



**Henderson County Schools Regular Local School District
Fiscal Year 2025
Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0**

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Overview and Guidance

Welcome

Welcome to DPI's Local AIG Plan electronic system! This database system is the official site where your LEA and/or Charter School will submit its Local AIG Plan for 2025-2028, as mandated by Article 9B. We appreciate your efforts to develop high quality (HQ) AIG services and programming and develop an effective plan to support gifted and advanced learners in your LEA and/or Charter School.

Overview of Legislation

North Carolina has legislation that mandates identification and services of K-12 AIG students. This legislation was passed in 1996 and is entitled Article 9B, Academically or Intellectually Gifted Students (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.05-.08). Article 9B provides a state definition for Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) students and requires local education agencies (LEA) to develop three-year AIG local plans with specific components, to be approved by local school boards and subsequently sent to the State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for review and comment.

NC State Board of Education Policy (ACIG-000)

As legislated in Article 9B, the SBE and DPI provide guidelines for LEAs to follow in the development of their local AIG plans. Each year prior to the submission of a new local AIG plan, the standards are revised and approved by the SBE. The NC AIG Program Standards were revised and approved again in July 2024 and continue to serve as a statewide framework for all of NC and guide LEAs to develop, coordinate, and implement thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs, while still honoring local flexibility.

What is the purpose of this plan update?

As with the previous plan revision cycles, each LEA or charter school is asked to review progress and make updates to their local AIG plan. The overall process remains the same as the previous plan submission cycles. The LEA or charter should have clear responses to each of the practices within the standards, making sure efforts are made to honor local context while implementing best practices in gifted education. This framework supports our efforts to move forward into the next stage of developing HQ services and programming with a focus on equity and excellence and ultimately supports LEAs and charters to craft effective local AIG programs that support the optimal growth and development of all gifted learners.

Overall Writing Information

Develop a plan for utilizing stakeholder feedback and other applicable data regarding your 2022-2025 plan as a starting point for your 2025-2028 plan. Every standard and practice must be addressed in this local AIG plan through your LEA Response. The self-assessment rating for each standard and practice can be found in the Self-Assessment section. However, this information will not be printed in your final Local AIG Plan document. As legislated by Article 9B, local Boards of Education approve local AIG plans. Indicate the date of approval and upload evidence of approval in the submission section. Upload any documents and forms you need or want to include in either the specific the AIG Additional Resources area on each standard page OR in the AIG Related Documents section. Note that only a list of these documents will print as part of the text in the plan. The actual documents will not print as a part of the local AIG plan.

When are the local AIG plans due?

The local AIG plans are due to the SBE/DPI by **July 15, 2025**, for review and feedback for all LEAs and interested charter schools. As Article 9B legislates, these updated plans should be approved by the LEA's school board prior to submission and must be submitted every three years to SBE/DPI.

For questions, please contact:

Stephanie Cyrus	State Consultant (AIG, CDM, & Advanced Math)	stephanie.cyrus@dpi.nc.gov
Crissy Brown	State Consultant (AIG, CCP, & Honors)	crissy.brown@dpi.nc.gov
Beth Cross	Assistant Director (AIG & AP/IB/CIE)	beth.cross@dpi.nc.gov
Sneha Shah-Coltrane	Senior Director, Academic Policy and Advanced Learning	sneha.shahcoltrane@dpi.nc.gov

AIG List of Standards & Practices

Organization of the AIG Program Standards

Each standard is formatted as follows:

Standard: The standard is a defining statement articulating the State Board of Education expectations for quality, comprehensive, and effective local AIG programs and relates to the categories addressed in Article 9B.

Practices: The practices clarify the standard, describe what an LEA must have in place, and guide LEAs for program improvement. These practices will be verified to stakeholders through a variety of sources of evidence.

Standard 1: Student Identification

The LEA's student identification procedures for AIG are clear, equitable, and comprehensive and lead towards appropriate educational services.

PRACTICES

- a) Develops both screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels. Provides opportunities, including universal screening, for every student to show their strengths and talents.
- b) Establishes a process and criteria for AIG student identification at all grade levels, K-12, 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.
- 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, multilingual learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.
- d) Monitors the screening, referral, and identification processes for consistent implementation across the LEA.
- e) Disseminates information regarding the screening, referral, and identification processes to school personnel, parents/guardians, students, and the community-at-large.
- f) Documents the evidence gathered and analyzed to support an AIG identification decision. This documentation is reviewed with parents/guardians and maintained in student records.
- g) 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 developed and reviewed annually with parents/ guardians to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

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.

PRACTICES

- a) Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the academic and intellectual needs of AIG students, across all grade levels, K-12, and learning environments, through collaboration with a variety of personnel. Services are aligned to students' advanced learning needs and AIG identification.
- b) Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the social and emotional needs of AIG students, across all grade levels, K-12, and learning environments, through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.
- c) Integrates and connects the AIG program and services with the district's priorities and resources through policy and practice.
- d) Develops procedures for intentional, flexible grouping practices to facilitate the achievement and growth of AIG and other students with advanced learning needs.
- 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.
- f) Communicates among and between teachers and schools to ensure an effective continuation of K-12 services, especially at key transition points.
- 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.
- h) Cultivates and develops the potential of young (K-3) students with early intervention and talent development opportunities through purposeful and intentional programming.
- i) Develops mindsets, policies, and practices to promote equity and excellence by broadening access to advanced learning opportunities through a variety of talent development efforts, including frontloading, in grades 4-12.
- j) Enhances and further develops the talents and interests of AIG students through extra-curricular programming during and outside of the school day.

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.

PRACTICES

- 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 by differentiating curriculum and instruction, including enrichment, extension, and acceleration strategies.
- b) Uses students' identified abilities, readiness, and interests to address a range of learning needs K-12.
- c) Incorporates a variety of evidence-based resources that address the range of academic, intellectual, and social and emotional needs of AIG students.
- d) Fosters the development of durable skills and mindsets which support post-secondary success. These skills include adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical and creative thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility.
- e) Uses ongoing assessment, both formative and summative, to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction.
- f) Collaborates with a variety of personnel, based on student needs, to implement differentiated curriculum and instruction.

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.

PRACTICES

- a) Employs an AIG-licensed educator as lead coordinator to guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program and plan.
- b) Engages AIG-licensed specialists in tasks that explicitly address the academic, intellectual, and social and emotional needs of K-12 AIG students and supports the implementation of the local AIG program and plan.
- 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.
- d) Provides general education services by personnel who have earned an AIG add-on license or have met the LEA requirements for that position.
- e) Develops strategies for the recruitment and retention of AIG-licensed professionals, including those of diverse backgrounds.
- f) Provides focused professional learning opportunities to realize equity and excellence in gifted education including changing mindsets, policies, and practices.
- 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.

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.

PRACTICES

- a) Develops intentional, two-way partnerships with parents/guardians to support the following needs of AIG students:
 - academic and intellectual
 - social and emotional.
- 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.
- 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.
- d) Informs all students, parents/guardians, and the community of the following:
 - Local AIG Plan
 - Local AIG program services
 - Policies and procedures relating to advanced learning and gifted education
 - Ways to access advanced learning opportunities

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

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.

PRACTICES

- 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}), based on a comprehensive program evaluation. This Local AIG Plan has been approved by the local board of education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- g) Elicits regular feedback from students, parents/guardians, families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the ongoing implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program to support continuous program improvement.
- h) Shares local AIG program evaluation data with school and district personnel, students, parents/guardians, families, and other community stakeholders.
- i) 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.

Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

* LEA Superintendent's Name:

Mr. Mark Garrett

* LEA AIG Contact Name:

Wilson, Marcie - mmwilson@hcpsnc.org

This Local AIG Plan has been developed based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021, and 2024). 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 and related 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 2025-2028. 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 review and comment.

For 2025-2028, the Local AIG Plan is as follows:

* Mission and/or Vision Statement(s)

The vision of the Henderson County Public Schools' AIG program is to nurture the potential of all high-ability students through engaging, differentiated instruction that promotes academic, intellectual, and emotional growth. We prepare students for future success by fostering creativity, critical thinking, a persistent curiosity, and pursuit of knowledge.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)

State Funding		Local Funding		Grant Funding		Other Funding	
* \$	1,126,430.00	* \$	92,608.00	* \$	0.00	* \$	0.00

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, including universal screening, for every student to show their strengths and talents.

Henderson County Public Schools (HCPS) uses a comprehensive screening and identification process to ensure that all students have the opportunity to be identified as gifted. The AIG student identification process is made available to stakeholders in several different ways including the county website, parent newsletters, and faculty presentations.

Each school has an assigned AIG Specialist who is responsible for screening, referrals, and identification. Each school also has an AIG Identification Team (AIGIT) that works together to make placement decisions. The specialist presents student data to the team to verify which students are eligible for identification and inclusion in AIG classes.

Information on the definition of giftedness, eligibility criteria, nomination procedures, and contact persons is available to students, parents, faculty, administrators, and community members through websites, learning management systems (LMS), parent meetings, faculty meetings, newsletters, and/or letters. The AIG staff uses individual nominations, teacher recommendations, aptitude tests, and standardized achievement tests to locate all children who may potentially be identified as AIG. Students who have been identified in another system and transfer into this system are also eligible for services. In an effort to have participation from all ethnic and socio-economic subgroups, disaggregated data, including tests and various forms of nomination, are used to compare students to their demographic peers.

In grades K-2, students who show advanced academic needs are served by specialists in a variety of ways. Students may be pulled out in small groups or specialists may collaborate with teachers to do whole group enrichment as schedules allow. Qualitative and quantitative information including mClass, iReady, K-2 benchmarks, K early learning inventory, behavior scales, work samples, and aptitude scores are used to identify younger students in this grade span.

In the 2nd grade, all HCPS students are given the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) over two days and results from this test are used to further screen students. Specialists review test data with all 2nd grade teachers and school administrators to ensure they understand test results. Information is sent home to parents about their child's testing, and specialists meet with parents as requested to further explain results.

In grades K-8, AIG Specialists conduct a broad sweep of the general population at the end of each grade. For grades 3-8, the AIG Director provides files each summer for all specialists that contain information on students who scored at the 85th percentile or higher on EOG assessments to aid in this sweep. Students who score at or above the 85th percentile (verbal, quantitative, non-verbal, and/or total composite by age) on aptitude or 85th percentile on reading or math achievement tests are considered for AIG program participation.

The AIG Specialists in grades 9 through 12 coordinate with counselors to conduct a broad sweep of the general population at the beginning of each school year and at the end of first semester. Each summer and at the end of first semester, the AIG Director provides files for all specialists that contain information on students who scored at the 85th percentile or higher on EOG/EOC assessments. Students who score at or above the 85th percentile on the 8th grade EOG tests, EOC tests, PSAT, SAT, Pre-ACT, or ACT tests are considered for placement in advanced classes for those subjects and identification. Students who score a 3 on Advanced Placement (AP) tests and students who rank in the top 10% of their class are considered for placement in advanced classes for those subjects and identification. Disaggregated data is examined for students who may show potential for performing at exceptionally high levels of accomplishment in relation to their own demographic group. Additionally, individual nominations may be received from teachers, administrators, community members, parents, or students throughout the school year.

