

Overview: Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Swain County Schools (870) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

* LEA Superintendent's Name:

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Swain County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2021). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide Public School Units (PSUs) to develop, implement, and monitor 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 aligned to NC's AIG legislation, Article 9B (N. C. G. S. 115C150.5). These best practices help to clarify the standard, describe what a PSU should have in place, and guide PSUs to improve their programs. In an effort to continue to transform AIG programs and align to the NC AIG Program Standards, each PSU has participated in a self-assessment process of their local AIG program, involving multiple stakeholders. The data gathered during this process has guided PSUs in their development of this local AIG plan for 2022-2025. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's local board of education or charter school's board of directors and sent to NC DPI for comment.

For 2022-2025, the Swain County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

* Mission and/or Vision Statement(s)

The Swain County Academically/Intellectually Gifted program aims to provide these unique learners with experiences which support their academic growth, develop their leadership skills, and promote a balanced approach to life. The array of services provided to them is structured to meet their varying needs. Possible service options include:

enrichment classes, specialized peer academic groups, project based activities, academic competitions, accelerated curriculum, differentiated lessons, and academic counseling. Through integration with regular educational programs, personalized and challenging educational experiences will enrich and extend the curriculum for academically and intellectually gifted learners. This collaborative approach allows learning opportunities to be maximized and fosters continuous improvement of efforts.

Swain County's vision for the Academically/Intellectually Gifted program includes the following:

1. identifying all students who perform or show potential for performing at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, environment, or subgroup
2. providing these students with an array of services by the total school community to ensure that they receive appropriate, unique learning experiences that maximize their growth and address their academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs
3. providing comprehensive and ongoing professional development for teachers concerning the needs of gifted learners and best practices for fostering their growth and development.
4. increasing collaboration and strengthening partnerships between Swain County Schools AIG program, its stakeholders, and the community at large
5. continuously reviewing the program policies and processes to improve programs and services provided to our AIG students

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2022)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* \$ 108,381.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 0.00

Standard 1: Student Identification

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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 both screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels. Provides opportunities for every student to show their strengths and talents.

The district has developed screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels. These processes and procedures have been in place for formal identification in grades 4-12 during the previous plan cycle. AIG identification will occur at all grade levels beginning with kindergarten.

The referral process may be initiated by any of the following:

1. Nomination by teacher
2. Nomination by parent
3. Nomination by other school staff/community member
4. Nomination by self
5. Recommendation through universal screening
6. Recommendation as a result of regular assessment data review

Nominations for the AIG program are accepted at any time during the year. Most nominations occur as a result of screening and performance review processes. Universal aptitude screening tests (CogAT) for students in Grades 4 and 7 are administered during September of each school year. Review of these results by the AIG specialists, AIG coordinator, and school principals produces a pool of potential candidates for nomination. Review of achievement results such as mCLASS for Reading, iReady benchmarks for math and English language arts, BOG percentiles, EOG

or EOC percentiles, and KEA are performed regularly by classroom teachers and the AIG specialist. These reviews may suggest additional students for the pool for nominations.

Steps in the referral and placement process include:

1. Teacher, parent, student, or other completed nomination form.
2. Nomination form is received by AIG specialist.
3. Additional information is collected by AIG specialist
 - a. Observed traits of giftedness-completed by teacher
 - b. Academic performance measures
 - c. Normed formative and/or benchmark assessments
 - d. State or national tests of academic proficiency
 - e. Classroom performance measures or grades
 - f. Results of test of cognitive ability/skills (CogAT)
 - g. Work samples
4. Preliminary completion of scoring rubric by AIG specialist
5. Review of nomination and supporting information by school-based AIG committee
6. Three possible placement decisions by committee
 - a. Student is recommended for placement
 - i. Placement category determined
 - 1) AR--Academically Gifted in Reading
 - 2) AM--Academically Gifted in Math
 - 3) AG--Academically Gifted in Reading and Math
 - 4) AIG--Academically and Intellectually Gifted
 - 5) IG--Intellectually Gifted
 - ii. Parent notification and request for conference are sent
 - iii. Initial Parent Conference for placement is held
 - 1) Review of information that led to placement decision
 - 2) Development of Differentiated Education Plan (DEP)

- 3) Permission for DEP services; parent signatures
- 4) Receipt of copy of Parental Rights Document
- 5) Communications plan; contact information

b. Recommendation for further testing for student

- i. Parent notification of nomination and school-based committee's need for additional information
- ii. Request for written permission for further individual testing
- iii. Offer for conference (face-to-face or by phone)
- iv. Copy of Parental Rights Document is sent
- v. Placement committee reconvenes
- vi. Placement decision made
- vii. Follow-up letter sent to parent to request conference
- viii. Receipt of copy of Parental Rights Document

c. Placement on "Wait and Watch List"

- i. No parent notification
- ii. Students may participate in some enrichment activities with teacher recommendation
- iii. Nominations are reviewed by school-based placement committee at least annually with updated performance data

Although face-to-face meetings between the AIG specialist and the parent are preferred, if a parent is unable to attend such a conference, a phone conference can be held with the parent sending permission signatures to the school by mail or directly with the student.

*** 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.

Criteria for AIG student identification include measures of student aptitude, multiple measures of student achievement, academic performance measures, teacher and/or parent observations of behaviors of giftedness, and student work samples. Placement rubrics for grades K-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12 have been developed. Copies of placement rubrics are included in the appendix section of this plan. Although common identification criteria are

considered at all grade levels, differentiated rubrics allow placement teams to clearly consider data that is available for each grade span. In general, scores in the top 10 percentile range are considered strong evidence of giftedness. As placement indicators are determined for grades K-3, top 10% performance in comparison to grade level peers will be used as a strong indicator for giftedness in these grade levels.

1. Observed Gifted Characteristics by a Teacher (may include artifacts of student work)
2. Achievement Test Results (BOG, EOG, EOC, ACT)
3. Other Standardized State or National Assessment Results (mCLAS,iReady benchmark assessments, NCENSI, Pre-ACT, ACT, SAT)
4. Aptitude in 90th percentile or above (CogAT)--Full Scale, Verbal, or Perceptual Reasoning
5. Academic Performance in Core Academic Subjects
6. Work samples demonstrating unique abilities in problem-solving, creativity, and practical applications.

Generally, students who demonstrate performance at the 90th percentile or above on 4 out of the 5 categories (using any of the indicator scores) may qualify for placement in the AIG program. Students may place in math (AM), in ELA (AR), or in both (AG) via this pathway.

Additionally, students may place in the AIG program with the Intellectually Gifted (IG) designation via a single indicator, 97th percentile performance on a full-scale score of aptitude, usually the CogAT test. The Academically and Intellectually Gifted designation (AIG) indicates a student who meets both placement requirements for AG and IG.

Students who have been nominated, but do not place via the traditional route may be referred for individual testing of aptitude and achievement with the school psychologist. Teachers may also collect additional evidence such as samples of work, anecdotal records, and questionnaires for the student or others who may know the nominee outside of the school setting. These additional types of evidence can also be used to build a more complete learner profile. Such students will be re considered by the placement committee once this information is collected.

Students who do not meet the placement criteria remain in the pool of possible candidates; their nominations are reviewed each year with updated performance data generated from universal screening and regularly-scheduled assessments as well as updated teacher observations and checklists.

Placement committees at each school consist of the AIG specialists, regular education teachers, and an administrator. When additional perspectives may be beneficial, the district AIG coordinator, school psychologists,

school counselor, Career and Technical Educators, and Exceptional Children's personnel may be included in placement meetings.



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*** 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.

In order to ensure that our AIG screening, referral, and identification procedures are responsive to our total school population, we analyze our AIG enrollment trends for ethnicity, economic indicators, and gender each year. According to last year's enrollments, the AIG population generally aligns with total enrollment patterns in terms of ethnicity and gender. However, the percentage of AIG students receiving Free or Reduced Lunch is significantly lower than that of the general school population.

