
Cultivates and develops the potential of young (K-3) students through purposeful and intentional differentiated curriculum and instruction.
District Response: Richmond County Schools strives to enrich the potential of K-3 students with purposeful and intentional strategies to create Future Ready learners. We currently develop potential in our K–3 learners in a variety of ways.

K - 2 utilizes Enrichment Seminars to develop talents through enhancing the students' strengths, critical thinking and problem solving skills. These Enrichment Seminars provide students with complex problems and conceptual lessons. This pullout experience allows the AIG Specialists to develop potential with our high achieving learners. The selection to attend a session is based on formative assessments by the classroom teacher, the AIG specialist's observations from the whole class talent development and data that reflects an above grade reading or math need.

Another structure is whole class talent development lessons. The AIG Specialists teach whole class lessons for kindergarten through third grade utilizing Habits of Mind and thinking skill materials. Our goal is to provide students with purposeful, intentional and differentiated instruction. Complex texts are used along with the Read Aloud Project developed by Achieve the Core. The K-3 learners will experience a variety of resources and opportunities to guide their ambitions and develop their potential.

Classroom teachers also benefit from these whole class talent development lessons. They get to observe research-based practices utilized by the AIG Specialists. The whole class structure is a great way to develop collaboration with the classroom teacher and to share differentiated strategies.

In addition to talent development opportunities, we also screen our K – 3 students for gifted services. We use mCLASS and K - 2 math assessment data to determine the students that need to be screened. Working with the classroom teachers, the screening list is discussed to determine students that may need to be assessed.

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

District Response: Richmond County Schools' AIG Program believes in interaction among AIG Specialists, general education teachers and all professional support staff to meet the needs of the gifted population. Gifted learners benefit from collaboration among all personnel related to AIG students when the partnership is intentional and the responsibility is shared. In keeping with Richmond County Schools' strong commitment to PLC collaboration, AIG Specialists consistently communicate with teachers and administrators.

The Curriculum and Instruction Department schedules consistent and timely PLC meetings to plan instruction and analyze data. During this time, rigorous and differentiated curriculum units are created and shared across the district. These units incorporate complex, diverse text. The needs of AIG students are met through the participation of AIG specialists. When schedules permit, the AIG Specialists attend the grade or content PLCs at their respective schools. This attendance provides consistent communication to better plan instruction for our gifted learners and promote reflection on differentiation.
Shared decision making between the classroom teachers and the AIG Specialists about the development and implementation of differentiated curriculum and instruction is essential. Co-teaching allows the AIG Specialists and classroom teachers to plan and provide differentiated rigorous instruction that meets the needs of our gifted learners.

The AIG Specialists conduct periodic meetings to collaborate about gifted students. The Gifted Needs Determination Team engages in shared decision-making. This team will consist of the AIG Specialist as the Chair, an administrator, guidance counselor and a teacher from each grade level. Additional people will be invited as deemed necessary to make decisions and provide insights that are in the best interests of our gifted learners.

The AIG Coordinator often attends data PLC meetings at schools. These data meetings track students' performance on the NC Check-Ins. We discuss the AIG students and curriculum support needed to ensure academic growth. AIG Specialists attend these sessions when their schedules allow.

The district professional development plan provides up to four facilitated planning sessions with the Director of ELA/SS/Arts/Gifted. These sessions allow schools to develop the curriculum units by adding differentiated materials. The AIG Specialists attend these meetings. Small group instruction is part of these planning sessions to the AIG teacher can deepen the standards taught.

The Director of ELA/SS/Arts/Gifted is included in all administrative meetings. The opportunity to discuss with the Director of EC and ESL Coordinator occurs in our weekly PLC meetings. The psychologist provide the AIG Coordinator with data from testing when the student shows strengths in an area. Data is then shared with the Needs Determination Team for screening and identification.

**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:** Richmond County Schools is focused on ensuring that parents/families are aware of how their child is being served and in what services they are receiving. Our goal is to provide K-12 services that are reviewed annually. The services that a gifted learner is accessing should be documented in a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or the Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP).

The DEP and IDEP outline the services that are available to gifted students.

A student that is identified for AIG Consultative services will:
- receive individualized conferences
- benefit from AIG Specialists collaboration with classroom teachers to promote differentiated assignments
- receive periodic pull-outs based on the assessment data
A student that is identified for AIG Resource services will:
• receive weekly pull-outs

A student that is identified for AIG Magnet services will:
• receive individualized projects and units of study based on interests
• have opportunities for online courses

A student that is identified for AIG Acceleration services will:
• receive subject or grade acceleration
• receive an IDEP to ensure roles and responsibilities for support are clearly articulated

Any gifted student can have an IDEP. An IDEP can be initiated at any time facilitated either by the AIG Specialists, classroom teacher, administrator, parent or student. The IDEP specifically outlines the needs the gifted student has and what supports are going to be put in place to ensure success. The roles of each team member and what they are responsible to monitor will be clearly defined. Once an IDEP is developed, the Gifted Needs Determination Team will begin with weekly meetings on the student. At each meeting, a new timeline will be developed for supports once team members have shared both formal and summative data they have collected. Meetings may continue weekly or be adjusted to better meet the gifted learner’s needs.

The annual reviews will occur in the spring. These reviews will allow parents to meet with the AIG Specialist and classroom teacher. The purpose of this meeting is to review the services and determine if the services are meeting the gifted learner’s needs. In addition to the annual review, a progress report will be provided each nine weeks to parents articulating academic progression.

The high school annual review will occur at high school registration. The AIG Coordinator will review four-year plans with gifted learners and determine courses needed to graduate. All options with community college, Advanced Placement and Honors will be explored at this meeting. These meetings allow the students to receive guidance on courses based on their interests and career choice.

**Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:** Examine more programs for talent development
Continue the implementation of complex, rigorous units
Improve differentiated small group instruction
Increase small group instruction opportunities for gifted learners

**Sources of Evidence:** Lesson planning aligned to the NCSCOS
Units of Study
Summer Enrichment
PowerPoints
Observations
AIG Specialists Training Certificates
PLC Minutes
Professional Development Calendar
AIG Specialists Schedules
Handbook for teachers
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: Richmond County Schools employs an AIG-licensed coordinator to ensure success of the AIG program. The coordinator implements and revises the local plan.

The AIG program is directed by an AIG-licensed educator. The lead coordinator has the role of collaborating with AIG Specialists, stakeholders, and central office staff to revise and monitor the program. The coordinator of the program is an advocate for AIG students and strives to ensure that all of their academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs are met.