Additionally, disaggregated data is examined for all students who may show potential for performing at exceptionally high levels of achievement in relation to their own demographic group. AIG Specialists are provided with sub-group data for each of their schools to use in identification and talent development. Individual nominations may also be received from teachers, administrators, community members, parents, or students throughout the school year. Lastly, AIG Specialists meet throughout the year with classroom teachers to talk about students' data, both quantitative and qualitative, to screen for AIG services.

*** Practice B**

Establishes a process and criteria for AIG student identification at all grade levels, K-12, 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.

Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude or competence in one or more domains (math, language arts, etc.) (NAGC 2019a; NAGC 2019b). Comprised of qualitative and quantitative measurements, our identification criteria document the interlocking components of student behaviors, achievement, interest, performance, aptitude, and motivation to learn with adequate reliability and validity. Students can be identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI), Academically Gifted in math and/or reading (AM, AR), Academically Gifted (AG), or Intellectually Gifted (IG). In the identification process, no one criterion will automatically keep a student from being considered.

The AIG team will continue to use alternate means of collecting data, such as portfolio development or administration of nonverbal intelligence testing, to determine student need and appropriate service options. Opportunity for consideration is provided to all students at all schools. Once the criteria requirements have been met, the AIGIT will meet to determine which services will be provided. These decisions will be made on an individual student basis with all elementary, middle, and high schools providing services.

All Henderson County Schools utilize the same identification process. Specialists work with each other and their schools to ensure that identification is done in a consistent manner. The identification of students is taken very seriously and steps are taken to ensure proper procedures and all paperwork are done accurately and efficiently. Because HCPS also recognizes that some students who need differentiation may not meet the criteria for formal identification, the county is committed to providing AIG services through our nurturing/talent development programs to meet the academic needs of these students. Nurtured students are included in pull-out/cluster groups at the elementary level, honors classes in middle school, and honors and college credit bearing classes in high school. In the 2024-2025 school year over 1900 students were nurtured as a part of the HCPS AIG program, kindergarten through 12th grade. Through the nurtured component of the AIG program, we recognize the potential of many students and continue to monitor them for formal identification

while providing them with needed differentiation and services. Nurtured students are monitored closely by AIG Specialists, especially as they reach key transitional years (5th to 6th and 8th to 9th) to ensure these students are placed in challenging courses that will grow their academic abilities and talents.

Grades K-12 Pathways to Identification

- Pathway 1: AI (Academically and Intellectually Gifted)
- Approved aptitude test equal to or higher than 94th percentile
- Approved achievement test equal to or higher than 94th percentile in BOTH reading and math
- Grades: A/B Average in the identified areas
- Teacher Checklist

Pathway 2: AM, AR (Academically Gifted in Math or Reading)

- Approved aptitude test equal to or higher than 94th percentile
- Approved achievement test equal to or higher than 94th percentile in reading OR math
- Grades: A/B Average in the identified area
- Teacher Checklist

Pathway 3: AG (Academically Gifted)

- Approved achievement test equal to or higher than 98th percentile in both reading and math in the same academic year
- Approved aptitude test of 85th percentile or higher
- Grades: A/B Average in the identified area
- Teacher Checklist

Pathway 4: IG (Intellectually Gifted)

- Approved aptitude test equal to or higher than a 98th percentile total composite
- Teacher Checklist
- Students who identify as IG will be given a DEP or an IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) to best meet their academic needs.

Pathway 5: AI, AM, or AR Portfolio

- Approved aptitude test equal to or higher than a 94th percentile
- AIGIT approved student portfolio (K-2, 3-5, and 6-8)
- Grades: A/B Average in the identified area
- Teacher Checklist

*See Procedure Manual for specific identification criteria.

*Because it is not in a student's best interest to be "de-gifted," student performance will be assessed through a Yearly Performance Review (YPR) at the end of every year. Students not meeting identification guidelines could be placed "consultative" after a case review from the AIGIT, AIG Director, and parents, but AIG identification will not be changed.

Once the criteria requirements have been met, the AIGIT will meet to determine which services will be provided. These decisions will be made on an individual student basis.

Portfolio Guidelines

A portfolio may be used to refer any students who have clearly demonstrated a need for gifted differentiated educational services. A portfolio highlights the student's strengths and documents his/her ability to work above current grade level. The following items are helpful to have in the portfolio (depending on the student's grade level) when a student is considered for AIG services:

- Teacher Checklist
- Writing samples
- Anecdotal evidence of strengths
- Any math or reading assessments that show the student's ability to work significantly above grade level or shows significant growth in one year as determined by the AIGIT (List of books read, Reading 3D, iReady data, NC Check Ins, PSAT/SAT/ACT/AP scores, Benchmark Assessments, etc.)
- English-Language (EL) testing results (shows accelerated growth in home language)
- Documentation of special interests of the student (exceptional projects, academic competitions, etc.)
- Unusual presentation of an idea that demonstrates in-depth understanding and critical thinking
- Unique ways of doing assignments

TRANSFER STUDENTS:

When students enroll in HCPS and are already identified as AIG:

Students shall retain identification. Students will be looked at individually by the school AIGIT team, will be placed in appropriate settings, and updated Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) will be developed. Students may or may not be placed in AIG pullouts, honors, or advanced classes. This placement will be based on the individual student's information/data.

ACADEMICALLY GIFTED PROGRAM

APPROVED TEST LIST AND TEACHER OBSERVATION/BEHAVIOR CHECKLISTS

APTITUDE

- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
- Comprehensive Test of Non-Verbal Intelligence II (CTONI-2)
- Differential Ability Scales 2 (DAS-II)
- InView
- Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children II (KABC-II)
- Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test I & II (NNAT & NNAT 2)
- Naglieri General Ability Tests (V, NV, Q)
- Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT-8)
- Raven's Progressive Matrices
- Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales (RIAS-2)
- Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary and Middle School Students (SAGES 3)
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults, Aptitude Portion (SATA)
- Stanford-Binet 5
- Universal Non-Verbal Intelligence Test (UNIT or UNIT2)
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children IV (WISC IV)
- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III (WAIS III)
- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale IV (WAIS IV)
- Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability (WJ-IV Cog)
- Other tests as approved by the AIG Director

ACHIEVEMENT

(If EOG/EOC scores are available, they need to be used.)

- American College Test (ACT)
- Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP4/ERB)
- End-of-Course (North Carolina)
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)
- Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED)
- Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement II (KTEA 3)
- Metropolitan Achievement Test 8

- PLAN (Preliminary ACT Assessment)
- Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT)
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults, Achievement 10 Portion (SATA)
- Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)
- Stanford Achievement Test 1
- TerraNova
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II (WIAT II)
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III (WIAT III)
- Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJ-IV ACH)
- Other tests (i.e. state achievement tests) as approved by the AIG Director

TEACHER OBSERVATION/BEHAVIOR CHECKLISTS

- Henderson County Public Schools Academically Gifted Observation Checklist for grades K-2*
- Henderson County Public Schools Academically Gifted Observation Checklist for grades 3-5*
- Henderson County Public Schools Academically Gifted Observation Checklist for grades 6-8 *
- Henderson County Public Schools Academically Gifted Observation Checklist for grades 9-12*
- Gifted Rating Scales-S
- Pearson Company

*Indicates resource is available in HCPS AIG Procedures and Guidelines Manual

* 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, multilingual learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.

Giftedness is the manifestation of ability to learn well beyond the expected level of one's peers. It may be discovered through outstanding student performance, high test scores, and/or observation (NAGC 2019a; NAGC 2019b). In some cases, these abilities are not seen in students due to various circumstances such as language barriers, home situations, trauma, etc. and these students need to be actively sought out through alternate means of assessment.

- Multiple indicators include measurable student achievement, student performance, student aptitude, and observations of student behaviors, which include student interest and motivation.
- Information from any and all indicators may be used in matching students with appropriate service options.

HCPS uses EOG scores and aptitude scores from the CogAT aptitude assessment, which is administered to all 2nd grade students each year. We continue to screen students in all grades (K-12), and specific students are selected to participate in an aptitude test (CogAT,

NNAT, OLSAT) each fall. AIG Specialists also give a second aptitude test when students have a qualifying EOG score but have not met the aptitude criteria after one aptitude test. The Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (CTONI-2) and/or the Naglieri (NNAT) is given to English Learners (EL), twice exceptional students, or students with a 504 who score high on the EOG but do not meet aptitude criteria after taking the CogAT.

In the 2022-25 AIG plan, multiple pathways for identification were created to give more opportunities for identification and service. These pathways have been updated for the 2025- 2028 plan based on data and ongoing feedback from various stakeholders. This is a continual topic of the AIG Professional Learning Community (PLC): how to properly identify students who are traditionally under-served. The AIG Director will provide a list of the top students who score 85th percentile and higher on the EOG to the AIG Specialists to screen for the possible participation in the AIG program. AIG Specialists will continue to consult with EC, EL, Title I, and other specialists to identify and serve potential students. Specialists will consult with other counties to explore other non-traditional standardized measures. We believe our use of the Naglieri General Ability Tests (V,NV,Q) will assist in the endeavor to identify and/or serve under-represented populations due to its diverse approach in measuring general ability using verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal test questions that can be solved regardless of the student's language knowledge.

The nurtured/talent development part of the AIG program continues to grow as we incorporate individual school data to inform decisions about placement in the nurturing program. Specialists are continually reviewing student data to look for students that do not automatically meet criteria but have consistent data showing growth or giftedness in specific areas.

Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %
Female	---	---	<5%	---	6.60%	---	9.88%
Male	18.75%	---	<5%	---	6.17%	---	12.20%
Total	15.48%	---	<5%	---	6.38%	---	11.04%

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

*** Practice D**

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

District AIG staff monitor identification and service data to ensure that identification processes are followed uniformly at each school. Presentations that explain to faculties how screening, referral, and identification are conducted are shown each year. Included in these presentations is specific information about recognizing gifted characteristics in under-served populations. Specialists may modify their presentations to specifically target the demographics of their particular schools.

AIG Specialists meet monthly, and at other times as needed, to collaborate and discuss county procedures, best practices, and meeting the various needs of students.

The AIG Director regularly reviews the processes leading up to, and including identification, to check for consistency. All needed paperwork for identification is found in the AIG Specialist LMS folder. Procedural handbooks for specialists are used to ensure consistency.

Specialists meet on a regular basis with their schools' classroom teachers, other specialists, and principals to help maintain open communication and understanding of services. All schools have AIGIT teams to help with the identification process and to enable school personnel to be involved in decisions regarding their students. Updated information on identification is also made available to the public via the county's website.

*** Practice E**

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

Parents/families, students, and the community-at-large can readily find current information about the AIG program of Henderson County, including screening, referral, and identification processes on the Henderson County Public Schools website. The website contains an active link to the current AIG plan and has contact information for the AIG Director and each AIG Specialist. The AIG Director also presents the AIG plan to the school board and community-at-large.