Because our latest identification process includes multiple opportunities on multiple types of assessments for students to demonstrate performance in the 90th percentile range, our enrollment numbers in AIG more closely match the state average than they did in the past. We are encouraged by this trend, but recognize the need to more closely analyze the influence of socio-economic factors on our placement processes.

Nominations are actively sought from Native American tutors, English Language Learners teachers, and exceptional children's staff. Nonverbal subtest scores may be used for placement decisions for students. The CogAT was chosen as a universal screener partially due to its array of subtests which help to separate out the effect of verbal/language ability from other aptitude measures. Assessments in the student's native language are also available for use as needed.

*** Practice D**

Monitors the screening, referral, and identification processes for consistent implementation across the LEA.

During the last three years, our AIG staff have met together once per quarter for half-day work sessions and on three extra workdays in the summer. A main focus for these meetings has been to clearly define our placement criteria, processes, and rubrics. The results include standardized rubrics for placement which have been implemented at placement meetings at all schools.

One elementary AIG specialist serves our two elementary schools, ensuring consistency of processes between schools at the elementary level. We have three AIG advisors at the middle school level and one AIG advisor at the high school level. Whenever there is a question regarding a placement issue, the AIG specialists consult with each other and the AIG coordinator to gain a district-level perspective.

New student registration materials now include a description of the AIG program in Swain County Schools and a request for information regarding if the student was in an AIG program in his or her previous school setting. Inclusion of the AIG designation in PowerSchool/HomeBase also helps to identify those students more efficiently. Students transferring from another AIG program are immediately considered by school-based placement committees for meeting the local placement standards

The purchase of on-line testing capacity for the Cog-AT will facilitate a more timely consideration of placements for students transferring in from the Charter School in our district (or other schools which do not provide universal screening of academic and/or intellectual aptitude). Waiting for individual testing with our one school psychologist has been a barrier to placement of such transfer students.

*** Practice E**

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

Information regarding the AIG student identification process is presented to the faculty at each school at least once per year, usually during a faculty meeting at the beginning of the school year. Information presented includes characteristics of giftedness along with descriptions of the referral/nomination, screening, and identification processes. These meetings are facilitated by the district AIG coordinator and/or the school AIG specialists. The AIG specialist follows up with additional information for individual teachers as needed or requested. Professional development sessions regarding identification issues, including underrepresentation of sub-groups allows for more in-depth discussion of these topics.

Information regarding nomination and identification processes are posted to the district website. Parents and teachers may access needed forms using the links provided. Notebooks with print versions of the same materials are also available in each school office.

General informational meetings for parents are held at our two elementary schools each year to provide an overview of the AIG nomination and identification process. In the past, our presentation has been included in the agenda for general PTO meetings. We have also held additional meetings during the spring semester at each elementary school specifically for parents of third grade students since our formal identification process previously had begun at the end of the third grade year. We invited all third grade parents to the meetings via print invitations included in take-home folders and provided meeting reminders via Connect-Ed calls. Parents could attend the meeting offered at either school. The meeting times provided two options to allow for differing parent schedules: one for immediately after school and the other for a 7:00 PM meeting start.

On parent surveys in 2022, parents indicated there is a lack of knowledge and explanation regarding the AIG identification process and services. The outreach to parents is an area that needs to be improved. A revitalized AIG Advisory Group has provided feedback with practical suggestions for improving this practice.

*** 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.

Program documents have been developed and are being utilized at each grade level and in all schools. Those documents include information about the identification process and service options for AIG students. Folders for all AIG students are secured in locked cabinets at the schools by the AIG specialists.

These folders include DEP's and other information pertinent to the child's placement such as the completed placement rubric for the AIG program. Forms for nomination and placement decisions are signed and dated. Non-placement folders are also maintained in a similar manner. All student folders are moved to the next school as the student advances. Each year AIG specialists meet together to transfer folders at transition levels.

An annual, informal audit of sample folders is performed by the AIG coordinator. This process may include a review of the completeness of documentation, including signatures and dates, as well as a review of the timeline for placement

from nomination to parent meeting for DEP development. At the end of the 2019 school year, a more complete audit including all student folders will be completed.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- The AIG website is hidden on the district site, so we need to make it more accessible. Each school needs a link to the district webpage or individual AIG page.
- Include AIG information in the beginning of the year packet
- Utilize PowerSchool for documentation of DEP's
- Provide equity professional development focused on AIG and underserved populations
- Host AIG transition parent meetings as students transfer from 5th to 6th and 8th to 9th grade to share opportunities at each grade span.
- Create a AIG referral flow chart to share with parents and regular education teachers.
- revise K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 identification rubrics to better identify underserved populations
- Separate subgroup data to examine top 10% of each subgroup for potential AIG identification
- Examine/research move to using local norms.
- communication protocol for EC teachers to update AIG coordinators for potential twice exceptional students

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * Agenda and Sign-in sheets for parent meetings
- * Updated AIG webpage
- * AIG referral/identification Flowchart
- * AIG Coordinators Meeting Agendas
- * Log and roster of attendees for AIG Professional Development offerings
- * Data to track AIG referrals, identifications, and watch list students that include suspected areas, demographics, and subgroup

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
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AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	
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Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

The LEA provides a K-12 AIG program with an array of services by the total school community to meet the diverse academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners. These services will develop students' strengths through intentional learning experiences in various domains that are not dependent on the students' demographic background or economic means.

*** Practice A**

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners, across all grade levels and learning environments through collaboration with a variety of personnel. Services are aligned to students' advanced learning needs and AIG identification.

Elementary AIG

Gifted students in Grades K-3 are served within the regular classroom through flexible grouping and personalized instruction for ELA and math instruction which allows for differentiation of instructional materials and tasks, and the elementary AIG specialist teaches whole class STEM activities . One AIG specialist is shared between the two elementary schools. The elementary AIG specialist works in both push-in and pull-out models, depending on the purposes of the activities planned with the regular classroom teacher

Elementary Grades K-3 options include:

- A. Early admission to kindergarten
- B. Cluster grouping in regular classroom
- C. AIG Specialist delivers whole group STEM Activities
- D. Flexible grouping within regular class setting
- E. Technology supported personalized learning
- F. AIG Teacher as a resource and support for the classroom teacher

- G. Across grade/team level grouping
- H. Grade or subject level acceleration

Elementary Grades 4-5 options include:

- A. Differentiated Education Plan in subject of identified strengths
- B. Cluster grouping in regular classroom
- C. Flexible grouping within regular class setting
- D. Technology supported learning
- E. AIG Teacher as a resource and support for the classroom teacher in the identified areas of strength of the student
- F. Across grade/team level grouping
- G. Independent Study, or Independent Instruction
- H. Grade or subject level acceleration

Enrichment pull-out sessions offer K-5 AIG students opportunities for in-depth study of one or two subjects per year. These subjects/topics are aligned to the NCSCOS, but extend, enrich, or accelerate study of concepts. Components of the enrichment classes include issues in social and emotional growth of the student. Peer relationships and teacher-student relationships are also addressed.

Middle Grades AIG

The middle grades AIG program is facilitated by 3 part-time AIG specialists, one for each grade level. His/her additional duties include providing services as a classroom teacher. The 6th grade specialist also provides services through a Robotics elective and collaborates with another teacher to provide an AIG elective which focuses on project based learning and developing writing skills. The 7th and 8th grade specialists provide services through an advanced ELA class, provide opportunities for students to engage in advanced grouping/activities and meet with parents and students to develop personalized education plans for each AIG student.