The coordinator for the gifted program has many responsibilities. The coordinator must monitor all areas of the plan to ensure that implementation is consistently followed by the AIG Specialists. A monitoring checklist is used to determine how well the plan is being implemented.

The coordinator will do internal audits on the student folders to determine if documentation is being correctly completed and reviewed annually. This audit will occur prior to the submission of the AIG headcount.

The AIG Specialists are expected to provide updates and guarantee consistency with respect to identification processes.

Professional development will be required for the AIG Specialists. The AIG Coordinator and Specialists will attend trainings provided by the North Carolina Department of Education and conferences that provide instruction on gifted learners. In addition to the professional development provided for the specialists, professional development will be planned for all personnel to allow them to strengthen their knowledge of gifted learners. The coordinator will also support all district initiatives and ensure that the AIG Specialists are involved.

Collaboration between the district coordinator and all stakeholders is critical. The coordinator must communicate and articulate information pertaining to gifted learners. The coordinator will participate in the regional meetings and other meetings to stay informed about information pertinent to support gifted education.

Practice B
Engages AIG-licensed specialists in tasks that explicitly address the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.
**District Response:** Richmond County Schools’ AIG Specialists currently engage in tasks that support the academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners. Focus groups recognized many accomplishments for our work in the academic and intellectual areas.

AIG Specialists are required to implement the AIG program standards based on our plan. The expectation is to create rigorous, engaging learning experiences for our gifted population. With this role, the focus must be on program and classroom responsibilities, while gathering evidence that the AIG plan is being implemented to fidelity.

Program Responsibilities for AIG Specialists

All AIG Specialists have the responsibility to maintain accurate records of all AIG students. This requires the specialists to collect evidence during the screening and identification process. AIG Specialists are often expected to score ability and achievement tests and accurately review the testing data with parents / guardians. All records on AIG students should have annual current Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) on file.

Not only must AIG Specialists maintain accurate records, but at all levels they must screen students for gifted services. They must examine any data that exists on a student and determine through collaboration with other stakeholders if additional information or testing is needed. To help with the screening process, each AIG Specialist will chair a Needs Determination Team at each of their schools to assist with determining the needs of students.

AIG Specialists will also accept referrals on students. They will collaborate with stakeholders to gather pertinent information once a referral has been made to determine the best outcome for the student.

The AIG headcount is a responsibility that will require collaboration with the data managers. AIG headcounts will be submitted biannually to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Each AIG Specialist must guarantee that the headcount is accurate and reflects AIG students that receive services.

AIG Specialists will advocate for the gifted students and the program. This advocacy requires collaboration with administrators, teachers, parents and community members about the AIG program. Developing and delivering appropriate professional development, while also providing and promoting gifted resources to our learning community, requires the Specialists to provide resources to teachers that support social, emotional and academic needs of our gifted learners.

Another responsibility requires AIG Specialists to work with the AIG Coordinator by attending PLC sessions that focus on implementation of the AIG plan. In addition, strong curriculum units are developed district-wide that promote differentiated units K-12. These units ensure social and emotional areas are addressed by utilizing literature and real-world situations. Not only do these units support whole class instruction, but unit resources are extended by the AIG Specialists in small group instruction.

Classroom Responsibilities for Elementary School AIG Specialists
The AIG Specialists design the program services with the school administration team each year. This allows the program to be differentiated and meet the needs of our various communities while ensuring that we are providing quality services for our AIG students.

AIG Specialists are responsible for quality conceptual units that encourage academic and intellectual growth. AIG Specialists provide pull-out classes as a means to serve students. In these classes, we utilize research-based units that focus on critical and analytical thinking. In creating Future Ready learners, students are given opportunities to use technology in creative ways. AIG fosters an appealing environment that allows students to thrive while engaging in challenging content.

In addition to pull-out services, we also utilize co-teaching that allows the AIG Specialists to work within the classroom. This permits the teacher and the AIG Specialist to support small group instruction and ensure differentiated learning experiences.

AIG Specialists also provide a strong talent development program for Kindergarten through third grade students. This consists of both pull-out and whole-group lessons. We utilize a variety of instructional supports in these classes. A major focus for us is Habits of Mind to develop social and emotional thinking processes. These lessons also support critical thinking skills.

Classroom Responsibilities for Middle School AIG Specialists

Middle school AIG Specialists provide varied instructional support for gifted learners. These specialists follow the Resource Consultation Model based on the work of Mary Landrum. This model supports team-teaching as well as complementary teaching and pull-out instruction.

Our middle school AIG Specialists work to extend and refine instructional standards. Through multiple service options, the AIG Specialists provide extensive writing and research as well as complex reading. They work in classrooms with gifted clusters to provide small group instruction.

A strength of the middle school AIG Specialists is the co-teaching support. Co-teaching allows students to receive rigorous activities in differentiated stations. An example of this is Actively Learn Text, an online literacy platform, assigned to students and monitored by the AIG Specialists and classroom teachers. In addition, complex texts are provided and utilized to support vocabulary development and critical thinking.

The middle school AIG Specialists also collaborate with students and families to provide social and emotional support. Middle school is a stressful time with many changes. Emotional support is provided through lunch groups and afterschool activities. In addition, guidance counselors are working with groups to provide emotional support in many areas.

Responsibilities for High School AIG Specialists

High school AIG Specialists work with gifted learners to complete and monitor four-year plans. Meetings are held with the parent and student to outline a plan for the four years of high school. This plan informs parents and students of all opportunities that are available for gifted learners.

In addition to the four-year plan, the high school AIG Specialists works with the Advanced Placement Program to support students. The specialists will provide teachers with instructional materials that
ensure rigor in the AP classes. Assistance is provided to the School AP Coordinator with testing and proctoring.

Additional support is provided to school counselors to assist with social and emotional issues of our gifted learners. The specialists and counselors work together to prevent gifted students from dropping out. Through a seminar time in the high school schedule the students work through modules that address many social and emotional issues ranging from how to apply for college to etiquette issues to promote Future Ready students.

Professional development opportunities are provided for our AIG Specialists. Our partnership with the North Carolina Advanced Placement Partnership (NCAPP) provides our middle school and high school teachers, guidance counselors, administrators and AIG Specialists with fall and spring professional development on a variety of initiatives and resources for our advanced learners. Additional professional development opportunities that promote STEM and social and emotional learning are attended by AIG Specialists.