To ensure all school personnel understand the AIG processes, the AIG Specialists share a presentation during a faculty meeting at the beginning of the year. Specialists also touch base with teachers routinely to check on student performance, provide resources, and answer any questions teachers may have. The AIG Director also reviews the plan with school administrators and the HCPS AIG Advisory Group.

AIG Specialists send notices home and conference with parents/guardians/students to review screening, referral, and identification information. Dissemination of screening, referral, and identification information is available in parent's/student's native language as needed.

* Practice F

Documents the evidence gathered and analyzed to support an AIG identification decision. This documentation is reviewed with parents/guardians and maintained in student records.

The AIG program communicates with parents/guardians and involves them in decisions made concerning their child. There are systems in place where parents/guardians sign for permission to test and to implement a DEP or an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP). Parents/guardians are invited to a placement conference where their signature is required on a student's DEP or IDEP. Identified students who transfer from other counties or states are evaluated, and parents are notified of service delivery decisions by the AIGIT. Notification, along with a written "Procedures to Resolve Disagreements" guide, is sent home when a transfer student who was identified in another LEA receives services that differ from services they were receiving in their former school. Screening, referral, and identification processes are clearly explained in the HCPS AIG plan. AIG Specialists maintain documentation for each school which contains screening forms and AIGIT decisions. AIG Specialists meet monthly to discuss issues and questions. They also work with the AIGIT at each school to ensure that procedures are followed correctly. All forms and procedures are available in the AIG conference folder. A "Procedure to Resolve Disagreements" guide is sent to parents/guardians with the permission to test form. It is also given to parents/guardians at conferences when they sign any DEP or IDEP forms. All AIG student information is confidential and is kept in locked files. It is always available for parents or guardians to view.

All identified AIG students within the county have an AIG file which contains the DEP or IDEP and is maintained by the specialist at his/her school. These records are kept secure and are updated on a regular basis. Communication with parents/guardians is done throughout the school year through a variety of methods including the LMS, newsletters, emails, quarterly reports, and initial and annual reviews. DEPs or IDEPs are developed by the AIGIT when a student is identified in the AIG program. These are reviewed and signed by parent/guardian at a placement conference and become part of the student's AIG file. Interpreters are available, if needed, for conferences. The DEP/IDEP specifies the area(s) of identification and service options for the individual student. DEPs are reviewed annually and Yearly Performance Reviews (YPRs) are sent to parents/guardians at the end of each school year. New DEPs are developed when a student transitions from elementary to middle school and middle to high school. A new DEP is also developed when any change needs to be made in a student's service options, such as adding an area of identification or changing from direct to consultative services. Any change to a student's DEP requires a parent conference and signature. For a student who is identified as IG, an IDEP is developed to ensure their academic needs are being addressed. An IDEP can also be used for students who are twice identified (i.e. AIG and autistic) or have disabilities, underachievers, students with high potential or demonstrated academic skills from a culturally diverse or economically disadvantaged family, and those who are subject or grade accelerated. Detailed information about this process and the forms to be used are provided in the AIG Procedure Manual, which is located in the AIG LMS folder. Throughout the school year AIG students receive progress reports/midterm reviews, and parent conferences are scheduled to address specific concerns. Parents receive a letter and YPR from the AIG Specialist at the end of the school year concerning the status of their student's AIG services. Procedures are in place to make any needed changes to the DEP or IDEP and require AIGIT signatures as well as a parent signature.

Data Collection: The AIG Specialist will collect documentation on students demonstrating outstanding academic ability or potential. This data will be presented to the school-based AIGIT. Collected data should include the following multiple indicators: Student Achievement scores from EOG/EOC (most recent scores; no more than two years old)*, Student Performance documented with a copy of student's academic grades (most recent two years), Student Aptitude scores on individual IQ/aptitude tests and/or group IQ/aptitude tests (within three years, if available), Student Interest Survey results, Motivation to Learn and Observable Student Behaviors Checklist, and Teacher Observation Checklist. Additional data may be included in a student academic portfolio as needed.

*If EOG/EOC scores are available, they should be used as the achievement measure. If EOG/EOC scores are not available, then standardized tests (most recent scores; no more than two years old) may be used.

Review by the AIG Identification Team (AIGIT)

The AIGIT is a school-based team and has the responsibility of determining whether a student demonstrates a need for differentiated services within the gifted program. This school-level team consists of a school administrator or designee, the AIG Specialist, a classroom teacher, a counselor, and others as needed. The team is chaired by the AIG Specialist and reviews the data collected for the purpose of identification. The steps for the review include the following:

Step 1: Student screening occurs and data is collected.

Step 2: Data is reviewed and recorded by the AIGIT.

Step 3: The team decides if: (a) the student will be identified as AIG, (b) the student will be served in a nurtured capacity, (c) more information is needed, or (d) differentiation is inappropriate at this time.

Step 4: If the student is identified, a DEP is developed.

Step 5: If more information is needed, the AIGIT requests permission from the parent to obtain this additional information. Additional information may include new test scores and work samples.

Step 6: If the AIGIT determines that no differentiation is needed at this time, parents are notified of this decision. If parents disagree with the decision of the AIGIT, the procedure to resolve disagreements is available to them.

*** Practice G**

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 developed and reviewed annually with parents/guardians to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

All identified AIG students have a DEP or an IDEP. The AIGIT at each school, led by the AIG Specialist, meets to determine which differentiated services will best meet the needs of each student. HCPS has a menu of services that explain the differentiated curriculum and instructional services that are offered for AIG students. These DEPs/IDEPs are reviewed annually with parents/guardians to ensure effective programming and the parents' understanding of their student's AIG services.

The AIGIT, composed of classroom teachers, the principal, the counselor, and the AIG Specialist, meets at each school on an as needed basis to determine which students need a DEP or IDEP and which students need nurturing through the AIG Program to develop their talent and academic potential. Once developed, the DEP/IDEP is presented to parents for their input at a conference. At the same conference, the service options and school transitions are explained. The plan is reviewed annually by the AIG Specialist, the classroom teacher, and parents.

PROGRAM SERVICE OPTIONS

The HCPS AIG plan offers a range of program service options for kindergarten through 12th grade, designed specifically to meet the unique needs of identified gifted students. The service options, content modification, special programs, and instructional strategies are explained both below and in the AIG Procedural Manual. Separate charts give specific information for grades K-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

Each K-12 student's needs and abilities are matched with appropriate service delivery options using the specified criteria. A DEP will be used to document criteria. In some instances, students may also need an individualized component (IDEP). These cases may include the under-achieving gifted student, the gifted student with disabilities, or the gifted student with high potential or demonstrated academic skills from a culturally or linguistically diverse or economically disadvantaged family. An IDEP will also be created for students who are identified as IG so that appropriate services can be given. The IDEP will address the student's needs in language arts or math. Parents will be invited by the AIG Specialist to attend an individualized meeting to review the DEP or IDEP. Service options for high school students will be determined annually as the student and a faculty advisor, school counselor, and/or gifted specialist review the students' course selections via the Student Information System. A student's eligibility to enroll in honors and/or AP courses will also be reviewed annually.

This review will be completed prior to registration. High schools encourage students to challenge themselves academically and recognize students for academic achievement throughout the year.

Level of Need for Differentiation in Programming

HCPS identifies four levels of programming for gifted education in grades K-12: all, many, some, and few. These program levels provide for increasing levels of differentiation to meet student needs, ranging from what all students should have to what only a few are likely to need.

ALL represents the regular education program in the regular classroom setting. The options in this level address what all students need in the form of varied teaching strategies and techniques to motivate and stretch all learners to reach their maximum potential. It is within the regular classroom that teachers may recognize gifted behaviors and develop gifted potential. Talent development opportunities are provided to all students.

MANY represents "in class" modifications that are made to accommodate students displaying a need for differentiation in some academic skills, but not necessarily in all areas. The focus is on developing the student's potential. The responsibility for meeting the needs of these students lies with the regular classroom teacher; however, the AIG Specialist may provide consultation and support to the regular teacher.

SOME represents service options for students who have demonstrated a clear need for differentiated instruction one to two grade levels above their classmates. These services usually extend outside the regular classroom setting for some services. Specific criteria have been established for service options at this level, which include pull out for reading and math at the elementary level and honors classes at the middle and high school level.

FEW represents services that usually involve a great deal of modification of the content and/or the learning environment. While this level represents the smallest number of students, it reflects the widest range of individual differences. Specific criteria have been established for service options at this level, which include grade and/or subject acceleration.

HCPS offers a range of program service options to address the unique needs of identified and nurtured high school students. Some of these services include honors classes, AP classes, Henderson County Virtual Public School (HCVPS) offerings, Early College high school, college courses, Career and College Promise (CCP), North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) options, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) online program, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM), early graduation, internships, and academic and service clubs.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

As a team, we will continue to have discussions and research into the use of local norms. We will also continue to look at strengthening ways to move students from being nurtured to being identified, especially as we monitor traditionally underrepresented students.

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * AIG Headcount and nurtured numbers
- * AIGIT school notes
- * AIG PLC notes

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 AIG students, across all grade levels, K-12, and learning environments, through collaboration with a variety of personnel. Services are aligned to students' advanced learning needs and AIG identification.

The AIG department recognizes the importance of supporting the full range of needs of gifted learners, and it understands the value of developing the school community's understanding of gifted learners. By collaborating with a variety of personnel including teachers of Multilingual Learners (ML), Exceptional Children (EC) teachers, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) staff, and classroom teachers, as well as administrators, guidance counselors, and school psychologists, our programs and services align with the students' demonstrated needs and identification areas.

Henderson County students have a number of academic options open to them based on need including subject acceleration and grade acceleration for grades K-8. At the elementary level, AIG identified and nurtured students are grouped based on achievement and aptitude testing results and input from classroom teachers. Students are primarily served through cluster grouping in the regular classroom and pull out sessions in language arts and/or math with the AIG Specialist. Pull out groups are flexible for nurtured students depending on the strengths and weaknesses displayed each quarter in the regular classroom and in the pull out sessions. Specialists plan instruction for these groups based on identified needs, and students may attend groups at other grade levels or additional smaller groups to meet specific needs. Specialists and the AIG Director will continue to work with administrators in emphasizing the importance of clustering.

In middle school, students are served in both honors language arts and math classes on a daily basis. The language arts classes at all the middle schools are taught, or co-taught, by a language arts teacher who is a licensed AIG Specialist. Other honors classes are taught or co-taught by AIG licensed teachers or teachers with local credentials. At the middle school level, students also have the opportunity to earn credit in English I, Math I, and Spanish I with face to face instruction. Should students have academic needs beyond these high school courses, they also have the opportunity to take online courses through HCVPS, NCVPS, NCSSM, and Edmentum, a company that provides online instruction to our students.

In high school, students can enroll in honors, advanced placement, and online classes. Honors and AP classes are taught or co-taught by AIG licensed teachers or teachers with local credentials such as AP training, honors course training, Regional AIG Credentials course at Western Region Education Services Alliance, or other locally offered training focused on meeting the needs of gifted learners. Henderson County Virtual Public School, free online classes taught by HCPS instructors, is offered to in-county students to broaden their opportunities to pursue advanced courses while being able to meet with teachers when needed. Students can also pursue dual enrollment through the Career and College Promise (CCP) program or enrollment in the Early College High School, both of which allow them to receive both a high school diploma and an associate's degree.