Middle Grades 6-8 service options include:

- A. Differentiated Education Plan in subject of identified strengths
- B. Cluster grouping in ELA and math; heterogeneous in other subjects
- C. Flexible grouping within regular class setting
- D. Technology supported learning
- E. AIG Teacher as a resource and support for the classroom teacher in the identified areas of strength of the student

- F. Across grade/team level grouping: Independent Study, or Independent Instruction
- G. Across grade/team level grouping: Grade or subject level acceleration
- H. Enrichment/Extension AIG Class as an elective for 6th grade students; strongly recommended one semester. Exceptions are granted for Robotics, Band, and other electives as demonstrated by student interest.
- I. Academic competitions
- J. After school enrichment programs
- K. Math 1 in a 4/3 Model

9-12 AIG

- In grades 9-12, the AIG program is facilitated by an academic specialist advisor for AIG students. High School Grades 9-12 service options include:
- A. Differentiated Education Plan/Develops a 4-Year Academic Plan designed to help the student meet his or her high school and post high school goals. Course options within their subject of identified strength are discussed. Opportunities for parents and students to revisit the plan are provided each year.
 - B. Heterogeneous grouping in regular classroom
 - C. Flexible grouping within regular class setting
 - D. Technology supported learning
 - E. Honors Classes
 - F. Advanced Placement Classes
 - G. Dual enrollment at the community college
 - H. On-line distance learning
 - I. Enrichment programs in after school programs and extracurricular activities
 - J. Academic competitions
 - K. Visits to colleges
 - L. Service learning/leadership opportunities
 - M. College awareness, preparation, application assistance activities
 - N. Information and assistance with applications to specialized residential programs
 - O. Opportunities to achieve Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

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*** Practice B**

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners, across all grade levels and learning environments through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.

Swain County students are placed in programs and are served on the basis of gifted identification. Students are challenged to develop their individual strengths across curricular areas. Swain County is a Leader in ME (Covey) school district. All students K-8 are taught Leader in Me Lessons either by the school guidance counselor or classroom teacher. Students are also encouraged to participate in leadership opportunities including Student Lighthouse Team, Action Teams, and other school based student leadership roles.

Each school has a certified counselor who provides support for all students and parents, including AIG students and their parents. School counselors are knowledgeable of issues faced by gifted students and provide individual and group instruction as needs are identified. In some cases, the school-based committee includes the school counselor as a standing member of the committee. AIG specialists in elementary and middle schools plan specific units delivered in AIG enrichment classes and choose specific instructional materials to initiate discussion and reflection related to the social and emotional needs of AIG students. Leadership groups at the middle school further address personal development using the principles of The Leader in Me program.

The middle school AIG specialists/advisors and the high school AIG Advisor proactively monitor grades and attendance for AIG students. These teachers add an extra level of support by arranging and/or participating in parent meetings to address issues of grades, attendance, or behavior for AIG students.

At the high school, the AIG specialist advises students about career and college choices. The AIG specialist can attend parent and teacher conferences to help facilitate progress in achievement and growth of the student.

In the elementary setting, AIG extends and enriches the curriculum being taught in the regular classroom. AIG pull-out classes use multi-disciplinary, project-based learning activities. The AIG specialist also uses the push-in model when scheduling and academic purposes allow, particularly in elementary math classes.

At the middle school level, students are cluster grouped for ELA and math instruction in the regular classroom. Subject specific grouping decisions may be influenced by AIG placement data. The AIG enrichment class at the middle school also focuses on project-based extensions of the regular curriculum and opportunities for students to develop 21st

century skills. Additional SEL support is offered at SMS through Monday Meetings that include guest speakers, student speakers and activities aligned to the months Leader in Me theme.

At the high school level, students and parents have many choices for students to pursue advanced learning in different subjects based on their abilities, interests, and college and career goals. Those opportunities include honors, AP, and college course offerings; CTE pathway programs; individual online and/or distance learning options; Credit by Demonstrated Mastery; service learning opportunities; internships; and leadership roles and responsibilities.

*** Practice C**

Integrates and connects the AIG program and services with the district's priorities and resources through policy and practice.

Swain County School integrates and connects the AIG program and services with the district's priorities and resources by including AIG representation in district planning and decision making. The district's AIG coordinator serves as the Chief of Academic Operations for the LEA and is involved in the Strategic Planning, AIG Program planning, MTSS, PLC planning, and other LEA initiatives. The district AIG coordinator meets with school based coordinators to identify strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the AIG program. The district Coordinator is able to share the needs to the district planning team. Swain considers the AIG programming staffing as a strength to the AIG program. It is significant to have a district office influence on the needs of the AIG program.

*** Practice D**

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

Students in grades K-8 may be served in class through differentiated education plans for the identified areas of reading and/or math. These plans are developed collaboratively by the regular classroom teacher, the AIG specialist, and the parent. Topics for the AIG classroom are planned to extend and enrich standards addressed in the regular classroom. Development of district course maps and pacing guides serve as a resource to facilitate alignment of AIG activities with regular classroom curriculum delivery. All students in Grades K - 5, including AIG students can participate in reading and math instructional groups based on their achievement levels as determined by on-going formative assessment, rather than groups based on age/grade parameters.

In Grades 6-8, students are placed in homogeneous groups for reading and math instruction based on achievement patterns. Options for advanced courses are available to middle school students in math and in science.

In Grades 9 - 12, students may self-select honors and AP courses based on areas of strengths. They may also choose acceleration through college, and on-line course work, and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery. The high school AIG Specialist Advisor assists students with course selection and encourages students to pursue advanced coursework that aligns with their abilities, interests, and goals.

At all levels, a district-level emphasis on STEM activities is reflected in the selection of tasks and projects for the AIG pull-out classes, academic competitions, and afterschool clubs. AP classes at the high school are now taught in conjunction with Career and College Promise courses, encouraging more students to enroll in these challenging academic classes

*** Practice E**

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.

The district website has a page devoted to AIG information, services, and policies. The webpage offers an overview of the screening, identification, and placement processes as well as various forms that stakeholders may need. These resources include nomination forms for teachers and parents, the placement criteria and categories, and parent rights and responsibilities information. Links to additional resources including enrichment programs for AIG students and parents are also provided.

General informational meetings are held annually for teachers and for parents. Often, these meetings are part of a broader agenda with inadequate time to devote to the AIG program. Parent teacher meetings are often not well-attended. On the 8th Grade Parent Night, the high school AIG specialist meets with the AIG 8th grade parents/students. Holding this meeting prior to the general 8th grade meeting has been more successful in terms of participation rates. While information is made available, there is a need to find ways to disseminate the information more effectively. Faculty and administrators who serve on school-based committees are better informed regarding the local AIG program, plan, and services than the general school staff.

School AIG coordinators participate in PLCs to provide support for classroom teachers to meet the needs of students in

the AIG program. AIG coordinators present information on the AIG program such as referral, placement, and programming options at the beginning of the year back to school faculty meetings.

*** Practice F**

Communicates among and between teachers and schools to ensure an effective continuation of K-12 services, especially at key transition points.

There are strong communication links between the AIG specialist/advisors in our district. Quarterly meetings for collaboration and planning are held for the AIG staff. Two additional paid workdays are provided at the end of each school year. These collaborative meetings allow time to discuss transition students and related issues, to reconsider students in the nomination pool, and to move student folders to the next level, as well as to reflect on the status of the AIG program and needed improvements. Often forms and information sheets are revised and updated during these meetings.

AIG specialists/advisors are present at Open House events to meet with parents and students. Resource materials and information are made available for students and parents. Open Houses and Transition Program events work together to promote awareness of the program services available as students progress from elementary to middle to high school.

Specific transition events include:

Grade level specific open houses

School tours

Staggered enrollment days

Parent informational meetings

*** Practice G**

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

At the elementary level, the AIG specialist may advocate for, and sometimes provide, accelerated instruction for unusually advanced students who require subject or grade acceleration. He serves as a knowledgeable resource for parents and administrators who are considering grade acceleration as a service option. Policies are in place for early kindergarten entrance; these procedures are used on rare occasions when a body of evidence indicates the student is academically/intellectually and socially ready for early school entrance.

In the middle school, the math curriculum is compacted beginning in sixth grade and seventh grade for the highest performing math students. This compacted middle school math program allows some eighth grade students to take Math I for high school credit. This acceleration opens the students' high school schedules to allow more opportunity to pursue advanced course work.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is available for high school subjects. A CDM procedural guide is published as a part of the registration materials and is included in the student handbook for students and posted on the high school website. Students have a variety of options for gaining college credits while still in high school through AP classes, Dual enrollment in Career and College Promise classes, and pursuing certification programs in CTE classes offered at the high school.