Resiliency training is provided K - 12 to assist with the emotional support of learners.

**Practice C**

Establishes specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, special education teachers, counselors, and school administrators.

**District Response:** Richmond County Schools AIG Program relies on specific and appropriate professional development requirements for AIG Specialists, general education teachers, and all professional support staff as a means to work toward the common goal of meeting the needs of its gifted population. Focusing on collaboration among all personnel related to AIG students is to the gifted learner’s advantage when the partnership is intentional and the responsibility is shared.

Currently, AIG Specialists have licensure in Gifted Education. We realize that we are limited in the number of teachers with AIG certification in our system. Each year, to increase the number of teachers with AIG licensure, the district selects one teacher to pursue licensure and covers all expenses for coursework and materials.

We also realize the need to provide professional development for all teachers regarding our gifted program and differentiation. The district has two content professional development training sessions a year. These content professional development days allow the curriculum directors and AIG Specialists to work with all teachers in the district. Utilizing varied instructional methods, training is provided on research-based practices that support gifted learners. Differentiated and multiple instructional methods are promoted. These trainings include special education teachers, ESL teachers and support personnel. The focus of these sessions is determined by the data from NC Check-ins and End-of-Grade assessments. To ensure information presented in these professional development sessions is implemented, administrators and academic coaches, as well as AIG Specialists, work in classrooms to monitor the alignment.

All personnel are regularly engaged in specific and appropriate professional development in an effort
to cultivate and implement differentiated units. Richmond County Schools has professional development annually to revise and strengthen our differentiated units in all grade levels. The units stress NCSCoS, content and instructional practices that support gifted learners.

In addition to the two professional development sessions with directors, AIG Specialists and classroom teachers have three or four staff development days. These days allow the AIG Specialists to work with classroom teachers in PLCs to support gifted learners or to meet as an AIG team to design instructional support and activities for classrooms.

Another professional development opportunity for classroom teachers and AIG Specialists are facilitated planning with a curriculum director. These facilitated planning sessions provide teachers with opportunities to differentiate with an AIG emphasis. Teachers leave these sessions with pacing, materials and resources to ensure complex rigorous instruction occurs in the classroom. AIG Specialists attend these sessions to gain information on how they can extend the NCSCoS for gifted students and to share materials and strategies for our differentiated stations.

The AIG Coordinator works with school counselors to support gifted learners. The coordinator provides professional development on high school planning, preparing for AP course work, special programs for gifted learners, improving SAT and ACT scores, etc. Professional development also occurs on social and emotional needs. We are currently working on helping students become more resilient and to overcome some of the adverse childhood experiences.

Each year our federal needs assessment on professional development is done in a spring K – 12 principal meeting. The principals discuss what is going well and changes that they think should occur to our district professional development plan. In May, our teachers receive a survey that allow them to provide feedback and make suggestions on how to approve our professional development plan. Once the data is collected, the curriculum team discusses changes that need to occur and make revisions to our district professional development plan. These changes are then shared with principals and teachers.

**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:** Richmond County Schools recognizes the importance of placing AIG students in general education classrooms with teachers holding an AIG licensure. The AIG Specialists work with administrators to cluster AIG students with teachers that have AIG certification, when possible.

Since many of our schools have limited personnel with AIG certification, EVAAS data is reviewed to determine teachers that exceed expected growth with gifted learners. Ninety-three percent of Richmond County Schools' teachers met or exceeded expected growth. The growth of teachers is examined to determine the placement of AIG students.

AIG clusters are considered 4-6 identified students and/or students in talent development. The
students are placed with the teacher that has exceeded or met expected growth. We examine the teachers' growth based on where they have performed over a period of time.

We also realize that the limited number of AIG-licensed personnel impacts how we plan to implement cluster grouping. This creates the need for a strong professional development plan that will assist teachers who have clustered groups with support and training. We provide after school professional development as well as support through PLC meetings that target teachers with AIG clusters. Data walls assist schools with monitoring how well our gifted students are performing based on NC Check-in and benchmark data. In PLCs we discuss how to meet the AIG student needs and if their data reflects the performance and growth expected.

Our high school Advanced Placement courses are taught by teachers who have received a week long summer training. This ensures the teachers understand the course content and rigorous expectations of the AP program. We review the AP data each summer and make scheduling changes as needed.

We recognize teachers who receive AIG-licensure and Advanced Placement certification.

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

**District Response:** The AIG Program of Richmond County Schools is focused on aligning professional development with other district initiatives. It is critical that we provide professional development on differentiated Core instruction. The District Improvement Plan establishes that all teachers will receive two half-day content professional development days, three to four staff development days and three to four facilitated planning days. AIG Specialists attend the content professional development and then attend facilitated planning sessions with teachers.

Our current professional development plan is focused on standards and increasing instructional strategies in all subject areas. In November and February, after NC Check-in data is shared, all teachers in the district receive a half-day content professional development with the curriculum directors to analyze and plan instruction accordingly. Each group receives explicit professional development in math, English/language arts, social studies and science. Teachers receive instructional support for differentiated practices. These classes also focus on our district initiatives of vocabulary, distributed summarizing, writing to learn, small group instruction and utilizing multiple instructional methods. The multiple group instructional methods are a focus for meeting the needs of gifted learners. In this session we discuss standards based on grade level whole group instruction, cooperative groups, small group instruction and differentiated work stations. This requires teachers to think about the varied levels in their classrooms and determine how to plan instruction that meets the needs of all learners, including gifted students.

In addition to the half-day content professional development, teachers receive three to four staff development days throughout the year. These days allow the AIG Specialists to work together on instructional units or work with PLCs in their school. The agenda for these days is created by the AIG Specialists.
Professional development will continue in PLCs. Working in PLCs, we focus on individual students in our classes. Teachers create instructional plans outlining how to meet the needs of students. Utilizing common assessments, NC Check-ins and benchmark data, flexible groups are created for class instruction as well as Intervention and Enrichment blocks. These formative assessments ensure classroom teachers and AIG Specialists know how gifted students are consistently performing. A data notebook and strategic plan is created and monitored. AIG Specialists are critical to the data discussion and helping to implement the strategic plan.

AIG Specialists conduct a beginning of the year training with all staff members to inform them of the requirements for AIG identification, characteristics of AIG learners, social and emotional supports as well as how services will be provided in the school. In addition, AIG Specialists will introduce "Booster Shots" provided to districts by NCDPI, during PLCs or after school small group instruction rotations.