For additional intellectual stimulation K-12 students are encouraged to participate in a variety of enrichment programs such as STEM and STEAM clubs, Battle of the Books, Robotic Clubs, Spelling Bee clubs, summer camps, NC Governor's School, NCSSM, Summer Ventures, the legislative page program, National History Day, Science fairs, local programs and contests, and other school clubs and competitions. As needed, the AIG department works with schools to ensure that costs for things such as entry fees, camp fees, etc. are paid through local and state funds. These opportunities are communicated to students and parents through a variety of means including school-specific communication, AIG LMS classrooms, emails, phone calls, etc.

*** Practice B**

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the social and emotional needs of AIG students, across all grade levels, K-12, and learning environments, through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.

AIG Specialists play a pivotal role in coordinating the joint efforts of those who support the social and emotional needs of AIG students. The AIG Specialists meet directly with parents to review each student's DEP or IDEP and to discuss the social and emotional needs of their student. Students who need individual attention may be referred to a school counselor for classroom guidance, small group counseling, or individual counseling sessions. They may also be referred to a school social worker or school psychologist for additional specific services.

The AIG Specialist cooperates with the regular classroom teacher to meet the needs of AIG identified and nurtured students, paying particular attention to the under-achieving, twice identified, multi-language, or at-risk gifted student. AIG Specialists invite school counselors and guest speakers to participate in group presentations and discussions on topics such as goal setting, growth mindset, and perfectionism. AIG Specialists share current research and resources on social and emotional needs through websites, LMS classrooms, and newsletters. Topics include the unique characteristics of giftedness, stress, social skills, sensitivity, perfectionism, self-esteem, cooperation and competition, expectations of others, asynchronous development, growth mindset, grit, procrastination, motivation, and burnout, among others. Each LMS post includes the contact information for the AIG Specialist and school counselors if the students should desire follow-up about a particular skill. AIG Specialists will also host meetings to discuss these needs with students in person.

Recognizing that transitioning from one school to the next can be an emotionally vulnerable time, AIG Specialists and counselors work together to host special transition events for AIG students and their parents as students move from elementary to middle school and middle to high school.

Secondary AIG Specialists also collaborate with Career Development Coaches to provide students with college/career counseling programs including career education/awareness, internship and apprenticeship experiences, and mentorships. AIG Specialists also use information gleaned from Graduation Coaches' work with students using Pathful to discuss student inventories that are tied to careers, clusters, colleges, and other interests.

HCPS staff is aware of potential socio-emotional needs that may arise and is committed to addressing these issues through the following services:

A. Direct services for students

1. Support and discussion groups (based on current research) that focus on behavioral needs of gifted students. Topics include: unique characteristics of giftedness, stress, social skills, sensitivity, perfectionism, self-esteem, cooperation and competition, expectations of others, asynchronous development, growth mindset, and grit
2. Provision for gifted students to work with intellectual peers through clustering and flexible grouping, honors and AP courses, and enrichment opportunities
3. Appropriate levels of academic challenge
4. Awareness of unique needs of specific AIG population including: under-achieving students, diverse populations, twice identified students, and the highly gifted
5. Acceleration options including: early entrance to kindergarten, subject/grade acceleration, college courses including AP and CCP with online options, dual enrollment, CDM, and HCPS Early College
6. Enrichment programs that provide opportunities for gifted students to interact with peers such as NCSSM, summer enrichment programs (Governor's School, local camps, etc.), school clubs, and competitions
7. College/career counseling program: career education/awareness, internship and apprenticeship experiences, and mentorships

B. Support for parents

1. Parent meetings
2. AIG LMS classroom
3. Newsletters
4. Individual parent-student-teacher conferences

C. Scope and sequence for the affective curriculum:

1. Understanding what it means to be gifted

Elementary:

- Discussions on the characteristics of giftedness
- Student inventories
- Survival Guide for Gifted Teachers
- Emphasis on celebrating differences in learning Socratic Seminars

Middle:

- Socratic seminars and shared inquiry discussions on articles and stories about giftedness
- Concept-based units focusing on gifted issues

High:

- Student inventories that are tied to careers and/or college majors
- Group and one on one counseling for student

2. Developing coping strategies for behavioral needs of the gifted:**Elementary:**

- Group problem solving activities that develop cooperation
- Individual or peer groups with school counselor to focus on perfectionism, anxiety, stress, and other issues as needed

Middle:

- Bibliotherapy--recommended reading addressing specific issues such as underachieving or perfectionism
- School counselor led sessions addressing specific issues
- Intervention with progress monitoring as necessary through appointments with counselor, social worker, and/or parents

High:

- School counselors
- Social workers
- AIG Specialist
- Community resources

3. Guiding students to become their own advocate**Elementary:**

AIG Specialists guide students to reach out to classroom teachers and school counselors to discuss their socio-emotional needs and resolve conflicts with peers. In addition, students are encouraged to proactively seek out more rigorous learning opportunities within the regular classroom as needed.

Middle/High:

AIG Specialists encourage students to become their own advocates by contacting their school counselors and individual teachers in order to ask about opportunities for improvement or to discuss their academic or socio-emotional needs. AIG Specialists also assist other staff in educating students and parents of requirements for the following: CCP enrollment, NC graduation, NC Academic Scholars program, Career and Technical Education (CTE) scholars program, Governor's School, NCSSM, extra-curricular opportunities, internship opportunities, local college information, admission to colleges/universities, and importance of service/sports/clubs. Students also have access to consultative support with the AIG Specialist.

4. Providing college/career guidance

Elementary:

Students are introduced to college and career information beginning in elementary school. Career fairs, guest speakers, field trips, and more are all designed to help younger students understand what is available to them in the future.

Middle:

AIG Specialists collaborate with Career Development Coaches to provide students with college/career counseling programs, including career education/awareness, internship and apprenticeship experiences, and mentorships. They also use the information gleaned from the Graduation Coaches' work with students using Pathful to discuss student inventories that are tied to careers, clusters, colleges, and other interests.

High:

AIG Specialists partner with the Career Development Coordinators to provide information on internships and apprenticeships to students. AIG Specialists also encourage students to attend local college fairs and to provide students with access to attend local job fairs, such as the Henderson County manufacturing job fair. AIG Specialists coordinate with school counselors to host workshops to provide all juniors and seniors with assistance with college and employment applications as well as résumés, and publish timelines or action plans that students can use to plan for and apply to college. AIG Specialists ensure that students set up individual meetings with school counselors and to review the student's transcript and plan for transition to college. AIG Specialists collaborate with school counselors to make students aware of and provide assistance with scholarship applications.

5. Educating and encouraging parents on how they can be effective in guiding their students

All grade spans:

- Share current research in social/emotional needs through LMS classes, emails, parent conferences, newsletters, etc.
- Arrange individual parent conferences and calls
- Focus discussion on social/emotional needs during transition meetings (entering and exiting middle/high school)
- Discuss academic options such as online classes during transition meetings (entering and exiting middle/high school)
- Two way parent communications throughout the school experience

HCPS has responded to the growing mental health and social and emotional needs of all students by adding a variety of youth mental health and trauma-informed classroom practices training. Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) helps participants to better understand a wide variety of mental health conditions to better recognize the signs and symptoms of students experiencing a crisis or the effects of mental illness and to respond more quickly and appropriately when students are in distress. This training helps teachers better support students and helps them more effectively collaborate with other professionals such as school counselors, social workers, nurses, and other medical professionals. School based therapists, who are employed by a variety of community mental health partners, can provide out-patient therapy at school, clinical assessments, and crisis support.

Like their regular education counterparts, AIG Specialists have been a part of these training sessions, helping to provide a supportive network that can respond to students who are experiencing problems. Continued social emotional trainings will be available to all AIG personnel during the next plan cycle.

* Practice C

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

The programs and services that are developed for the AIG students are thoughtful, research-based, and connected to the county's strategic plan, specifically "HCPS Strategic Plan Priority 1: Future-Ready Students, Subgoal 1: Henderson County Public Schools (HCPS) will graduate all students ready for their future" (HCPS Strategic Plan 2024-2027). Students are served through well-defined policies and procedures. All schools have the services of an AIG Specialist. All specialists participate in county-wide professional development that is often designed to help teachers develop understanding and practice of research based instructional strategies. In addition to this participation, specialists participate in their school PLCs and the AIG PLC to ensure that what they are doing is connected to school and district instructional goals. The AIG Director is part of a larger county curriculum and instruction team, which allows the AIG program, firsthand, to be aware of local and state instructional issues and influence district level decision making.

HCPS has embraced what is known as the Henderson County Instructional Framework which trains all certified staff in the areas of: higher order thinking skills, summarizing, accelerating learning focus, vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing to raise achievement, using advanced organizers, and using non-verbal representations. All of these strategies are research based and proven to be most effective in teaching students. HCPS continues its focus on high yield strategies with professional development throughout the school year for administrators and teachers. The system continues to dedicate itself to a research based model of professional development which includes direct instruction, practice, feedback, modeling, and follow-up strategies that occur throughout the school year. Instructional coaches are placed at all schools to enhance professional development and to support teachers as they work to provide the best instruction for all students. Administrators are encouraged to monitor instruction by conducting daily walk throughs of classrooms, and district walk throughs take place throughout the school year.

Teachers continue to have extensive training in differentiation, formative assessments, and PLCs. The district expects all schools to provide their teachers with dedicated PLC time, which has allowed for teachers to better plan and implement strategies that help all students grow. The implementation of MTSS throughout the district has also brought renewed differentiation training to classroom teachers to support core instruction so that they are working every day on meeting students where they are to take them to the next level. The AIG Director also serves as the MTSS coordinator for the district which has created a cohesive focus on the needs of all learners. Since the focus of MTSS is on all students who are not achieving at potential, district and school-specific data focused on student performance will highlight AIG students whose progress is stagnant or inconsistent with their ability, allowing us to adjust services as needed.

AIG staff work daily in the schools to support and instruct students. Their instruction is expected to extend and enrich the Standard Course of Study. Lessons and units, while tailored to the needs of their particular students, also follow the county's learning framework expectations that include essential questions or "I Can" statements, graphic organizers, and summarizing activities. Specialists are included in school staff development initiatives and are expected to participate in instructional professional development. Many of the AIG Specialists are members of their School Improvement Teams, attend 504 and IEP meetings with regular classroom teachers, and have been part of developing school specific professional development. AIG Specialists work closely with ML teachers to develop talent and identify under-represented populations with more intentional meetings to take place during the new plan cycle.

*** Practice D**

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

The AIG department works with schools to help them implement grouping that supports the growth of students.