Implementation of the Multi-tiered System of Support framework in our district has given us a new lens to view procedures for determining options for Differentiated Education Plans. In general, all students identified in the AIG program are provided services through a differentiated core curriculum (with collaboration between regular education staff and AIG specialists) with Tier 2 support provided through pull-out or push-in activities, field trips and enrichment activities, and access to advanced course work provided by AIG specialists. Students who show exceptional achievement and potential could be considered for Tier 3 options such as grade acceleration or single subject acceleration. Such options would be considered for students who demonstrate scores at or above the 97 percentile in both ability and achievement tests with state or national norm comparisons and a teacher recommendation. Final decisions for early admission and grade or subject acceleration are made by the school principal in consultation with the parent, regular education teacher, and AIG staff. Consideration of social and emotional readiness is vital to the decision-making process.

*** Practice H**

Develops mindsets, policies, and practices to promote equity and excellence by broadening access to advanced learning opportunities through a variety of intentional efforts, including talent development, at all grade levels.

The AIG program has monitored enrollment trends for gender, cultural/ethnicity, and socio-economic groups. Gender and cultural/ethnicity trends for AIG enrollments are in line with total enrollment trends for these groups. Spanish versions of assessments are made available for native Spanish speakers. Non-verbal sub-tests of ability assessments are used as acceptable evidence for potential in students nominated for placement in AIG programs.

Additionally we have worked with determination to make the identification and placement process fair and equitable while at the same time addressing the variety of ways students may demonstrate their abilities and giftedness. By utilizing multiple types of assessments, allowing for individual testing when indicated, and building a body of evidence including student work samples, we have increased enrollments at all grade levels. Our placement philosophy has shifted from a more restrictive view to one that is more inclusive.

In the elementary school, our AIG specialist works within the classrooms in grades K-1 to allow familiarization with all students and observation of their unique abilities in this setting. This approach provides opportunities over time for the specialist to work with regular classroom teachers to recognize giftedness in under-represented AIG populations.

Our greatest enrollment gap is in identification of students of poverty as indicated by Free/Reduced Lunch status. Our latest enrollment data indicates that while around 65% of our total school population receives F/R lunch, only 15% of our AIG population is included in the count. We have made attempts to address this gap by expanding our identification criteria to allow for use of work samples and inclusion of an array of achievement measures in the identification rubric. All teachers in our district are required to participate in the training "Disrupting Poverty in our Classrooms." However, a reliance on traditional academic measures may still influence our identification process in a way that excludes students of poverty. This concern is one that we will continue to address through:

1. Studying the implementation of local norms
2. increasing communication with EC teachers to identify potential twice exceptional students
3. expanding screening criteria to include the top 20% on local and state assessments
4. expanding screening criteria to include the top 10% of every subgroup.

*** Practice I**

Enhances and further develops the needs, talents, and interests of AIG students through extra-curricular programming.

We believe that participation in extracurricular programs and events is a critical part of the AIG program for our district. These types of activities provide students with background experiences and perspectives that they may not have outside of the school program. Consequently, we have added a number of extracurricular options to enhance the educational experiences provided for AIG students. Field trips for elementary AIG students have included field work in archaeology and biology studies in National Parks. Field trips to musical and theatrical performances, the Planetarium, Highlands Biological Station, and others to promote STEM. Swain will continue to offer STEM camp and Robotics Club.

Regular classroom teachers, the AIG specialist, and teaching/learning coaches at each school offer a variety of STEM activities throughout the school year. Students and parents enjoy participation in STEM activities and view student projects at an annual Family STEM Night. Students in grades 5-9 can participate in a two-week summer STEM Camp. The middle school offers a Robotics Club, Lighthouse Leadership Team, and History Day activities and competitions.

At the high school level, many extracurricular opportunities are available to AIG students. Project Endeavor (a Burroughs-Wellcome-funded after school science club), Robotics Club, Student Lighthouse Leadership Team, Publications, Creative Writing Club, and many others allow students to pursue their interests and develop leadership skills. Students are encouraged by teachers and counselors to pursue summer opportunities such as Governor's School and a variety of internship placements.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- study the concept of local norms as part of the eligibility criteria
- increase communication and promotion of opportunities provided through outside agencies and universities (i.e. Governor's School, and camps such as the previous Duke TIP program)
- AIG coordinators attend PD on identify underrepresented sub groups.
- redefine screening and placement procedures to better represent underserved subgroups.

Planned Sources of Evidence

* Enrollment data
* Meeting agendas/Minutes
* Improved webpage
* PD records

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

Swain County Schools (870) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

The LEA employs challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum and instruction to accommodate a range of academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of K-12 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.

Students in grades K-3 receive differentiated core instruction within the classroom through a blend of teacher-designed interventions for remediation, enrichment, extension, and acceleration. Instructional groups within and among the classrooms and the grade levels are based on district approved formative assessment results. The classroom groupings are flexible throughout the year. In some cases, students may move to a higher grade level to work with other students in the same achievement level in reading. Digital tools and programs also provide individualized work assignments based on the students' level of skill acquisition.

In prior years, the elementary AIG specialist has worked within the K-1 classrooms providing instruction in the arts and creative writing and has worked with some of the highest achieving students in Grades 2 and 3 during a pull-out period once a week for 45 minutes. This allows our AIG specialist the time to get to know these students better, to observe them in a variety of work situations, and to enrich the NCSCOS curriculum for them. AIG students in 4th and 5th grade have one block of 90 minutes or two blocks of 45 minutes during the week to meet with the AIG specialist. This pull-out time is devoted to projects that are aligned with the NCSCOS, that extend, expand, or enrich the content, and that promote the development of 21st Century skills such as collaboration and problem-solving. Extra scheduling time is also developed each new year for the AIG specialist to push-in to classrooms and assist with differentiated instruction of AIG students. Schedules may vary depending on individual student, classroom, or school needs.

AIG coordinators will advocate that students in middle school be cluster-grouped in English/Language Arts and Math classrooms. Placement is based on achievement scores from the previous year, including EOG results and report card grades. ELA classrooms offer enrichment opportunities such as project-based learning assignments and service projects. Math instruction is compacted for the highest-performing group to allow for students to take Math I for high school credit during the 8th grade year.

The AIG advisors/specialists at the middle school level meet with students during an elective period and/or individualized and small group meetings with students. The elective class is held daily for 45 minutes for one semester in the 6th grade. Enrollment in the AIG elective is not required to remain in the AIG program. The middle school AIG specialists serve as a resource for academic advisement for all students identified in the AIG program whether they take the elective class or not. Electives / enrichment in grades 7 and 8 are not designated as AIG only, but are designed to address interests of AIG students. They include Robotics and History Day Projects. In 7th and 8th grade, the AIG

advisors/specialists will meet weekly with AIG students and once per semester with parents. Coordinators will share with students and parents about opportunities for enrichment. AIG staff will be meeting with grade level teachers to enhance classroom opportunities for all AIG students. AIG students will be given opportunities to participate in advanced group activities both on and off campus. AIG advisors/specialists at the 6th, 7th and 8th grade level will teach at least one section of an advanced ELA class during the school year.

High school AIG students may take honors-level classes in all core academic content areas as well as several CTE options. Numerous Advanced Placement courses are offered at the high school level. Students may also take college coursework through the College and Career Promise program dual enrollment with Southwestern Community College or other NC community colleges. Students may achieve CTE certifications in several fields, if interested. The AIG Advisor at the high school meets with students and parents during registration meetings annually, encouraging students to take challenging coursework aligned with their interests and goals. High school parents have been overwhelmingly positive about the opportunity to learn about options for their students and participate in the decision-making process. The high school AIG advisor also monitors grades and attendance of AIG students and meets as needed with students and parents to provide intervention if a problem develops. Credit By Demonstrated Mastery is available for students who are interested; documents and timelines are posted on the high school website.