AIG Specialists attend a variety of professional development experiences in order collaborate with others across the state and region. The district strongly promotes STEM, literacy and Advanced Placement professional development to ensure the needs of our AIG students are being addressed.

**Practice F**

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

**District Response:** Collaboration between AIG Specialists and classroom teachers allows for the improvement of the educational experience for gifted learners. Teachers need opportunities to refine skills, share successes, capitalize on teaching strengths, address concerns and problem-solve. Richmond County Schools encourages these opportunities. We currently utilize professional learning communities to improve instruction and to ensure collaboration.

We utilize the Professional Learning Community structure for the AIG Specialists to plan instructional strategies with teachers. This is a strong practice in the middle school but one that needs strengthening for elementary school. Due to the number of schools the AIG Elementary Specialists serve, the opportunity to meet consistently with PLCs is not always present. Even though PLCs are not always an option for planning, through emails and one-on-one contacts, consistent communication occurs to ensure we are meeting the needs of AIG students.

AIG Specialists meet periodically in District AIG PLCs. They will utilize Canvas and Google Drive to provide resource materials, exemplar lessons and differentiated materials. These lessons are shared in facilitated planning sessions with classroom teachers.

In addition to school PLC meetings, AIG Specialists are included in the facilitated planning sessions, district professional development and staff development days. The facilitated days allow the AIG Specialists and classroom teachers to pace content and standards, develop differentiated small group instruction and work stations materials. AIG Specialists help plan the work stations for the AIG students that promote rigor and critical thinking. The district content professional develop days are to strengthen Core Instruction and promote differentiation in whole and small group instruction. AIG Specialists often lead a session promoting a technology tool that is used in the district. On the staff
development days, AIG Specialists work with teachers on planning whole and small group instruction. These planning sessions ensure that AIG students are receiving rigorous and engaging instruction every day.

**Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:** Continue to increase AIG certified teachers in the district
Provide more professional development on differentiation methods

**Sources of Evidence:** Local AIG Plan
Steering Committee Meetings
Focus Group Meetings
Staff Development for AIG Specialists
Monitoring Checklist
Monthly PLC minutes
Screening Rosters
Folder Reviews
Test Data
PLC Minutes and Agendas
Professional Development Rosters
Headcount Verification forms
Parent Meetings
Conceptual Units
Seminar Schedules
Research and discussion on Social and Emotional needs of gifted learners
AIG Presentation at Board of Education meeting
AIG Presentation at Principal's meeting
AIG School Presentations
Professional Development Sign-ins
Professional Development monthly calendar and summer booklet
Plan with university
Increased licensure of AIG teachers
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: Richmond County Schools works to expand the relationships with parents, families and the community to build a partnership in order to support the needs of the AIG students. Communication among the AIG stakeholders is essential to ensure success of our AIG program.

We will increase strategies and efforts to share information about our AIG program. We use multiple media to disseminate information.

To increase community partnership and ensure that the needs of our AIG learners are met, AIG Specialists will maintain a presence throughout the academic year including, but not limited to, the following endeavors:
• Open House
• Title 1 Nights
• High school planning informational sessions
• Duke TIP parent meetings
• Governor’s School Information Session
• College Foundation of North Carolina Seminar
• Advanced Placement Session
• Social and emotional needs (PBIS)
• Resiliency Training Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
• Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

The AIG Specialists will hold AIG Focus Committee meetings with parents, teachers, and administrators at individual schools to discuss the details of the current plan, share concerns, address questions, and make suggestions in order to improve the plan and better support the gifted students. Information is also gathered annually through parent, teacher and student surveys.

In addition to the AIG Focus Committees at individual schools, the AIG Coordinator and Specialists partner with a variety of parents, teachers and administrators to form the District AIG Advisory Committee. The District AIG Advisory Committee discusses information about the program, such as the referral process and the identification process in order to better serve the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of the gifted students.

We will continue collaborations with NC Advanced Placement Partnership. This partnership has
allowed us to improve our current Advanced Placement program as well as providing opportunities on how to make our courses in middle school more rigorous.

In addition to the NCAPP, we also have partnerships with the following to support our gifted learners:

• Title IV grant that provides funding for STEM and Social and Emotional Learning

• Camp Millstone, a 4-H Camp, has a long partnership with our schools. Many experiences are provided such as 4-H Incubation and Embryology Project for second graders and various field trips to the camp to explore nature. These endeavors strengthen curriculum areas for our gifted learners.

• Richmond Community College (RCC) is a strong community partner. This partnership has allowed us to increase the college courses that our 11th and 12th graders take as dual enrolled students. Each year the number of students taking these Career and College Promise courses increases. RCC recently received a grant, RCC Guarantee, which allows eligible high school students to attend RCC tuition-free upon graduation, in order to earn an Associate of Arts or Science degree.

• Career Day – In partnering with our community, our middle schools host an annual Career Day. Students explore different career opportunities provided by community members informing them of the variety of career options available to them.

• Bright Idea Education Grants - North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives provide funds for projects to improve classroom instruction and innovative teaching methods. AIG Specialists have been recipients of this grant to improve opportunities for our AIG students.

• Community and elected officials have been guest speakers on a variety of topics related to units of study. Some examples are a beekeeper, Sheriff's Department Bloodhound Unit, K-9 Sheriff's Department Handler, Duke Energy Science Night, Performances from a variety of drama companies, StarLab Planetarium, NC BioNetwork Lab, etc.

• A variety of clubs exist to support social and emotional learning of our students. Community members and elected officials support our schools with these clubs. Examples are Real Men Read, Bow Tie Club, Girls in Pearls, Young Lady and Young Men’s Club, Beautiful You, etc. All of these efforts support social and emotional growth with strong positive role models.

• College Fair occurs at Richmond Senior High to provide students with college admission criteria. College representatives meet with students and discuss the advantages of the programs offered at their specific college.

Richmond County Schools continues to seek out partnerships with community members to ensure our gifted learners are exposed a variety of experiences.

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: Realizing that communication is imperative to the success of our program, the AIG Specialists and coordinator work with classroom teachers, both directly and indirectly. Communication with stakeholders is achieved through PLCs, home/school communications, automated calls to parents, district newsletters, parent conferences, progress reports and nine weeks grade reports.
At the elementary and middle school levels, communication with parents is fostered through newsletters, report cards, progress reports, and a district-wide AIG webpage. Richmond County Schools hosts biannual conference days for parents. AIG Specialists are available to meet with parents on those days to inform parents of upcoming opportunities. AIG Specialists have information available regarding our gifted program in the form of an AIG Parent Packet, PowerPoint, web-based apps and videos.