At the elementary level, students are served by AIG Specialists through pull out services for Language Arts and math. These pull out groups serve both identified and nurtured students throughout the year. Specialists review student performance data with teachers and administrators to help them cluster high achieving students together so that pull out and push in services can be readily accessed and purposeful differentiation to meet student needs can occur in the core. These cluster groups also provide students with like minded peers to ensure the regular education classroom promotes strong, effective collaboration. At our elementary schools, intervention/enrichment groups are formed based on formative and summative assessment data, including data from EOGs, aptitude testing, NC Check-Ins, i-Ready, classroom assessments, Reading 3D, etc. Students are flexibly grouped throughout the year based on academic needs as exhibited in data. Special attention has been given to subgroups at the elementary school as we continue to look for ways to better meet the needs of individual schools. Because AIG Specialists are aware of the subgroup data, they can serve high achieving students, as we try to better mirror the school demographics in our service delivery plan.

At the middle school level, ELA honors classes are filled using HCPS gifted learner rubrics and AIG identification criteria. Middle school math honors classes meet the HB986 law that specifies students who make a Level 5 on their Math EOG are placed in the honors math class the next year, including Math I. These classes are carefully created based on student performance data and with input from the AIG Specialists, teachers, parents, and administration. Some of the middle schools have also created intervention/enrichment time periods where students are able to engage in academics that best meet their needs.

At the high school level, most honors and AP courses are self-selective, which allows students multiple opportunities to enroll in classes that are both rigorous and of high interest. High schools also offer many opportunities, through CTE courses and internships, for students to explore career interests and earn credentials. Students are also encouraged to explore CCP courses, which allow them to earn free college credit while in high school. A few students who are ready for more specialized coursework in a particular field can register through NCVPS, HCVPS, or dual enrollment courses. Students who are identified as AG or IG are also able to enroll in dual enrollment courses at Blue Ridge Community College during their freshman and sophomore years.

*** 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.

AIG Specialists deliver essential information about differentiation services, gifted education policy, and the local AIG plan to all faculties across the county. Specialists have created presentations to share with schools at the beginning of the year to ensure understanding of the AIG program. They meet with faculty and support staff to inform them of regulations related to gifted education, the local AIG program and plan, and the delivery of differentiated services at their particular school. AIG staff will adjust presentations to meet the needs of their different schools. Also included is information about what gifted is not and common misconceptions about gifted students. At the high school

level, a grade-span appropriate list of qualities of gifted learners will be distributed to teachers at the beginning of each year as a reminder to differentiate instruction based on students' needs. Specialists will re-distribute this list of qualities before class registration each year to encourage teachers to identify students who should be recommended for advanced courses. Additionally, AIG Specialists are available to answer questions and provide assistance throughout the school year.

Specialists also meet with teachers and administrators on a regular basis to discuss students and their services.

DEPs/IDEPs are shared with teachers, and AIG teachers include classroom teachers when developing goals for gifted students.

Each AIG Specialist in Henderson County serves one or two designated schools. This assignment of staff allows for the availability of specialists to faculty, support staff, and both identified and nurtured students. It also enables them to build ongoing relationships with their schools. Both hard copies and electronic copies of the plan are available at all schools. AIG Specialists and other teachers who work with the gifted students participate in grade level meetings and school-specific workshops. Each school's AIGIT has members who have various working roles in the school, weaving together wide-reaching experience and awareness. The AIG Director meets regularly with county principals and teachers and attends various School Improvement Team meetings to advocate for gifted needs and services.

*** Practice F**

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

Yearly presentations by AIG Specialists to school staff facilitate communication and service continuity. All AIG Specialists annually update presentations to include current and pertinent information.

At the elementary sessions, the following topics are included in the presentation: explanation of multiple pathways of identification, characteristics of gifted students versus high achievers, resources for serving gifted students, resources for differentiating instruction for gifted students, AIGIT members, county and school AIG demographics, and AIG services provided.

At the middle and high school sessions the following topics are included in the presentation: AIG Consultative Support, North Carolina's Graduation Requirements, Criteria for Honors and AP Courses, Honors and AP Course Selections, CCP opportunities, North Carolina Academic Scholars Program, summer programs such as Governor's School and Summer Ventures in Science and Mathematics through NCSSM, online classes offered through HCVPS, NCVPS, and NCSSM, college placement tests such as PSAT/SAT/Pre-ACT/ACT, helpful websites such as College Foundation of North Carolina and My College Quickstart, applying to Colleges and Universities, importance of Community Service/Sports/Clubs, scholarship opportunities, etc. Information presented will also include how students are served, honors class expectations, specific social emotional needs of gifted adolescents, and other opportunities available for gifted students.

Because transition times between elementary, middle, and high school can be challenging for parents and students, the AIG staff facilitates programs and conferences to provide information that can ease the stress sometimes associated with change. Elementary, middle, and high school AIG Specialists work together to present information to rising 6th and 9th grade AIG students and their parents prior to the beginning of the 6th and 9th grade school years. Rising 9th graders in particular, and their parents, need an understanding of all the

opportunities available to them at the high school level. Specialists purposefully collaborate to ensure that information about services is clearly shared and understood by students and parents. Information presented will include how students are served, honors class expectations, specific social emotional needs of gifted adolescents, and other opportunities available for gifted students.

Elementary specialists collaborate with middle school specialists to review honors recommendations and to talk specifically about identified and nurtured students who are moving to 6th grade. The middle school specialists collaborate with the 5th grade classroom teachers at their feeder schools to discuss what honors is at the middle school and how students are selected for these honors classes. Middle school AIG Specialists collaborate with high school AIG Specialists to review honors/AP/dual enrollment recommendations and to talk specifically about identified and nurtured students who are moving to 9th grade. Student DEP folders are also passed along at these end of year meetings.

High school AIG Specialists will work with middle school specialists to visit eighth grade honors classrooms and/or create videos to be shown in these classes (depending on the availability). This visit and/or video will serve as an introduction to the specialist and will answer students' frequently asked questions regarding high school. High school specialists also use the visit and/or video as a continued opportunity to encourage students to take a rigorous course load and to take advantage of extra curricular opportunities that support their interests and talents.

*** 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.

HCPS has clear procedures and options in place for accelerated learning. The AIG Specialist will complete HCPS AIG Multiple Indicators of Giftedness – Subject Acceleration Form (3D) or HCPS AIG Multiple Indicators of Giftedness – Grade Acceleration Form (3E) for any student demonstrating a need for subject or grade acceleration, compacting, and/or dual enrollment. This form, along with work samples documenting the need, will be presented and discussed with the AIGIT. Parents will be active members of this process and will be fully informed on how the proposed service option will match the student's demonstrated needs.

Early admission to kindergarten, subject and grade acceleration, on-line options and college courses are avenues open to those who show a need for advanced learning opportunities.

In elementary school, students can qualify for early-K enrollment and also subject- and grade-level advancement. AIG Specialists facilitate these advancements and help classroom teachers create portfolios so that students can have a body of evidence to show their need for different placement. Elementary and middle schools also use iReady technology to provide differentiated advanced learning. Additionally, when needed in elementary school, students can take advanced classes through various opportunities, including joining middle school classes.

In middle school, students can take online classes through HCVPS, NCVPS, or Edmentum, allowing them the opportunity to advance their subject knowledge. Middle school students also have the opportunity to earn high school credit in teacher-led (face-to-face) Math I, English I, and Spanish I courses. AIG identification and rubrics are used to determine eligibility for these classes. The Credit by Demonstrated

Mastery (CDM) process is also available to middle school students who wish to place out of some high school courses.

The HCPS CDM procedure includes the following steps:

Student and parent complete an application to determine eligibility for CDM.

Phase 1: At a county-determined date, a student takes a released EOC, released North Carolina Final Exam (NCFE), or relevant teacher created exam. Students must attain appropriate Phase I scores to move on to Phase 2.

Phase 2: Eligible students complete a subject-area project or assessment which is graded by a county-level committee to determine the granting of course credit.

For high school students there are many options for learning advancement. Honors and AP courses, HCVPS, NCVPS, Edmentum enrollment, CDM, Early College High School, CCP enrollment, internships, and many summer opportunities allow for students who wish to accelerate their learning to do so easily. AIG Specialists and counselors guide students and their parents in choosing services and options that work best for them as they navigate through their school years.

*** Practice H**

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

Several talent development opportunities are available to our K-3 students across our district. These opportunities include Kindergarten Jump Up Camps, Kindergarten Readiness Rallies, and grade-specific summer learning opportunities. Many of the elementary schools also have clubs that allow K-3 students to have academically and socially enriching experiences. Some examples of school clubs include: chess club, math club, chorus club, robotics club, theater club, etc. AIG Specialists encourage students to participate and include information about opportunities in the LMS classroom.

Elementary AIG Specialists currently screen, nurture, and identify K-3 students. AIG Specialists work with K-3 teachers to identify students who would be candidates for pull out opportunities. AIG Specialists support core teachers with activities and resources to extend and differentiate learning in the core classroom and, as time allows, participate in grade level PLCs. Specialists use an early elementary checklist for identifying students who should work with the AIG Specialists for pull out opportunities. Specific units of instruction for differentiated reading and math instruction are developed to nurture the academic potential of high performing K-3 students.

Specialists use a range of instruments to help with K-3 pull outs. Screeners such as the HCPS teacher checklist, Reading 3D mClass assessments, the NC K-2 mid year and summative assessments, iReady data, BOOST data, writing samples, BOG results, and 3rd grade Check-In results are used when reviewing student needs. While working with K-3 students, specialists use a range of materials to extend the curriculum, such as Byrdseed.tv, William and Mary Literature Units, logic puzzles/perplexors, and many other critical thinking resources. Specialists try to work with many students on a variety of topics including math, reading, writing, logic, and creativity. Pull out groups at the schools change throughout the year as assessment results and teacher recommendations are received. The elementary specialists meet with grade level teams, which include classroom teachers, ML teachers, special education teachers, and administrators to determine which students have mastered standards and would benefit from an extension of the curriculum. Specialists also work with classroom teachers as much as schedules will allow to create lesson plans and/or units.

*** Practice I**

Develops mindsets, policies, and practices to promote equity and excellence by broadening access to advanced learning opportunities through a variety of talent development efforts, including frontloading, in grades 4-12.

HCPS values all students and understands the need to have procedures in place to ensure all students have access to learning opportunities. In service of this task, the AIG department has intentionally implemented some options to broaden access to advanced learning opportunities. Several talent development and front-loading opportunities are available to our 4-12 students across the district. These opportunities include grade-specific transition nights, AP boot camps, AP course-specific readiness events, and grade-specific summer learning opportunities. All of our schools also have clubs that allow students to have academically and socially enriching experiences. Some examples of school clubs include: chess club, math club, chorus club, robotics club, theater club, dance club, Battle of the Books, MathCounts, etc. AIG Specialists encourage participation and include information about opportunities in the LMS classroom.

The AIG department works with the HCPS Accountability department to get subgroup data from all schools. This data is analyzed at both the district level and at the individual school level. Children in the subgroups are looked at individually in order to nurture and serve the highest students from each subgroup. Specialists look at a range of data and work with classroom teachers to ensure that all high performing students from each subgroup are seen.

Nurtured groups at the elementary level are not static. At various points of time in the year, students are added to groups based on what could be a variety of data, including formative assessment data and classroom performance. Elementary AIG Specialists facilitate the administration of the CogAT to all 2nd grade students, and secondary AIG Specialists review high school schedules of students who were nurtured in middle school to ensure their needs are being met through honors courses, AP courses, or other means as these students enter 9th grade.