Because of limited resources, most of the AIG specialists at each level have other responsibilities and teaching assignments. These assignments, while necessary and beneficial to the district, limit the time available for the AIG

specialist to serve as a resource for regular education teachers in choosing appropriate strategies for differentiation in the classroom. The district has made some scheduling and personnel changes that will help to alleviate this challenge. Coordinators will meet with individual and small groups of students to monitor attendance and academic progress, to offer advisement on course selections and transition decisions, and to address social and emotional learning with their students. They will also regularly participate in collaborative planning sessions with regular classroom teachers to address specific issues for AIG students and to provide ideas, resources, modeling, and coaching for differentiation.

Our district uses a collaborative curriculum writing process based on "Understanding by Design" to create a differentiated core curriculum guaranteed for the students in our schools. The work proceeds as an on-going process and continues to produce rich, reflective conversations around learning goals, assessments, and differentiation. Teachers are expected to meet weekly in PLCs to discuss student needs. These weekly meetings promote teacher collaboration and sharing of ideas to meet the needs of all student including students that are performing above expectations.

Further guidance regarding decisions for individual students may be provided by the MTSS (Multi tiered System of Support) framework. In general, all students identified in the AIG program would be provided services through a differentiated core curriculum (with collaboration between regular education staff and AIG specialists) with Tier 2 support provided through pull-out or push-in activities, field trips and enrichment activities, and access to advanced course work provided by AIG specialists. Students who show exceptional achievement and potential could be considered for Tier 3 options such as grade acceleration or single subject acceleration. Such options would be considered for students who demonstrate scores at or above the 97 percentile in both ability and achievement tests with state or national norm comparisons and a teacher recommendation. Final decisions would be made by the school principal in consultation with the parent, regular education teacher, and AIG staff.

*** 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.

Differentiation practices are used in regular education classrooms across the district and supported by weekly PLCs. In Grades K-5, flexible, leveled instructional groups for ELA and math are based on formative assessment results. Teachers differentiate instruction for the instructional groups and/or individuals within the small groups. The move to standards-based grading in the elementary schools has formalized the need to proactively plan for what to do for

students who can already demonstrate mastery of skills. Time for the AIG specialist to collaboratively plan with regular classroom teachers will further enhance the quality of activities provided for AIG students within the regular classroom setting.

K-12 administrators have emphasized the use of Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge (DOK) frameworks to develop questions, activities, and assessments that will appropriately challenge AIG students. Examples of differentiation strategies being utilized within the district's classrooms are:

1. Modification of assignments-AIG students who demonstrate mastery of concepts on pre- assessments are allowed to pursue related alternative assignments, such as independent projects on a related topic that allows a deeper, more complex study of core curriculum content.
2. Modification of questions-Teachers use modified Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide to develop questions that require higher levels of cognition to appropriately challenge students.
3. Use of open-ended questions/essential questions-These questions stimulate higher order thinking skills and provide an opportunity for expressing diversity of opinions. Students develop greater ability to defend their positions and conclusions and greater appreciation for the differing opinions of others.

Essential questions provide a focus to tie content knowledge and skills into a broader framework of understanding.

4. Use of learning contracts-Teachers use pre-test results to tailor an enrichment contract for students that already have acquired the basic knowledge/concept being introduced. The contract provides an opportunity for gifted students to build on the prerequisite knowledge to tackle challenging new content or problems.
5. Cluster grouping- Teachers provide subject-specific small groups for students with similar abilities to promote more appropriate pace and/or level of instruction for AIG students. This grouping strategy can increase peer interaction for AIG students.
6. Acceleration of content-Middle school students may take high school level math eighth grade year. Students receive high school credit, but their grades are not included in their high school GPA. Occasionally, younger students have been placed in instructional groups, particularly for math, in a grade or two above their age mates as middle school students.

7. Honors and Advanced Placement classes-During high school, students may be placed with other students of like abilities either through advisement or self-selection to pursue accelerated instruction. These courses provide a more demanding curriculum often including a more rigorous pace. Another benefit of the classes is to provide an opportunity for younger, capable students to study and interact with an older peer group whose maturity level more closely matches their own. Advanced Placement courses provide the opportunity to accrue college credit during high school based on performance of national exams.

8. Dual enrollment/College Coursework-High school students have several options, both in-house, on-line, and off-campus, for pursuing college level coursework through the local community college and the state university system.

9. Early admission to kindergarten and grade skipping-For highly gifted individuals, the district allows for acceleration to higher grades than the like-age peer group when it is determined that the child has the pre-requisite skills and achievement level to be successful in the new setting. The determination is made by the principal in cooperation with the parent and teachers who weigh ability, achievement, and social/maturity factors in making a final decision.

* Practice C

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

Progress has been made in introducing opportunities for clubs, competitions, and regional enrichment opportunities to supplement curricular programs. The middle school sponsored a Robotics Team which participated in local and regional problem based competitions. Several students completed History Day projects for local, regional, and state competition. Eighth grade students design and implement service learning or History Day projects and present the projects to community audiences.

The high school received a grant for an afterschool/summer science enrichment club which offers students a wide variety of opportunities to experience real-world examples of science, math, and technology careers. Some members of the club competed in the state Envirothon competition. Several students completed science projects for the regional Science Fair held at Western Carolina University. Students often advance to the state level of competition. Students also have the opportunity to participate in other state and national competitions through HOSA, Envirothon, and other organizations.

Because of our district's adoption of The Leader in Me principles, many opportunities for leadership roles and responsibilities have been identified at all grade levels. These include classroom leadership roles, school-level leadership roles, and Lighthouse Leadership Team memberships so that all students can develop leadership skills.

*** Practice D**

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

Our district supports the incorporation of 21st century content and skills into classroom instructional practice. A district coordinator for STEM activities oversees professional development for teachers and administrators, acquisition of technology tools and resources, extracurricular activities in robotics and other STEM topics for students, and a popular STEM Summer Camp for students in Grades 4-9. While these activities are open to all students, they appeal particularly to AIG students whose interests lie in the areas of math, science, engineering, or technology or to AIG students who enjoy the problem- or project-based learning environment and collaborative nature of competitive teams.

The district has also employed full-time Teaching and Learning Coaches (TLC's) who are also Instructional Technology Facilitators at each school. This on-site, just in time support for teachers has encouraged more classroom teachers to incorporate technology-based activities, group project work, peer review, and other 21st century activities into instructional practice. The expectation of a blended learning model demonstrated in all classrooms at all levels will promote growth in this practice district wide. Professional development for teachers is being provided for teachers to support the implementation of these methodologies. TLC's will provide on-going support for teachers within the classroom throughout the next and following school years.

*** Practice E**

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

Swain County Schools uses a variety of instructional assessments to assist with differentiating learning in classrooms. These include mCLASS, iReady, K-2 Math Assessments, and teacher-developed assessments, including SchoolNet assessments for other subject areas. NC Check-ins have also been implemented in all grade levels in which they are available and used by teachers to formatively assess acquisition of skills and knowledge. EVAAS predictors are used to identify students for early intervention. The PreACT, PSAT, and ACT suite have been added to the available tools for middle school and high school formative assessment and planning for differentiation. Many middle school and high school teachers have developed tools (some technology-based) for quick formative assessments used daily to gauge student learning and make instructional adjustments. Assessment results are discussed during PLC meetings for grouping and instructional decisions across the grade level and within classrooms.

*** Practice F**

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

Swain County Schools provides gifted learners processes and skills to support their growth in social and emotional areas. This occurs through support provided by the AIG specialist in resource classes and also from counselors at each school. Student feedback indicates that AIG students value the culture of the AIG resource class and the opportunity to interact with students of like abilities and interests.

In order to develop the academic and intellectual potential of the gifted learner, the social emotional development needs must also be addressed. These students require help in learning to accept themselves as they are, and to appreciate the ways in which they are both similar to and different from others. It is the obligation of the educators of the gifted to create opportunities for them to experience and value themselves as unique persons. At the elementary school level, learning activities for the pull-out class may be chosen to facilitate discussions related to the social and emotional concerns of AIG students. These discussions also often arise as teachable moments from class interactions, school/life changes, and current news events. Reading selections and classroom projects often stimulate discussion around similar issues.