Richmond County Schools has all school board meetings televised. Annual presentations are made to our local school board that provide updates on our implementation of the program standards and practices, as well as spotlight gifted students for their academic endeavors. This will also keep our community informed.

Classroom teachers are a critical group to share information about the implementation of our AIG plan. We will conduct beginning of the year training sessions on our AIG plan. This will inform teachers and administrators about our plan and how we support gifted learners. Throughout the year, we plan to conduct AIG Focus Meetings to gather information about the AIG plan and ways it can be improved.

In addition to the teachers, we have been working with our counselors to improve experiences for our gifted learners. Counselors not only support emotional and social needs of learners; they also work with them on class selection and educational opportunities. A major focus with middle school counselors over the last three years has been on creating four-year high school plans. These plans include information on:

• Richmond Community College courses in high school
• North Carolina School of Math and Science – Residential and Virtual
• North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) – Online classes to offer courses that we currently do not offer face to face or courses offered in fifth periods or summer classes
• North Carolina Governor's School
• College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC)

Not only do counselors meet with each student, they also hold parent seminars to inform parents of the various opportunities that are available to their child in high school.

AIG Specialists support gifted learners by assisting them with scholarship and college applications. Students work with the AIG Specialists to improve their written components on scholarships and applications as well as providing feedback and suggestions.

The school system's collaboration with the Richmond County Daily Journal ensures that the newspaper highlights the wonderful things that occur in our gifted classrooms. Featured stories have included the Beta Club Convention Winners, Governor's School Selections, The Stock Market Game Winners and Duke TIP Participants, as well as chorus and art competitions.

**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:** Realizing that communication is imperative to the success of our program, AIG Specialists and Coordinator will work with an advisory group to develop, implement, and monitor the AIG program.

Currently, the AIG Coordinator is a representative on many advisory groups in the district. The following advisory groups are attended regularly in which periodic updates are given on the gifted education program:

- School Improvement Advisory Group
- School Health Advisory Committee
- Career and Technical Education Advisory Group
- Exceptional Children Advisory Group

These advisory groups have committee members representing various stakeholders. School administrators, teachers, community members, business partners, parents and other school personnel attend these advisory groups and assist in providing feedback on development and implementation of the AIG program.

The District AIG Advisory Committee meets to discuss the implementation of the AIG program. The committee is headed by the AIG Coordinator and comprised of the AIG Specialists, school-level administrators, curriculum directors, federal programs director, student services director, guidance counselor representing each grade span, parent per school, and community members.

These meetings occur each semester of the academic year to inform the stakeholders of AIG instructional activities and gather feedback to strengthen the AIG plan. These meetings allow us to revise and monitor the AIG plan, as well as share accomplishments that have occurred throughout the semester.

**Practice D**

Informs parents/families and the community of opportunities available to AIG students on an ongoing basis and in their native language.

**District Response:** The AIG department believes that a concentrated effort must be made to inform all parents/families of opportunities in their native language and make AIG services accessible to all.

Richmond County Schools utilizes ESL personnel to support the translation of all AIG materials, as well as mediating parent meetings. All messages go out in multiple languages.

There are scheduled times for AIG Specialists to collaborate with ESL teachers in an effort to identify and place minority students. On ESL Parent Nights, the AIG Specialists informs parents about the program.
We also encourage student leadership, through native language speakers, to present information to parents on AIG opportunities.

We will continue to communicate through multiple procedures and in multiple languages and support community opportunities.

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

**District Response:** Involving the community in the AIG program creates a strong foundation to enhance and gain support for the students and program services. Higher education institutions and local businesses open new opportunities for the gifted students.

The AIG Specialists are instrumental in supporting community/state sponsored activities and ensuring AIG students have experiences with these opportunities.

Some examples are:
- Science Olympiad
- Beta Club
- Summer Enrichment
- Duke TIP
- Summer Ventures
- Governor’s School
- Richmond Community College
- University of North Carolina at Pembroke
- Battle of the Books
- Battle of the Books and Beyond in Middle School
- STEM Initiatives
- Techy Kids Enrichment
- Coding – STEMerald City
- Sponsored 5Ks by students, as well as community
- Sociable Art
- ARTalympics
- Arts Alive
- Discovery Place Internships
- Camp Millstone
- The Stock Market Game SIFMA Foundation
- Partnership with community public libraries

AIG Specialists have partnered and will continue to seek grants with Pee Dee Electric through the Bright Ideas Grants to fund innovative units to extend experiences of the gifted students. Local business leaders and experts in various fields of endeavor volunteer to share their expertise.
AIG programs also need guest speakers that will provide information and learning experiences for gifted learners. The AIG Specialists will pursue guest speakers to enhance units taught in gifted pull out classes. For example, when we are teaching our stock market unit, we will have community members come in to provide information to support the unit and provide students with critical information that is needed to understand the big ideas of the unit.

We also have a high school career day that is a collaborative project with the Chamber of Commerce. This career day allows community members to provide critical information on a variety of careers in our area. The purpose of this event is to allow students to gain information on careers and understand the requirements needed to pursue each career.

Another partnership that supports our AIG program is the collaboration with Richmond Community College (RCC). Our gifted students are taking community college courses under Career and College Promise. These courses increase students' college experiences and provide them with experiences to prepare them for a four-year university. RCC continues to add courses that allow our students to take rigorous courses that transfer to universities. This partnership is critical to our AIG program and services because it allows unique college experiences for our students.

Richmond County Schools continually spotlights our gifted students through board meetings, awards assemblies and various media outlets. An example of a gifted student demonstrating leadership and community involvement was when one of our middle school students organized a 5K, Elves on the Run, to support purchasing gifts for needy families in our community.

We also have a close partnership with FirstHealth and Discovery Place, who organizes the Run for the Ribbons 5K and sponsored over one hundred students to participate in the race. Our student runners were spotlighted on Twitter and the website.

**Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:** Continue to explore partnerships to provide enriching experiences for gifted learners
Focus on professional development for STEM activities
Explore grants to increase STEM activities in AIG classrooms

**Sources of Evidence:**
Focus Meeting Agendas and Attendance
AIG Steering Committee Agendas and Attendance
Minutes from meetings
Parent, Teacher, Administrator & Student Survey
Seminar Information and attendance roster
Copy of home/school communication report
Copy of Newsletter
Sign in sheet from parent teacher conference day
Board Agendas
Parent Information Packet
PowerPoints from training sessions
List of parent/community participation in any capacity
Record of students recommended for/participating in community sponsored activities
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: Richmond County Schools has a comprehensive AIG plan describing the local AIG program in accordance with state legislation (article 9b).