*** Practice J**

Enhances and further develops the talents and interests of AIG students through extra-curricular programming during and outside of the school day.

AIG Specialists encourage students to participate in many extra-curricular programs, both school sponsored and community sponsored. Parents are made aware of these programs at AIG parent meetings as well as through the LMS classroom, newsletters, websites, and direct emails from the schools and teachers.

All AIG Specialists will maintain a grade-span specific district LMS classroom to provide students and parents with information about enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular programs. Examples of some events that Henderson County students are encouraged to attend or participate in include: Western Carolina University's summer camp for the gifted, Summer internships, programs at the NC Arboretum, Governor's School, DAR Essay Competition, Thomas Wolfe Short Story Writing Contest, VFW Patriot's Pen Writing Contest, Letters about Literature, Carl Sandburg Poetry Contest, Battle of the Books, Spelling Bees, Math and Science Fairs, Reading Raiders, AQ-IQ, Foreign Language Competitions, Mock Trial, MathCounts, Engineering Club, Games Day, National History Day, Science Olympiad, Robotics, Lego Leagues, Chess Club, Bridge Club, etc. Specialists are constantly on the lookout for opportunities that will generate interest and enthusiasm with their students. Specialists are also encouraged to sponsor extra-curricular clubs and/or events at their schools that specifically target AIG students.

All of our schools provide multiple opportunities for students to be involved in service, both at their schools and out in the community. Local organizations such as the Kiwanis Club, El Centro, United Way, Boys and Girls Club, etc. partner with schools to work with students in their service endeavors. Several of our schools are now Leader in Me schools, including eight elementary, two middle, and one high school. Students at these schools also have many opportunities to participate in service and leadership clubs within the school that allow them to have a variety of experiences throughout the year.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

The AIG department will continue to focus on providing opportunities for all students and on providing professional development for teachers to promote a growth mindset in regards to meeting the needs of gifted learners. Additionally, the AIG team will continue to focus on promoting smooth transitions from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school for gifted learners.

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * Nurturing numbers and school demographics
- * Membership and participation in extra-curriculars
- * Talent development programming information including student numbers

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 by differentiating curriculum and instruction, including enrichment, extension, and acceleration strategies.

HCPS is committed to adapting the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) to meet the needs of our K-12 gifted learners. Differentiation occurs throughout the grade spans:

Elementary:

Specialists provide pull-out/push-in services to AIG identified and nurtured students from 30-60+ minutes each week. Specialists also work with classroom teachers to support them as they provide differentiated instruction in all Core subjects for students each day.

Middle:

AIG students receive academic differentiation in each class. Honors ELA and math classes for gifted learners meet daily. In every middle school, there is also the opportunity for advanced students to take English I, Math I, and Spanish I in the 8th grade for high school credit and to take an accelerated course via Edmentum when they achieve above grade level status in iReady Math or Reading. Based on students' needs, other high school courses are made available through HCVPS and NCVPS.

High:

There is a wide variety of honors and AP courses available at all of the traditional high schools. There is also an Early College that serves several identified students. All of our high schools participate in College and Career Promise (CCP), allowing students to take college courses while in high schools. HCPS has also created its own virtual school (HCVPS), which allows students to take online classes that are taught by local teachers, allowing for personal connections and direct communication. Students are also supported in their work in HCVPS by our district lead coach for virtual learning. All high schools have HCVPS, NCVPS, and Edmentum available to allow students to work ahead and/or take classes not offered on their school's campus. All high schools have school year and summer work internships available to students to allow them real world experiences.

HCPS teachers follow county-wide curriculum calendars for all core subject areas. AIG Specialists use these calendars to develop specific reading and math units of study that extend the curriculum. Elementary specialists use a variety of research based materials and units to differentiate and enrich grade level content. Project based learning is often used for gifted students to explore ideas/concepts in which they are interested. In the elementary and middle school, students are given opportunities to test out of material they have already mastered and focus on more advanced concepts. Enrichment activities are frequently used instead of standard assignments. In all grades, teachers provide opportunities to explore individual interests. Middle schools AIG Specialists teach honors 6-8 language arts classes, which allows for continued adaptation and extension of the NCSCOS throughout a student's middle school experience. Math honors classes are also provided for 6-8 students and teachers follow advanced district wide curriculum maps to allow for a rigorous classroom environment.

High school honors classes are designed to extend the NCSCOS through the North Carolina Honors Course Standards. All high school honors teachers follow the district wide honors curriculum calendars for honors classes which provide extension of standards. All AP courses complete the College Board audit ensuring that the classes are taught at a college level. AP teachers must attend an AP summer institute or a fall or spring AP workshop, which are both conducted by the College Board. At both middle and high school, there is an opportunity for students to earn credit for a course without seat time. CDM is available at all of our schools. All high schools provide students with the ability to take community college courses through our partnership with Blue Ridge Community College. Workplace internships are available through the school year and summer for interested students.

As funds are available, materials are provided for all grade levels which extend the standard curriculum. AIG Specialists meet with classroom teachers on a regular basis to evaluate materials and determine needs so that classrooms are equipped with texts and tools to help extend the NCSCOS.

*** Practice B**

Uses students' identified abilities, readiness, and interests to address a range of learning needs K-12.

HCPS is committed to meeting the academic needs of gifted learners. Professional development has been conducted across the district to help teachers understand practices and strategies that work best with gifted students. These sessions will continue throughout the new plan cycle. Understanding that all students have unique learning needs, teachers work to develop and use instructional practices that best suit the gifted. The use of high yield instructional strategies has been a continual focus of our district, and the AIG department delivers and receives the training sessions that are available to teachers. All schools are served by an AIG Specialist who is certified in the respective grade levels and content areas, which guarantees an understanding of the age group content and the teaching strategies for the gifted.

HCPS has long embraced the Learning-Focused instructional model. Through internal training, HCPS has adapted the Learning-Focused model into an HCPS instructional model focusing on strategies that most impact student learning. Some of the high yield strategies include vocabulary development, use of graphic organizers, summarizing strategies, application of higher order thinking skills, and literacy across the content areas. All teachers have been trained in high yield strategies that focus on accelerating the curriculum so that students are challenged and can move at a faster pace as they master current content. The HCPS lesson planning template incorporates higher order thinking and advanced organizers into all lessons so that these practices are a natural part of each lesson. Henderson County has, and will continue, to train teachers and administrators throughout the year on high yield instructional practices, which include extending and refining the curriculum.

Elementary AIG Specialists work with pull out groups of identified and nurtured students in reading and math. These pull out groups also provide opportunities for students to investigate topics specific to their passions and interests.

Clustering of gifted learners is encouraged throughout our schools to provide specific opportunities for extension and acceleration in the classroom. At times, elementary specialists also co-teach with cluster teachers to extend the curriculum for students. The specialists, when available, participate in school PLC groups to ensure gifted students' needs are being analyzed and planned for throughout the year.

Each middle school has an AIG Specialist who teaches or co-teaches honors language arts classes. Sixth grade honors math teachers work together with middle school instructional coaches, the district Director of Middle Schools, the district AIG Director, and an AIG Specialist to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately differentiated. Seventh and eighth grade honors math teachers compact and extend the curriculum to ensure students are ready for Math 1 in eighth grade. Specialists also provide support to social studies and science teachers in order to design differentiated curriculum. While in eighth grade, students have the opportunity to take high school courses (English I, Math I, Spanish I) and are introduced to Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes which helps them to begin thinking about career pathways, robotics, technology, and future educational plans.

At the high school level, students are able to select classes from a variety of choices including numerous honors and AP courses. Additionally, there are many online classes offered through NCVPS, NCSSM, and Edmentum, an online provider of curriculum. The Henderson County Early College High School gives students the opportunity to earn both a high school diploma and an Associate's Degree in five years. HCVPS is another growing option for gifted students, especially those who want to advance through high school faster or are interested in a class that is not taught at their high school. High school AIG Specialists assist administration, students, and parents with questions about high school course options.

At all levels, instructional strategies such as shared inquiry, cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, creative problem solving, group investigation, higher order questioning, problem based learning, concept based instruction, simulations, seminars, writer's workshops, internships, mentorships, independent study, etc., are used with students to meet their different needs. By offering choice in assignments, teachers also provide avenues for differentiation. Learning contracts, tic-tac-toe boards, self-selected projects, and open-ended assignments are often used to increase student interest and enthusiasm for subject matter. Teachers are often given professional development in differentiation with choice as to what they need and are interested in learning more about for their students. PLCs are prolific in all grade spans with teachers meeting on a regular basis to plan differentiated instruction.

Students' individual needs are determined through informal observations, standardized aptitude and achievement tests, classroom performance, and classroom and district level formative assessments. AIG Specialists assist general classroom teachers with matching strategies for differentiated instruction based on all data collected.

*** Practice C**

Incorporates a variety of evidence-based resources that address the range of academic, intellectual, and social and emotional needs of AIG students.

The AIG program is committed to providing resources and materials to all grade levels in all subject areas in order to enhance and extend the curriculum and instruction for gifted learners. The AIG department has been fortunate over the years to build a body of resources and materials that enhance the curriculum and instruction at all of the schools. Every effort is made to purchase items that teachers need to have in their classrooms so that they can better serve gifted learners. Requested novel sets, website subscriptions, and instructional materials like Ozobots and Spheros, among other resources, have been and can be purchased for classroom teachers. As we look to ensure that students' needs are being met, careful reviews of current instructional resources are conducted to ensure connection with students' needs, interests, and varied backgrounds.

Elementary AIG specialists supplement the curriculum using:

- William and Mary Center for Gifted Education resources (Literature units such as Journeys and Destinations, Patterns of Change, etc.), Jacob's Ladder, Spatial Reasoning, Mentoring Mathematical Minds
- Zaccaro's resources including Primary Challenge Math, Real World Algebra, Becoming a Problem Solving Genius
- Hands-on Equations
- Various novel sets
- Mindware logic problems
- Vocabulary Development including Caesar's English
- Perfection Learning Series: Literature and Thought (Voices of the Holocaust, Harlem Renaissance)
- Junior Great Books
- PBLProject.com
- Breakout EDU
- Byrdseed TV

Middle school specialists supplement the curriculum using:

- Word Within the Word workbooks
- William and Mary Center for Gifted Education resources
- Jr. Great Books
- Perfection Learning Series
- Novel Studies using novels such as: The Giver, The Lightning Thief, The House of the Scorpion, The Book Thief, A Midsummer Night's Dream, To Kill a Mockingbird, Fahrenheit 451, Romeo and Juliet, etc.
- Marcy Cook Math
- Challenge Math
- Sadlier-Oxford Vocabulary (above grade level)
- Nancie Atwell writing workshop
- Creative Writing
- Greek and Latin Roots
- Variety of ELA and math supplementals

High school teachers enhance AP and honors classes using:

- Novel sets
- Calculator-based ranger systems
- Computer software

- Scientific and statistical materials
- Books of sample AP exam questions
- History review guides
- Laboratory kits & accessories

Annual discussions concerning curriculum and instructional needs for gifted students occur between specialists, the district AIG Director, and all principals to ensure needed materials are purchased that will directly benefit AIG students. As funds are available, it is the intent of the AIG department to continue to provide needed resources to our schools.