CTE Career Management has been added to Freshman Academy to support students' creation of personalized high school graduation and postsecondary plans, strengthen communication and self-advocacy skills.

Our district as a whole recognizes the influence of social and emotional factors on a student's readiness and ability to learn. Many members of our staff have received training in "Resources for Resilience" and SEL Champions have been

identified at each of the district's schools. These champions will continue to receive additional training in how to support student development in self regulation and growth mindset and will serve as local PD leaders in these areas.

*** Practice G**

Cultivates and develops the potential of young (K-3) students with early intervention and talent development opportunities through purposeful and intentional differentiated curriculum and instruction.

Regular classroom teachers of young (K-3) students differentiate instruction based on ongoing formative assessment of performance in reading and mathematics for all students. Beginning next year, the elementary AIG specialist will be working full-time as an AIG specialist and will devote time to developing the K-3 AIG program of services. Some time will be spent in the classroom working with all students in the early grades by providing activities in creativity and problem-solving. This time will allow the elementary AIG specialist an opportunity to observe students for characteristics of giftedness outside the traditional academic achievement assessment process. In general, K-1 students exhibiting giftedness may be provided individual programming and/or classroom support developed with cooperation of school principals. Types of individualization could include early kindergarten entrance, grade acceleration, or placement in instructional groups for a specific content area in an advanced grade group. These options would be in addition to in-class differentiation. The elementary AIG specialist will also begin working with identified AIG students in these grades through push-in small group meetings and/or pull-out extension group projects.

*** Practice H**

Develops and implements differentiated curriculum and instruction that addresses the academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners, across all grade levels, through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.

Our district's AIG specialists collaborate with regular education teachers, administrators, and special education teachers to develop and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction plans for AIG students. The initial placement process and early development of the differentiated education plan is determined by the school-based committee whose members represent these groups of educators. As members of PLC's within the school, they have opportunities to work with regular classroom teachers to address ideas for differentiation for AIG students. However, because of limited resources and personnel, time for working with teachers must be balanced with time to work directly with students. Changes/improvements to schedules for AIG specialists at all grade levels should help to provide time for the collaborative work needed for development of improved differentiated curricular and instructional plans.

*** 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/guardians to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

Swain County Schools develops a plan for students at each level to determine AIG Program services. The plan may include strategies for individual students based on specific strengths, needs, or interests. This plan is updated at key transition points for students. Plans are initially outlined by the school-based committee and are further developed cooperatively by the parent and the AIG specialist during the initial placement conference. Plans are reviewed annually to determine if modifications are needed.

AIG Student Plan components include:

1. Basic student information and rationale for selection
2. Types of differentiation determined appropriate for the student including:
 - a. In-class differentiation using technology-based tools and other classroom teacher- selected differentiation strategies
 - b. Participation in pull-out class (Grades K-5) or elective class (Grades 6-8) taught by the specialist for the school
 - c. Extra-curricular/summer enrichment options/participation
 - d. Special interests and hobbies
 - e. Advocacy for subject-specific instructional group acceleration when appropriate
 - f. Advocacy for grade acceleration when appropriate
3. Documentation of appropriate participants in the decision-making process.

Opportunities for review by parents are provided annually. AIG specialists invite parents to review the plan in person during Open House, parent conference days, or other general meetings at the school. If parents cannot attend these face-to-face meetings, a written copy of the AIG Differentiated Education Plan is sent home to the parent for review and comment.

At the high school level, the student four-year plan serves as the AIG Student Plan. Small group registration meetings are held in which parents and students have the opportunity to discuss their four year plan with the AIG advisor. Students are encouraged to take challenging courses that prepare them for their college and career goals. A variety of Honors and Advanced Placement offerings are available. Each of these advanced courses have a specialized and differentiated curriculum available for review. This process also documents the student's extracurricular options and participation.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Ensure AIG specialist at K-5 and 9-12 have the opportunity to support all PLCs

Provide professional development opportunities for regular classroom teachers on topics related to differentiation, including effective analysis of data, scheduling, and assessment of differentiated assignments

Planned Sources of Evidence

* AIG Schedules
* PLC Meeting Minutes and Agendas
* Professional Development Calendars, Agendas, and Participant list

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

Swain County Schools (870) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

The LEA recruits and retains highly qualified professionals and provides relevant and effective professional development concerning the diverse needs of gifted learners that is ongoing 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.

The District AIG coordinator does not hold an AIG license; however, the new coordinator holds an Ed.D in Educational Leadership, holds a superintendent license, served as a principal for 7 years, and has 18 years of experience in PK-12 education. 2 of the 4 coordinators are fully licensed AIG specialists, 2 are in the final stages of completing the additional certification, and 1 will begin the process in the Fall of 2022.

The District AIG coordinator meets quarterly with school based AIG coordinators to review the AIG plan, update on progress, and address future goals. The District AIG coordinator participates in NCDPI AIG Division sponsored conferences, webinars, and professional development. Although the Districts AIG coordinator is not AIG licensed, their role as Chief of Academics increase the influence and level of voice they have in district planning.

*** Practice B**

Engages AIG-licensed specialists in tasks that explicitly address the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of K-12 gifted learners.

The district employs five licensed teachers to work with students directly in the elementary, middle, and high schools. Teachers are expected to attain AIG certification once hired as an AIG Coordinator. One AIG specialist is shared between the two elementary schools in our district and serves as a fulltime AIG coordinator. The middle school contracts with three teachers, one per grade level (6, 7, and 8) to serve as the AIG coordinator. The high school also contracts with a teacher to serve as the AIG coordinator. The 6-12 AIG coordinators serve as fulltime teachers and are

contracted to provide AIG services and maintain AIG paperwork as an extra duty.

The K-5 AIG coordinator provides direct services to students identified as AIG, while the 6-12 teachers provide some direct services, such as counseling, mentoring, and support, but the bulk of their role is to provide indirect services through supporting other teachers and school teams in meeting the needs of students in the AIG program.

*** Practice C**

Establishes specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, instructional specialists, student services personnel, and school administrators.

An overview of the characteristics of gifted students and information about how to nominate students for the AIG program is provided in faculty meetings every year for all school personnel. This information is usually provided by the school AIG specialist and/or the district AIG coordinator. Since students are placed in mostly heterogeneous grouped classrooms, all regular classroom teachers need on-going professional development related to needs of AIG students. Differentiation in general has become a focus for PLC work and professional development offerings.

AIG coordinators offer workshops based loosely on the "Booster Shot" topics provided by the DPI website for AIG. Each workshop was held for one hour after school and focused on one strategy/topic for differentiation. Additional in-class coaching was offered for teachers who chose to develop a lesson using the strategy. Participants could accrue additional professional development credit for lesson development and implementation and for follow-up coaching activities.

*** 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.

Because of the limited number of AIG-licensed personnel, the district does not have the option of placing AIG students in classrooms with teachers who have earned an AIG add-on license from an Institute of Higher Education. At the middle school level, most AIG students are cluster-grouped for math and ELA instruction. Teachers who teach the cluster groups are required to develop course and unit plans that account for extension, enrichment, and/or

acceleration of content for those courses. Additionally, high school teachers who teach honors classes are required to develop and follow an Honors Portfolio which describes how the honors class instruction differs from a standard-level class. These portfolios are approved by local administrators and curriculum specialists. Additionally, all high school Advanced Placement teachers have completed the AP Institute related to their teaching assignment. They also meet requirements to serve as adjunct faculty for the local community college.

*** Practice E**

Develops strategies for the recruitment and retention of AIG-licensed professionals, including those of diverse backgrounds.

Swain County Schools will provide training and PD to teachers interested in learning more about AIG. Teachers will be reimbursed for 1 college course per semester if interested in returning to school to pursue an AIG certification. Teachers will also be reimbursed for the Praxis if they add the AIG certification to their licensure.

*** Practice F**

Provides focused professional learning opportunities to realize equity and excellence in gifted education including changing mindsets, policies, and practices.