Richmond County Schools’ AIG Coordinator and AIG Specialists analyzed data and feedback to guide the development of the new plan. We will implement, monitor and evaluate the AIG plan by collecting data to ensure the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of the gifted learners are met effectively and efficiently.

The revision process began during a professional development day in fall 2018; AIG Specialists did the self-assessment to determine the rating of each standard. The team discussed evidence that supports our assessment rating in each standard. Through continuous meetings and feedback data from surveys, the team worked to complete a plan that is cohesive and comprehensive in serving gifted students. The timeline for completion was May 2019 so that the plan would be presented to the school board June 2019.

Data collected from various stakeholders also ensures changes within the plan to meet the diverse needs of our community. Current EVAAS data reflects that 88% (146 out of 166) of our teachers meet or exceed expected growth. We realize that the strengthening of our core instruction has created the high growth that our schools are experiencing. However, we also know from our EOG / EOC data that we need to utilize more complex and rigorous instructional materials to increase our percentage of proficient students in all grades as well as those scoring level 5. Using data will assist us in monitoring and evaluating our local AIG program.

Our AIG plan provides opportunities for various stakeholders to assist in plan development and monitoring. Evaluation methods will continue through the duration of the plan to assist in continuous improvement and our self-assessments. We also attended DPI sponsored events to support the development and practices in our AIG plan. At the spring coordinator’s meeting several districts were spotlighted for their successes that provided our district with ways to strengthen and improve our plan.

In June 2019 this plan will go to the Richmond County School Board for approval.

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 local program will be monitored to ensure the fidelity of its implementation in accordance with current policies and the NC AIG Standards. The District AIG Coordinator will consistently monitor each school’s implementation of the plan. The implementation of the plan throughout the district will be evaluated for effectiveness utilizing various data collected throughout each year. Current data reflects that our implementation of the plan has areas that need to be strengthened. One area that needs strengthening is providing more opportunities for regional and state professional development for AIG Specialists and consistent AIG PLCs.

The District AIG Coordinator will continue to work closely with the AIG Specialists to ensure that we are implementing the plan to fidelity. Scheduled AIG PLCs will occur after school to examine the implementation of the local AIG plan. These PLCs will allow AIG Specialists to discuss the services they are providing to our schools.

Data collection is instrumental in assisting with monitoring the local AIG plan. We will annually collect data from our stakeholders to identify improvement opportunities. We encourage discussion and feedback of the local AIG plan implementation utilizing professional development sessions, principals’ meetings, grade level PLCs and School Improvement Team meetings. We will then annually report to our District AIG Advisory Committee the strengths and areas to improve in our current plan.

The District AIG Coordinator will review and collect evidence on the implementation of our AIG plan. This documentation will reveal how each school is implementing the local AIG plan as well as state standards.

Each school site will have flexibility for services as they make decisions and plan for their advanced learners, as the district team recognizes the diversity in our county. The AIG PLC meetings will assist us with ensuring consistency in the implementation of our AIG plan.

For 2019 – 2021, the process to monitor the local AIG plan will:

- required AIG Specialists PLCs
- collect annual data through surveys and google forms
- required school monitoring visits each semester
- gather screening rosters twice a year
- analyze test data in reading, math and science
- conduct parent and school personnel surveys
- require meetings with school needs determination teams and advisory groups

The District AIG Coordinator and AIG Specialists will analyze data collected to monitor the implementation of the plan and ensure that all practices align with current legislation and state policies.
**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:** Richmond County Schools continues to appropriately use and monitor state funds allotted to provide services for our gifted population. A majority of these funds cover AIG Specialists' salaries. Remaining funds are closely monitored through the district's Departments of Finance and Human Resources and the District AIG Coordinator. These funds are utilized to support our gifted program and ensure that the plan is implemented with fidelity.

The District AIG Coordinator is provided with the state AIG allotment. A budget is then developed based on the local AIG plan.

Our first priority is to have K – 8 AIG Specialists in our schools to provide direct services for gifted students. Our current budget allows us to employ four and a half positions that have been hired as AIG Specialists. Many service options in our plan require AIG Specialists to provide differentiated experiences for our gifted students in a resource setting. It is critical to allot funds for these positions. In addition to these positions, materials are provided to the AIG Specialists that allow them to provide rigorous, challenging instruction to our gifted learners, as well as testing materials to screen and identify students for the program.

Another priority for funding is creating K – 12 differentiated units that are complex and rigorous. We focus on "Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction" and evaluate annually our units based on data to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our learners.

Funding is also allotted to develop strong service options at the high schools. We have increased our Advanced Placement offerings and ensure that teachers receive materials and training to provide rigorous instruction in these Advanced Placement courses. We are also part of the North Carolina AP Partnership. This partnership provides training and support. This funding allows us to send teachers to AP trainings in the summer. With the support from the AP Partnership, we are able to send more teachers each summer.

The state funding and partnership will allow us to continue meeting the needs of our gifted learners and provide them with experiences needed to be College and Career Ready.

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

**District Response:** Monitoring and sharing student performance data on growth to assess individual needs is imperative to the success of the gifted program in Richmond County. Annual disaggregation of data from multiple sources is completed to determine the needs of our students.

June data meetings are conducted with all schools. Each principal presents their collection of data to the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Executive Directors, and Curriculum
Directors. The data presentations include data on identified gifted students. The principals include the EOG / EOC scores of the gifted students and if the AIG student's scale score showed positive or negative growth. During this presentation the principals also express ideas about improving instruction for gifted students based on data.

After each NC Check-In and district created common or benchmark assessments, the academic coaches in each school creates a data presentation that is shared with the Curriculum Directors and AIG Specialists. A major focus is on how each individual child does on the assessment. The data is analyzed by examining what the student's EOG / EOC score is and their percentage correct on the assessment. This helps to inform instruction and ensures stakeholders that our gifted students are receiving appropriate differentiated instruction in order to show growth. This also determines screening pool candidates.

Data is discussed with the AIG Specialists during our PLCs. They will also work with the classroom teachers to analyze instructional changes that may need to occur to ensure the growth of the AIG students. The gifted subgroup met growth in all schools. This is due to the strong collaboration between the AIG Specialist and classroom teacher.