Currently in our schools, teachers use Jr. Great Books seminars, Paideia seminars, and additional socratic questioning strategies to explore social and emotional issues. Novel units explore complex emotional issues, and writing units often have students consider personal issues as they have the opportunity to reveal insecurities and questions about themselves. The incorporation of an LMS classroom into daily Language Arts units also provides students the means by which they can share feelings and perceptions that can give teachers insights into the needs of the students.

Throughout the elementary grade levels, AIG Specialists work with children who have specific social and emotional needs. While whole class practices, including CASELs SEL Three Signature Practices, are used, individual students gain insight into their own needs, strengths, insecurities, and questions through collaboration with the counselor, parents, and teachers. Elementary specialists have developed lessons and supports to help students with social and emotional needs. Some of these supports include growth mindset lessons, girls' clubs called Glow and Shine, which offers gifted girl learners the opportunity to talk about issues facing them while working with community mentors to help them set short and long term goals, and lunchtime with the counselor to help students deal with perfectionism issues and test anxiety.

As in elementary school, middle school specialists serve AIG students each year and whole class practices, including CASELs SEL Three Signature Practices, are used school wide. In middle school, specialists teach honors classes in 6-8, so they have the unique opportunity to develop strong relationships with the students. They have also developed lessons that help students understand their social and emotional needs. For example, students read the novel *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell and discuss the relationship between giftedness and long-term achievement.

As in middle school, high school specialists serve AIG students each year and whole class practices, including CASELs SEL Three Signature Practices, are used school wide. High School AIG Specialists maintain a district-wide LMS Classroom that provides support for social and emotional learning needs of AIG students (see details in standard 2b). These needs have also been added to the DEP as a point of individual discussion with AIG students.

K-12 specialists have explicit discussions with students about the characteristics of gifted students and there are several opportunities for meaningful discussion to take place surrounding troubling issues. Every school in the district is served by a social worker who works directly with counselors and teachers to support students. AIG Specialists collaborate with the social worker and counselor at their schools as needed to support gifted students. AIG Specialists will also host meetings in collaboration with school counselors and social workers on a variety of topics relevant to AIG students.

*** Practice D**

Fosters the development of durable skills and mindsets which support post-secondary success. These skills include adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical and creative thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility.

The AIG department looks to integrate opportunities for students to develop durable and future ready skills within a real world context. Understanding that many post high school and college opportunities may not even be created yet, AIG Specialists teach and develop many skills including: global awareness, civic and economic literacies, health awareness, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, applied information, media literacy, research-based inquiries, and project-based learning.

It is through careful planning, implementing, and monitoring of the school's teaching and learning that the district can ensure that gifted students are being taught necessary skills and content that will have them ready for life beyond high school. Through lesson and unit plans that incorporate critical thinking skills and independent, thorough analysis of subject matter, our teachers are preparing students for their futures.

AIG Specialists support many initiatives in the classroom that foster the development of 21st century skills. Problem/project based learning, debates/mock trials, the use of Journey North/Mystery class, collaborative learning focused on team building, in-class leadership development, student presentations, and research projects all help students learn important skills that they will need as they leave school and enter the post-high school world.

There are also many opportunities available to students as both a part of the regular school day and as extra curricular activities. Some of these opportunities include: Engineering/STEM clubs, Robotics, Science Olympiad, Math Counts, National History Day, Lego Leagues, Book Clubs, Student Lighthouse Team, school news programs, student ambassadors, and a multitude of others offered at various school sites throughout the year and during the summer.

It is the AIG department's goal to continue to support school sites as they offer opportunities to cultivate college and career ready skills by purchasing materials, paying for registrations, sending people to trainings, offering professional development options for teachers, and relaying information to the school communities.

Elementary school example:

Fifth graders participate in an Exploration PBL unit to learn about all types of exploration. They research the history of flight along with famous aviators. They learn about aerodynamics and apply those concepts to create, collect, record, and analyze data. Finally, they become an inventor/innovator collaborating with a team to explore an everyday problem in-depth and research a solution. Students create a business plan and an advertising campaign (using web tools to create commercials and infographics). As a culminating activity, they make presentations "Shark Tank" style to try to "sell" their idea.

Middle school examples:

After reading *Outliers: The Story of Success*, English I students conduct research to apply Malcolm Gladwell's theories on success to individuals whom they consider successful. Through their research, they develop and support a thesis about the hidden advantages, opportunities, and cultural legacies that enabled their chosen individual to attain success. The students present their findings in both a research paper and oral presentation to the class.

Sixth graders participate in a three part debate with two other students in which they set out to determine who was The Greatest Explorer Ever. They begin by researching a variety of resources and weeding through bias, credibility, and authenticity. Once they've made their selection, they pretend that they are that explorer and put together a multimedia presentation in which each explorer introduces themselves using maps, videos, graphs, charts, drawings, etc. They provide an autobiography and outline their accomplishments. Then, following the same format, they research their two opponents (looking to downplay their accomplishments and highlight their shortcomings). During the debate, they listen critically to what their opponents highlight and prepare to defend themselves in the final part of the debate. Parents are encouraged to help them at home and can view the debate by a live link provided in the LMS classroom. When the debate is complete, they switch roles and using their opponents' presentations, try to win the debate by playing their opponents.

Seventh graders participate in dystopian literature book clubs in which they read and discuss their chosen book and topics related to it. They meet several times in their own book club and also with cross clubs which consist of students each reading a different dystopian novel. In cross clubs, students make connections between their different dystopian novels and discuss how the different characters in their books are developing and the effects the elements of the dystopian societies are having on them. After completing work in the book clubs, students apply their understanding by working together in small groups to design their own utopias. They must design all aspects of their utopian societies including governmental structure, laws, education, employment, and more. They must decide on a format to present their utopias to their peers. After each presentation, students discuss whether or not the components of the utopian society would be possible in the real world and why.

High school examples:

High School AIG Specialists include information on the district-wide LMS classroom related to durable skills: adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical and creative thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility. In high school courses, including honors and AP courses, teachers further integrate future ready skills into their lessons and units. Collaborative learning, projects, presentations, targeted group work, paideia seminars, real world applications, and other skill sets are observable in classes in all high schools. One example is in an English class where students discuss effective collaboration in advance of a group research project and then have a choice project at the end of the novel unit to demonstrate their understanding of the text and its themes.

*** Practice E**

Uses ongoing assessment, both formative and summative, to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction.

Assessments, both formative and summative, are critical tools that all HCPS teachers use as they develop curriculum and instruction for gifted students in AP classes, honors classes, pull outs, and cluster groups. A variety of formative assessments are used throughout the year to ensure students are receiving appropriate curriculum, and teachers continue to receive formative assessment training during the school year. Our district instructional coaches provide ongoing assessment training for all teachers. The HCPS lesson planning template also guides teachers on the implementation of differentiated assessments and assignments in their units of study with specific differentiation "ask fors" in the planning guide.

Examination of on-going assessment data has become a focus for all schools, K-12, through the PLC process. At all grade levels, PLCs analyze student data. AIG Specialists attend PLC meetings. As a result of PLCs, teachers are continually using formative and summative assessments to understand and better serve their students. At the elementary level, many schools have intervention/enrichment blocks as they assess the data and determine next instructional steps for students. Many of the AIG Specialists are able to do their pull out sessions during this prescribed time.

District PLCs have developed curriculum calendars for all core classes teachers and students participate in all the NC Check-Ins that are available. iReady math is used in K-8 and students take diagnostic math assessments three times a year, which allows for personalized instruction in math. At all of the district middle schools and some of the elementary schools, iReady reading has also been purchased and is used with all students. iReady has been especially helpful for AIG students as they can move ahead multiple grade levels in any iReady domain when appropriate. Students who test out of iReady Reading and/or Math receive further differentiation through Edmentum. Student results on the iReady diagnostics are immediately available to teachers to plan how to meet individual students' needs. Teachers of AIG learners in elementary, middle, and high school use curriculum compacting when relevant by assessing with pretests. These pretests are utilized in all subject areas including math, language arts, social studies, and science, and they can take the form of written tests, oral discussions, or other forms such as project or portfolio evidence. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of assessments when working with children, especially as they plan units where rubrics are used in grading student work. Portfolios and writing samples are kept throughout all grade levels and can be accessed when creating new writing assignments in all subject areas. All teachers have had training in EVAAS and are able to see growth of students, predicted scores, and trends in subgroup growth based on students' summative data.

High school teachers also use an array of formative assessments to understand where their students are and to know which students need to move ahead. Specialists and counselors continue to use PSAT scores, PreACT scores, and the College Board's AP Potential program to predict students' success in AP and honors classes. These results are then used to encourage students to enroll in advanced classes, including CCP courses.

Formative assessment is standard in HCPS classrooms. Teachers understand formative assessment and are using the results of formative assessments to best serve their students on a day to day basis. Formative assessment information is considered by AIG Elementary Specialists as they are able to create flexible pull out groups based on different assessment results throughout the school year.

Careful attention has always been given to summative assessments, especially standardized test results, which give teachers a better understanding of how students processed information over a given period of time. Summative and formative results are used to place students in classes and are used for placement in the AIG program. AIG Specialists also remind teachers to use the teacher checklist for the purpose of talent development and for recommending students for advanced classes.

*** Practice F**

Collaborates with a variety of personnel, based on student needs, to implement differentiated curriculum and instruction.

Regular collaboration among teachers is essential to creating a strong learning environment for children. The AIG Specialists work with other teachers at their schools, including classroom teachers, media specialists, EC and ML teachers, counselors, and administrators to ensure that curriculum and instruction is appropriate for gifted students. Each school also has an AIGIT that meets as needed to help determine which students need a Differentiated Education Plan and which students could benefit from nurturing to help develop their academic potential.

Differentiation, rigorous assignments, and thoughtful lesson planning are components of the county-wide professional development in the HCPS Instructional Framework. All staff members have been trained in techniques that benefit gifted children.

Funds have been devoted to enhancing all subjects. In elementary and middle schools, math, science, social studies, and language arts teachers have received curricular materials which aid in the differentiation process.

AP and honors teachers at the high school level receive funds in order to supplement their curriculums and attend content training. Providing funds are available, AIG Specialists facilitate yearly purchase orders for their schools' teachers after meeting with them and assessing needs and instructional goals. The ML and EC teachers have access to novels and other materials such as the Perfection Learning Series and curriculum guides purchased with AIG funds. Access to these materials and collaboration with all teachers ensures that nurtured students and twice identified students are challenged throughout the school year. AIG Specialists are available for collaboration with other specialists and teachers in PLCs and data teams to help create challenging lesson plans and units for students who show mastery of the basic curriculum.