Our district is in the process of developing a written, guaranteed curriculum for all grade levels and all courses using the "Understanding by Design" process. Many of our required professional development days have been devoted to the collaborative conversations required for this curriculum study process. These discussions have resulted in the development of course maps with pacing and standards alignment. Most groups are now in the process of creating common assessments. One of the benefits of the process has been the identification of big ideas, enduring understandings, and transfer goals for the course and individual units in addition to more traditional knowledge and skills goals for students. Consequently the common assessments, often in the form of performance tasks, aim at gauging a deeper level of understanding than most multiple choice type assessments measure.

The process has also led to conversations around how to differentiate for students that already can demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills and are ready for application of those concepts to real life scenarios and problems. School-based administrators require teachers to demonstrate understanding of differentiation through lesson planning that reflects formative assessment, flexible groupings, questioning strategies, and differentiation strategies.

This year we have offered, and in some schools required, in-district professional development in higher order thinking skills (Bloom's Revised Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge), questioning strategies for differentiation, and a series of

workshops on strategies for differentiation. Our district also supports attendance at regional offerings at WRESA related to AIG issues by providing registration fees, substitute or stipend pay, and transportation costs.

AIG staff are provided the opportunity to attend the state NCAGT Conference each year.

*** Practice G**

Aligns professional development opportunities with local AIG program goals, other district initiatives, and best practices in gifted education with opportunities to refine applications of professional learning.

All AIG staff are provided the opportunity to attend the state NCAGT conference yearly. This year a general education teacher also attended. Ideas and strategies are shared with all faculty members in a variety of formats through PLC and departmental meetings. The district has invested substantial funding for Chromebooks and software programs to support a blended learning approach for individualizing instruction. Use of technology-based programs to provide students with personalized learning activities have necessitated professional development for teachers in best practices in assessment and differentiation in blended learning classrooms. Teaching and learning coaches and AIG specialists provide additional support for the teachers once they begin to implement strategies in their classrooms during the school year. Teachers can document follow-up activities (strategy and lesson development, initial implementation, reflection, and coaching activities) for additional professional development credits.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

-work with HR to strengthen the recruitment plan

-partner with the Director of School Improvement to ensure needed AIG PD is offered throughout the year

Planned Sources of Evidence

* PD Plan

* PD completion records

* Recruitment plan

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
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AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	
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Standard 5: Partnerships

Swain County Schools (870) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 5: Partnerships

The LEA ensures ongoing and meaningful participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the local AIG program to develop strong partnerships.

*** Practice A**

Develops intentional, two-way partnerships with parents/guardians to support the following needs of AIG students:

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional.

Swain County Schools actively seeks partnerships with parents and the community. Opportunities are provided for parents to receive information about their child's academic, social, and emotional needs. Parent meetings/conferences are offered annually for review of student progress and DEP development. AIG staff present information at Open House events and are available for individual conferences with families at those events. At the high school parents are invited to participate in the registration process with their students and the AIG advisor.

Two general parent meetings are held each year and hosted by the AIG staff. The parent meetings held during the fall semester address some area of interest to AIG parents and students. Past programs have included:

Program on meeting social and emotional needs of AIG students presented by university EC/AIG faculty members

Promoting the growth mindset and encouraging AIG students to pursue challenging coursework throughout their K-12 education presented by Gear-Up and AIG staff

The parent meetings held during the spring semester are held in conjunction with the Family STEM Night. This meeting serves as a display of student work. AIG students often take turns manning the demonstration tables, explaining their projects and findings to parents and other participants.

*** Practice B**

Partners with community stakeholders, such as institutions of higher education, local business and industry partners, and others to enhance and support the local AIG program and services.

Parents support the AIG program in a variety of ways such as by participating in parent meetings, serving as chaperones for fieldtrips, providing feedback through parent surveys, assisting with activities and projects, and serving on the AIG Advisory Group. Partnerships with two local universities, Western Carolina University and University of North Carolina at Asheville, have provided speakers for parent meetings and assisted with student projects. Great Smoky Mountains National Park has hosted a variety of fieldtrip experiences for our students around accelerated content and real world applications and helped provide some funding for transportation.

One of our parents who serves on the AIG Advisory Group is also a member of the district's Business and Industry Advisory Group. The AIG staff has shared enrollment and performance data for AIG students with the Business and Industry Advisory Group.

*** Practice C**

Establishes and utilizes an advisory group to develop, implement, monitor, and revise 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/guardians, AIG teachers, and other instructional and support staff.

An AIG Advisory Group whose membership includes parent representatives from each school, teacher representatives from each school, a school-based administrator, AIG teaching staff, and the district AIG coordinator has been established. This group meets at least twice yearly. The group is active in program review processes such as reviewing enrollment and performance data, making recommendations for parent meeting topics and logistics, providing input and feedback into the local plan development, reviewing survey results, and making recommendations

for program improvement. There is a need to expand the membership of the group to include more parent representatives, support staff representatives, and student representatives.

*** Practice D**

Informs all students, parents/guardians, and the community of the following:

- Local AIG Plan
- Local AIG program services
- Policies relating to advanced learning and gifted education
- Ways to access opportunities available to AIG students

Communication is ongoing and responds to the diverse language needs of the community.

Parents are informed of opportunities available to AIG students by way of website links, regular newsletters related to upcoming events, emails with updates and announcements, Connect-Ed phone call reminders, and school-sponsored social media posts. Consistency and frequency of communications need to be monitored by the AIG coordinator as part of the annual program review. AIG specialists prepare introductory letters at the beginning of each school year, regular newsletters throughout the school year announcing upcoming units of student and enrichment opportunities, and updates on student accomplishments. The middle school AIG specialist has developed course maps for the AIG electives. The course map is available through the district website as a parent resources link.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Develop a calendar of events to inform parents and keep staff on track
Include AIG information in new student enrollment packets

Planned Sources of Evidence

* Records of information shared
* Agendas and minutes
* Calendar of events

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 6: Program Accountability

Swain County Schools (870) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

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 diverse 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.

Swain County Schools develops a written AIG plan in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy. The plan is produced as a result of the collaboration of various stakeholder groups through face-to-face meetings and/or survey results. The AIG plan is presented to the local board of education for review and approval and submitted to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

*** Practice B**

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

The implementation of the written AIG plan is monitored annually by the AIG staff and the AIG Advisory Group. Each year a Progress Monitoring document is developed which includes action steps, strategies, timelines, and responsibilities. This document helps to ensure that necessary steps toward program improvement are completed. The AIG staff meets quarterly to review the progress made toward implementation. The AIG Coordinator also meets with principals on a regular basis to address issues related to the AIG program and plan implementation at the school level. The district AIG Coordinator attends quarterly AIG Regional Roundtable meetings to receive updates on policies and

best practices in gifted education. Information is shared with the AIG staff and/or regular classroom teachers. All AIG staff attend the annual NCAGT Conference to learn about policies and practices that impact gifted education in North Carolina.

*** 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.

Swain County Schools uses all state funds allotted for the AIG program to support the local AIG program according to state policy.

Funds are used for:

1. AIG staffing
2. Purchasing materials and supplies for use in AIG instructional programs
3. Providing professional development opportunities for AIG staff
4. Supporting student travel for field trips and participation regional, state, and national academic competitions.

Additional financial support for the AIG program is provided through allocations of school-based funds for materials and supplies and local funds for fieldtrip/competition travel. Although not formally included in the AIG Budget, other funding sources and budgets provide support for the AIG Program. These include universal screening assessments costs which are covered by local funding through budgets administered by the Director of Accountability. Professional development activities related to differentiation, formative assessment, and other topics that relate to gifted education may also be supported for regular classroom teachers and AIG specialists by local funding administered by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

*** Practice D**

Maintains and analyzes multiple sources of student achievement and growth data, as well as annual dropout data for AIG students. Data is disaggregated to recognize patterns and trends over time and inform mindsets, policies, and practices for equity and excellence.