Data from Advanced Placement exams are also analyzed to determine the percentage of students who score a three or better on each test. In the 2018 AP test administration, only 46% of our students scored a three or higher on the AP Exam. As we analyze this data, some students are not demonstrating scores on the assessments that are reflected by their semester class grade. This has created conversations about rigor. We have examined courses that are successful with threes or higher. These teachers are sharing ideas and strategies that have made a difference in their classrooms. The AP success rate will continue to be monitored.

The District AIG Coordinator works closely with the Director of Accountability and Testing to analyze all data. The coordinator receives data on all state tests and performance indicators reports and subgroup data that determine each school's accountability.

The data from the 2018 school year reflects that 88% of our teachers met or exceeded expected growth. Our proficiency is also increasing at all grade levels. Six years ago, Richmond County Schools had a 25%-point gap from the state average. In 2018, that gap has been reduced to a 4% difference from the state. Our high school graduation rate has also increased to 84%. The high school administrative team works closely with the curriculum directors to track students who in danger of not completing in four years or dropping out. Students receive support from counselors and consistent follow-up meetings.

In January of each school year, the district invites the top thirty students from the previous graduating class to a luncheon. The students are asked a series of questions about their preparedness for college. Over the last couple of years, the students claim that they are prepared for college but would like to see more writing experiences in their high school classes. They consistently discuss how much writing they are required to do in college. As a result of these meetings, a writing plan has been created that will provide more writing opportunities while in high school. We also have increased our dual enrollment numbers with our collaboration with Richmond Community College. In the 2018 – 2019 school year over 500 students have taken classes at the community college. Through effective four year plans, we work with students on the courses taken so that they receive credit in a variety of university pathways based on their potential program of study.
All AIG students take at least one community college class.

Although achievement for all students is increasing, under-served populations are an area we are closely watching. We have an increasing gap with the identification of students from under-served populations. Current data reflects that the AIG program is serving 28% nonwhite students when the total enrollment population is 56% nonwhite students. This is an area of concern that will require consistent data collection that will monitor the trends. The plan will be to look at identification each quarter instead of the two headcount times, fall and spring.

**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:** Richmond County Schools AIG Coordinator and Specialists examine all data from local assessments, North Carolina K-3 Assessments, as well as EOG/EOC, SAT, ACT score reports to identify strengths of students. This is done continuously as data becomes available.

It is important to continue to explore strategies and alternative identification methods that accurately assess under-represented populations for gifted services. Consistent monitoring is critical to ensure that we are actively seeking and exploring ways to identify and serve our under-represented populations. For example, we communicate with our ESL teachers to identify strengths of our EL learners and how we can develop their talents.

Students will be identified through a comprehensive profile process that includes:

- test data
- giftedness scales
- referrals
- portfolio options

Annual data reports, such as screening rosters and headcount, will reveal diverse populations, identification numbers, growth numbers and services. Screening rosters from the fall semester reflect that we have a diverse pool for identification and that many underserved populations are screened.

Current data reflects that the AIG program is serving 28% nonwhite students when the total enrollment population is 56% nonwhite students. This is not a trend that is observed in all Academically Gifted areas. At our high school, Governor's School is more than 50% nonwhite applicants.

To ensure that we are monitoring these under-served populations, we will:

- collect and review the number of students from under-represented populations that are identified as Academically Intellectually Gifted at least twice a year based on the headcount
- collect screening rosters twice a year to analyze screening procedures
- analyze and monitor trends in screening and identification of under-served populations
• analyze and monitor Advanced Placement representation by diverse students
• use NC Check-Ins as a way to identify students for AIG

The AIG Specialists continuously monitors data and advocates fostering strong relationships with our under-served AIG populations. As we monitor performance, we utilize counseling services and provide targeted supports for academic deficits.

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

**District Response:** Richmond County Schools currently employs four and a half AIG Specialists, who are under obligation to be licensed in order to serve our gifted population.

To encourage teachers who are not AIG certified, Richmond County Schools offers reimbursement funds to one teacher each year who wish to earn this add-on license. They must verify that they have completed the appropriate coursework and have an overall B average or higher in order to receive reimbursement. This opportunity is offered in hopes that we can grow our list of certified AIG teachers in Richmond County Schools.

Annually, the AIG Coordinator examines the teachers that have an AIG license. This allows for assisting principals with cluster grouping students with personnel that understands gifted learners based on their coursework. These reports are provided by our Human Resources Department.

The AIG Coordinator will also monitor Advanced Placement training for high school teachers. The goal is for all teachers who teach an AP class to receive the week long summer training prior to teaching the course and then attend annual training sessions that provide updates to support their knowledge and pedagogy in an AP course. Currently 100% of the teachers teaching and AP course have attended the week long training.

**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:** Revision and reflection on maintaining a quality program for academically and intellectually gifted learners is ongoing in an effort to provide optimal gifted services. We will utilize the Continuous Improvement Cycle to analyze, evaluate and improve our AIG program.

The Continuous Improvement Cycle is used to review and revise our local AIG program. This ongoing cycle will allow us to collaborate and gather feedback on processes that need to be strengthened. The Continuous Improvement Cycle utilizes multiple sources of data for continuous program improvement. It includes but is not limited to the following:

• Yearly program surveys
• Established and maintained focus group minutes
• AIG District Advisory Group

Richmond County Schools will gather data to improve methods to meet our AIG learners. Annually we will gather feedback from our graduates in a focus group meeting in January. This feedback has created changes in our courses and implementation of the AIG program in our middle and high school based on the graduates’ feedback and suggestions. Consistently graduates state that they need more writing in high school courses and more rigor.

In an effort to gather data from parents, students and teachers, annual surveys are sent in the spring. The questions ask about the program and the experiences with the AIG program. The student survey from this year expressed that students wanted more time with the AIG teachers. Students feel that they are supported by the AIG teacher and that differentiated assignments are provided in classes. After the data is collected from the surveys the AIG Coordinator and Specialists review the data and make changes in the AIG program.

Another format for feedback on the implementation of the AIG plan is provided during PLCs and school level facility meetings. Scheduling and support for our gifted learners is discussed and impact what the AIG Specialist provide at a school.

To gather feedback from principals, the AIG Coordinator attended principals’ meeting. In these meetings we share important information about programs. The discussion about programs is what is going well and what are some opportunities for growth. At a recent principals’ meeting we had discussion on AP and community college courses. The high school principal had discussed with his AP teachers the need to change AP courses from A/B day to semester. Based on his discussion with teachers and presenting this to the AIG Coordinator, AP courses will be done in a semester for 2019 – 2020.

Once we collect the data, we examine our vision to determine if this is the direction that we want to go based on the alignment with the Richmond County Schools’ vision and mission.

After we determine the vision alignment, we put action plans in place to explain what we are going to change or implement. The action plans will be monitored and evaluated by the district coordinator to determine if this action plan is in the best interest of our AIG students. An example of this vision alignment is when Richmond County Schools implemented small group instruction in K – 12 classrooms. The AIG Coordinator met with AIG Specialists to discuss how they would support small group instruction in the classrooms. Now our AIG Specialists are often in classrooms teaching a small group of AIG students rigor skill-based lessons.

The District AIG Coordinator will provide information about the successful implementation of the AIG plan to groups annually.

Practice H
Utilizes multiple sources of data to review and revise the local AIG program and plan during comprehensive program evaluation.
**District Response:** Richmond County Schools consistently utilizes data to ensure AIG programming meets the needs of our AIG learners. Data is gathered from sources such as surveys, focus groups, social media platforms, and parents/community meetings. These sources of data allow us to gather critical information used to revise our AIG plans.

Data from student focus groups help the AIG Coordinator make program improvements. Current focus groups have suggested an emphasis on the need for more rigorous writing and coursework at the high school level. Middle school focus groups want more time with AIG Specialists. They currently spend time in groups utilizing literature circles in small group instruction focusing on reading standards. The elementary focus group wanted more time with the AIG Specialists and loved the activities that the AIG Specialists planned. These focus groups are done annually to gather data and make changes in the AIG program. We now have 4 ½ AIG Specialists as a result of these focus group meetings.

Our annual parent, student and educator survey is done in the spring to assist the district with program evaluation. The data is reviewed in an AIG PLC. The coordinator and specialists examine the positive and negative comments for patterns and trends. We then make decisions about how to improve our AIG program.

In the fall, the AIG Coordinator examines subgroup data provided in reports from the NCDPI Accountability Division. The coordinator and specialists will share with schools how well the AIG subgroup is performing and what are opportunities for growth. We look at if the school met growth with the AIG subgroup. If the subgroup did not meet the EVAAS Growth, we discuss critical changes that must occur in the AIG program. Fortunately, all of our schools met growth with the AIG subgroup. We drill down to determine improvements needed for AIG students since growth in EVAAS goes from positive 2 to negative 2. The coordinator then works with specialists to discuss how to better serve AIG students and provide more rigorous experiences.

Once we receive the data and analyze the patterns and trends observed, we meet with the AIG District Advisory group and share the data. Then changes are made based on the discussion. This occurs in the spring so that any changes can be implemented in the following school year.

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

**District Response:** Richmond County Schools Board of Education expects transparency with all decisions regarding the students in our schools. All board meetings are videoed and aired live on a local channel. The newspaper is also at all board meetings. We have had opportunities to discuss the AIG plan at board meetings and will continue to provide regular updates and information.

The District AIG Coordinator will review all aspects of the AIG program with school administrators, the local school board, and parents. Richmond County Schools will maintain and refine our collection of data to make consistent data-informed decisions.
**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:** In order to meet the individual needs of our gifted learners; we honor the policies and procedures that safeguard their rights in accordance to Article 9B. The primary goal is to ensure that gifted learners receive the academic services that enable them to maximize their potential.

Article 9B drives the development, improvement, and implementation of the Richmond County gifted program as evidenced by our AIG plan. The Richmond County AIG Program mirrors the state policies and procedures governing the administration of gifted programs and services.

We realize that Due Process rights protect our AIG students and help resolve disagreements.

AIG Placement Process:
A student who is screened for AIG and requires additional testing to determine if they meet the criteria will receive a Consent to Test form. Once this form is signed by the parent/guardian, the school has 30 days to complete testing.

Once testing is complete, parents are notified to attend a meeting and receive copies of all assessments and identification materials. Prior to the parent meeting, the Needs Determination Team will meet and decide on identification or the need for additional information.

At the parent meeting, services are explained and parents sign the Differentiated Education Plan.

Transfer Students:
If a student transfers to Richmond County Schools from another district, the Needs Determination Team evaluates the identification information and services the student received. We match the services to our services based on the information.

Student – Parent Rights
If parents agree with the Differentiation Education Plan services begin the next day.

If the parents disagree with the Differentiation Education Plan, the parent will follow the Review of Disagreement process.

Richmond County Schools has the following Review of Disagreement process:

Local Administrative Unit
If a parent or guardian disagrees with the local school administrative unit when 1) a child is not identified as an academically or intellectually gifted student or 2) concerning the appropriateness of services offered to the academically or intellectually gifted student the parent must submit to the AIG Team, through the principal, a letter stipulating specific areas of concern. The parents may request a conference to discuss the concerns and seek resolution. The members of the AIG Team and the principal will review the specific areas of concern and respond to the parent or guardian.
District AIG Coordinator
If the concerns have not been resolved, the parent may appeal the principal's decision and request that the disagreement be reviewed by the District AIG Coordinator. The Coordinator will review the specific areas of concern regarding identification and/or services. The District AIG Coordinator will respond to the principal and parent.

Associate Superintendent for Curriculum
If the Coordinator and parent cannot resolve the disagreement, the parent may appeal in writing to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum. The Superintendent for Curriculum or his designee shall review the areas of disagreement and a written response shall be made to the parent or guardian and the principal.

Superintendent
If the disagreement is still not resolved, the parent or guardian may appeal the Superintendent for Curriculum decision to the Superintendent in writing. A panel will review the decision and offer a final written decision.

Contested Case Hearing
In the event that the procedure developed under G.S. 115C-150.87 (b)(7) fails to resolve a disagreement, the parent or guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The scope of review shall be limited to i) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted student or ii) whether the local plan developed under G.S. 115C – 150.7 has been implemented appropriately with regard to the child. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains finding of fact and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on the parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

At any point in the hierarchy of discussions, the school system may consider the possibility of mediation with an impartial facilitator.

**Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:** Strengthen process for plan evaluation
Continue to attend state and regional level AIG meetings

**Sources of Evidence:** Student rosters
Staff development rosters
Meeting agendas
DEP's
Newsletter
Parent/student survey results
AIG specialist communication logs
Steering Committee
Budget
Data reports
Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):
AIG Board Approve 2019.pdf (Local Board Approval Document)