Our district has analyzed student achievement results for AIG students compared to other students in the district and to other AIG students in the state. The inclusion of the PowerSchool designations for AIG students made this process possible. We have not as yet analyzed student growth results, but we plan to include analysis of growth data in student achievement reporting for this school year when it becomes available. We also have not analyzed dropout data for AIG students in our district for this or the previous year. Student achievement data has been shared with the AIG Advisory Group, school principals and teachers, the local board of education, and the district Business Advisory Council.

*** Practice E**

Maintains and analyzes multiple data sources focused on the referral, identification, services, and retention of students within the local AIG program to ensure that students' racial, ethnic, economic, or other demographic factors, including other exceptionalities and language differences, do not reduce their likelihood of access to and participation in gifted education.

Swain County Schools maintains and analyzes district approved assessment data, CogAT, and state assessment as part of the screening and referral process. Individual student data including referral, eligibility determination rubric, eligibility determination, and yearly plan are maintained for each student referred to the AIG program. Students that are not initially determined eligible are placed in the talent development pool and data is reviewed yearly for reconsideration. Once a student folder is created it follows the cohort of student in the event that future screenings indicate a need to reconsider eligibility.

Fall and Spring headcount data is collected to ethnicity of students in the AIG program. Once a year a roster of AIG students is given to the Food Nutrient Director to calculate the percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

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Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
Female	---	---	---	6.93%	---	---	11.59%
Male	---	---	---	---	---	---	10.08%
Total	---	---	---	5.34%	---	---	10.81%

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

*** Practice F**

Maintains and utilizes current data regarding the credentials of personnel serving K-12 AIG students to align with the goals and strategies outlined in the local AIG plan.

Credentials of personnel serving AIG students are maintained by Human Resources through the district office. Licensure credentials, renewal activities, and professional development activities are documented through the My Learning Plan software program. The program tracks costs, nature of activity, contact hours, and certificates awarded. The information is then transferred as hours of credit into the HR system.

*** Practice G**

Elicits regular feedback from students, parents/guardians, families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program.

Swain County Schools seeks input from various stakeholder groups through formal and informal means. In past years, the general parent survey for the district included questions related to the AIG program. This year a brief parent survey was generated and shared by the AIG specialists with parents at their respective grades/schools. Survey results are reviewed and analyzed by the AIG Staff in order to identify common concerns and to make recommendations for

program improvement. AIG students in Grades 4-8 have sometimes completed surveys during the spring semester. Results from parent and student surveys have been shared with school principals. The AIG Advisory Group and School Improvement Teams have access to the survey results to inform program and school improvement recommendations. AIG specialists meet informally with regular classroom teachers to obtain feedback and program improvement suggestions. The district AIG Coordinator meets with grade level PLC's once per semester to elicit feedback on the AIG program and curriculum and instruction initiatives.

*** Practice H**

Facilitates a comprehensive evaluation of the local AIG program utilizing multiple sources of data to revise the local AIG plan every three years.

Every three years, Swain County Schools conducts an comprehensive evaluation of the AIG program. Stakeholder (teachers, students, and parent) survey results, referral and placement data, headcounts, AIG Advisory Board feedback, and student outcome data is reviewed to revise the AIG plan.

*** Practice I**

Shares all data from local AIG program evaluation with school and district personnel, students, parents/guardians, families, and other community stakeholders.

Data from evaluation of the local AIG program is shared with stakeholder groups during parent meetings, Advisory Group meetings, faculty meetings, and local school board work sessions and meetings. The district website links the public to a variety of state level sources of data and program information. However, local summary data specific to the AIG program has not been shared via the AIG web page.

*** Practice J**

Safeguards the rights of all AIG students and their parents/guardians 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.

Swain County Schools protects the rights of all students, including AIG students, through establishment and dissemination of policies, procedures, and practices related to its programs. Parents, guardians and teachers of academically and intellectually gifted students are encouraged to work together as partners to nurture the growth and progress of children. Conferences and open communications are promoted in order to maximize the potential of the student and to strengthen partnerships between school and families. AIG staff members communicate their

contact information to parents through the district website, individual teacher webpages, and various written documents sent home throughout the school year. They also participate in Open Houses, Parent Nights, PTO meetings, and other special events in order to make themselves available to answer questions or schedule individual conferences with parents. Copies of identification procedures are provided on the district webpage. Parents are invited to attend annual meetings to learn more about the nomination process, identification criteria, and placement decisions.

Parents of nominated students are informed in writing of the placement decisions of the AIG Team/School-based Committee. They are invited to the school to review the placement criteria and decisions and participate in the development of differentiated education plans, if recommended. A copy of Parents' Rights and Appeals Procedures are posted to the AIG webpage, and a print copy is provided to parents at the initial placement meeting. Should an appeals situation occur, parents are provided a second copy of the Appeals Procedure, and issues are dealt with in accordance with the policy.

A copy of the Parents' Rights/Appeals Procedure document is included in the Appendix of this plan.

According to Chapter 115-C, Article 9B of the General Statute of North Carolina a parent or guardian who disagrees with a schools' Academically Gifted Team decision regarding referral, placement, or service options, are guaranteed the due process procedures following:

Step I. AIG Team Conference

A. Parent/Guardian may make a request for a conference with the AIG Team to discuss the concerns. (A written request is required. Please keep written request for documentation.) B. The AIG Team/School-Based Committee (known as SBC) reviews the student's record and their previous referral, identification, and service option decisions. The committee may gather additional information about the student from teachers and parents as needed. The Individual Student Profile may be updated.

C. The AIG Team/SBC grant the conference within 10 school days of the request and responds to the parent/guardian and principal in writing within 5 school days of the conference. **IF THE DISAGREEMENT IS NOT RESOLVED AT THE AIG/SBC TEAM CONFERENCE, THEN PROCEED TO STEP II-APPEAL TO AIG COORDINATOR.**

Step II. Appeal to AIG Coordinator

A. Parent/guardian may appeal the AIG/SBC Team's decision in writing to the AIG Coordinator within 10 days of receiving the response.

B. AIG Coordinator shall review the grievance within 10 days of receipt of appeal. C. AIG Coordinator responds in writing to the parent/guardian and principal concerning the outcome of the review within 10 school days. IF GRIEVANCE IS NOT RESOLVED AT STEP II, THEN PROCEED TO STEP III – APPEAL TO SUPERINTENDENT.

STEP III. Appeal to Superintendent

A. Parent/guardian may appeal in writing the decision of the AIG Coordinator to the Superintendent or his designee within 10 days of receiving the response.

B. Superintendent reviews the grievance within 10 days of the receipt of the appeal. C. Superintendent responds in writing concerning the outcome within 10 school days to the parent/guardian and principal. IN THE EVENT THAT THE LOCAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FAILS TO RESOLVE THE DISAGREEMENT, THEN THE STATE LEVEL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED.

STEP IV – State Level Grievance Procedure

A. Parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of chapter 150 B of the General Statutes. The scope of the review shall be limited to: 1. Whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as a high achiever or an academically gifted student 2. Whether the local plan has been implemented appropriately in regard to the child B. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings 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 all parties, and is not subject to further review under Article of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.



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* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard

- digital record keeping to ensure seamless efficient record keeping
- documented yearly review of action steps and data
- review of screening data to broaden the pool of potential referral and improved talent development

Planned Sources of Evidence


* student records
* Program records- survey and data collection results
* new 3 year plan

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	

Local Board of Education Approval

Swain County Schools (870) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:

06/13/2022 

Original Application Submission Date: 06/14/2022

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
Local Board of Education Approval Signatures [Upload at least 1 document(s)]	 <u>Local Board of Education Approval Template</u>	 <u>Swain Board Approval</u>

AIG Related Documents

Swain County Schools (870) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Required Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
Local Board of Education Approval Signatures [Upload at least 1 document(s)]	 Local Board of Education Approval Template	 Swain Board Approval
Optional Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Glossary [Upload up to 1 document(s)]	N/A	
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	

Glossary

Swain County Schools (870) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Phrase	Definition
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The Local AIG Plan glossary is provided in an uploaded document.