An overview of the AIG program is presented to each faculty annually to introduce the AIG program to new teachers and refresh program goals for veteran teachers. Differentiation workshops offer guidance to teachers to appropriately modify curriculum for both EC and AIG students. These modifications are especially important for students who are twice identified. A LMS class has been created to help teachers understand the gifted learner and help them understand the importance of regular differentiation in the classroom. HCPS has professional development days during the school year devoted to teacher collaboration and training. All teachers are expected to participate in activities.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

We will continue to develop grade level curricular units for students in the elementary grades that incorporate the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. We will also continue to focus on professional development for teachers focused on meeting the needs of gifted learners, differentiation, and extending the curriculum.

Planned Sources of Evidence

- Developed units of study
- Student AIG folders with completed DEPs
- Honors Level Course and Development Tool results for HCPS honors courses

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.

HCPS employs a county AIG Director to ensure that the AIG program is cohesive across grade spans and schools. The Director, who is pursuing AIG licensure, is experienced in teaching AIG learners and in leading teachers of AIG learners. The Director also ensures that the AIG plan is made available to all stakeholders and reviewed regularly.

The AIG Director regularly meets with the AIG staff, which consists of six full-time elementary specialists, one part-time elementary specialist, five full-time middle school specialists, and four full-time high school specialists. Fourteen of these specialists have an advanced degree, National Board certification, or both. The AIG Director also meets with other professionals who work with gifted students, including classroom teachers, school counselors, media specialists, testing coordinators, school psychologists, special education teachers, and school administrators. The AIG Director is part of the district's Instructional Services team and works closely with other department heads, including the Directors of testing, ESL, elementary, special education, high schools, finance, etc. This collaboration helps the AIG department stay current with other local and state initiatives throughout the school year to effectively integrate the needs and interests of all groups.

The AIG Director is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the AIG plan and working with all schools in the county to ensure that students are receiving appropriate gifted services. The Director is available to meet with parents and students and regularly meets with other LEA AIG Directors to keep current with program opportunities and requirements.

*** Practice B**

Engages AIG-licensed specialists in tasks that explicitly address the academic, intellectual, and social and emotional needs of K-12 AIG students and supports the implementation of the local AIG program and plan.

HCPS has established well-defined descriptions and procedures for K-12 AIG Specialists.

There are currently six full-time and one part-time elementary specialists. All of the elementary specialists serve two (except the part-time specialist, who serves one) schools with their time divided at the schools based on the number of students who need to be served. Each middle school has an AIG Specialist who also teaches/co-teaches 6th-8th ELA and, at our largest AIG populated middle school, there is also a full time AIG Math Specialist. At the high schools, the AIG Specialists teach a regular load of classes while also fulfilling the role of specialists. During the new plan cycle, the AIG department will continue to evaluate the needs of our gifted learners to ensure our service plan is appropriate.

AIG Specialists at the elementary, middle, and high schools have defined responsibilities and roles at their assigned schools.

Specifically, elementary AIG Specialists:

- Implement screening and testing
- Review transfer records and materials
- Facilitate the development and implementation of a student's DEP/IDEP
- Serve as liaison between parents and the school
- Teach units and lessons to promote higher-level thinking skills in classrooms and through pull outs with identified and nurtured students Collaborate with teachers to support differentiation by providing materials, instructional strategies, unit planning, and professional development.
- Serve as scheduling advocates, working with principals to schedule students appropriately
- Assist with counseling AIG students on social/emotional issues
- Facilitate the transition from 5th to 6th grade by collaborating with the middle school AIG Specialist/counselors
- Provide PD as needed
- Maintain a district-wide LMS classroom to promote opportunities for enrichment and resources for social/emotional needs.
- Organize a school-specific LMS drive folder to house information for specialists, counselors, and teachers.

Middle school AIG specialists:

- Implement screening and testing
- Review transfer records and materials
- Facilitate the development and implementation of a student's DEP/IDEP
- Teach/co-teach honors classes for identified and nurtured students
- Serve as liaison between parents and school
- Collaborate with teachers to support differentiation by providing materials, instructional strategies, unit planning, and professional development
- Serve as scheduling advocates, working with school administrators to schedule students appropriately
- Assist with counseling AIG students on social/emotional issues
- Provide PD as needed
- Facilitate the transition from 8th to 9th grade by collaborating with the high school AIG Specialist/counselors
- Maintain a district-wide LMS classroom to promote opportunities for enrichment and resources for social/emotional needs.
- Organize a school-specific LMS drive folder to house information for specialists, counselors, and teachers.

High school AIG specialists:

- Work with middle school specialists to support a smooth transition for 8th-grade students moving to high school Implement screening and testing
- Review transfer records and materials
- Facilitate the development and implementation of a student's DEP/IDEP
- Teach honors and/or AP courses
- Facilitate the NC Governor's School application process at their respective schools
- Collaborate with teachers to support differentiation by providing materials, instructional strategies, and professional development
- Serve as scheduling advocates, working with school administrators and counselors to schedule students appropriately
- Assist with counseling AIG students on social/emotional issues
- Work with school counselors to help with scholarship opportunities and specialized applications for colleges and other high school experiences
- Facilitate early admission or dual enrollment/admission to specialized schools
- Meet with AIG students at various times in the school year to answer questions and ensure students are taking rigorous coursework
- Maintain a district-wide LMS classroom to promote opportunities for enrichment and resources for social/emotional needs
- Organize a school-specific LMS drive folder to house information for specialists, counselors, and teachers

Specialists are available to meet with parents when questions or concerns arise. They also work with administrators on scheduling issues and are often the go-to people when other school personnel have questions about working with gifted students. AIG Specialists will work with other personnel at their schools to present professional development in areas such as differentiation or project-based learning. AIG Specialists also coordinate the AIGIT at each of their schools and screen each school's population. While extremely busy, their most important role in the schools is to be a teacher for academically gifted students. Through the LMS drive, all specialists have folders with their student information, school information, various AIG forms, etc., to use throughout the year.

Currently, all of the county's AIG specialists hold a NC Teaching license in AIG. As AIG personnel are hired, if AIG licensure is needed, the AIG department will pay the cost of the Praxis examination or contribute an equivalent amount towards coursework. The AIG department also encourages other school personnel, such as classroom teachers who work with the gifted, to participate in professional development opportunities specific to the needs of AIG learners and to pursue AIG licensure. As the budget allows, the AIG department reimburses these costs in the same manner as outlined for AIG personnel.

*** 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.

AIG specialists will develop a grade-span specific LMS classroom course that focuses on traits of the gifted, identification procedures, social and emotional issues, differentiation, creativity, effective methods, and teaching models. This online class will be updated every summer and will continue to allow teachers the opportunity to learn more about the gifted students in their classrooms. It also gives them the opportunity to earn CEU credits while taking the course at their own pace. Teachers will be encouraged to take this locally-developed course as they work with gifted students on a daily basis as most do not have AIG certification.

All county personnel will continue system-wide professional development based on data (EVAAS, NC Check-In results, EOG/EOC tests, iReady, school designed assessment results, AP, ACT, PSAT, etc.). The county will also continue to train new teachers and refresh other teachers on our countywide instructional framework, which focuses attention on lesson planning with rigorous assignments and differentiation. Teachers will continue to create units with lessons that include differentiation components such as extending and refining. These units are shared through PLC groups, county-wide professional development sessions, and by the AIG Specialists. The 2024-25 focus on high yield instructional strategies will continue into the 2025-26 school year with a heightened focus on K-12 writing expectations.

The AIG Department will also continue to support teachers as they work on AIG coursework. The department frequently works with schools to support them as they train teachers in topics and resources such as acceleration, Paideia/Socratic seminars, and differentiation. AIG specialists have presented, and will continue to present, professional development for teachers on the importance of academic vocabulary, writing in the classroom, and the needs of the gifted learner with a focus on multilingual learners.

*** 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.

It is HCPS practice that all AIG Specialists must be certified or receive certification during a specific time frame while employed. Currently, all AIG specialists are AIG certified. The district uses the HCPS instructional framework for all teachers, K-12, which includes training in extending and refining practices and differentiation. All teachers must receive this training as they enter the classroom. HCPS provides multiple professional development days to work with teachers on areas of need such as differentiation, rigor, grade-level work, writing, and content area literacy. While these types of professional development have been prevalent, teachers continue to need specific support as they work with gifted students in the regular classroom setting.

In support of teachers, the AIG department will update and continue to encourage teachers to take the in-house LMS classroom course on gifted learners. AIG funds, provided funds are available, will continue to be used to reimburse classroom teachers who take classes leading to AIG licensure. The department will also continue to require and support AP training, both summer institute and fall updates, for high school teachers. The AIG Director and district Lead Mathematics Coach will work with middle school teachers who teach honors math courses so that they can readily access the available AIG online course or work towards AIG licensure. The AIG Director and the AIG Specialists will also continue to work with principals to encourage the clustering of AIG students in classrooms where teachers have received PD or licensure in gifted education.

*** Practice E**

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

HCPS is committed to recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers, including those with AIG certification. Each year, the Human Resources department develops strategies to attract top teacher candidates. Currently, HCPS advertises in the National Minority Update to encourage a diverse applicant pool. The district also actively participates in multiple career fairs and hosts its own career fair at a local high school to connect with educators from a variety of backgrounds. Additionally, HCPS utilizes multiple digital marketing strategies to recruit highly qualified employees to Henderson County Public Schools.

In an effort to recruit a teaching labor force more representative of our student population, HCPS is working collaboratively with the Henderson County Education Foundation on a 'Grow Our Own' initiative. Through this effort, HCPS is seeking to identify minority students interested in careers in education. These students, many of whom are taking the Teaching as a Profession course in our high schools, which began in the 2021-2022 school year, are eligible for scholarships that encourage them to continue their education in pursuit of an education career. The obvious hope here is that these students will return to Henderson County to teach once they complete college. These students are able to participate in "teaching" experiences throughout the year including tutoring, helping with classes, visiting K-12 classrooms, and meeting with education professionals. HCPS has a robust and engaging Beginning Teacher (BT) program, which allows for new teachers to meet regularly with others to feel supported as they go through the early years of teaching. In addition to their school-based mentors, Instructional Coaches support BTs throughout the year in all areas. The monthly AIG county PLC helps AIG Specialists connect with one another as they

share best practices. AIG Specialists will also meet quarterly to collaboratively plan units and differentiation activities to share with their respective faculties. Additionally, AIG Specialists will partner with HCPS Instructional Coaches to support BTs in their efforts to meet students' specific needs.

*** Practice F**

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

HCPS provides multiple days for professional development and requires the use of the district's instructional framework which focuses specifically on lesson planning, higher level thinking skills, and differentiated instruction. All new teachers receive this training, and all returning teachers receive periodic training on these strategies, including AIG Specialists. The framework addresses the needs of diverse learners with an intentional focus on planning rigorous lessons, the inclusion of higher order thinking in all lessons, and accelerated learning for specific students through the use of a differentiated core. Additionally, some of the HCPS AIG Specialists have also provided school,

district, and regional training on teaching strategies for the gifted with titles such as Differentiation, Depth and Complexity, and Understanding AIG.

At the beginning of each year and periodically throughout the school year, AIG Specialists provide information to their school staff about the traits of gifted learners, developing and recognizing the potential of all learners, and providing rigorous instruction to all learners. Throughout this plan cycle, specific information and procedures focused on recognizing areas of giftedness that are not always exhibited on standardized tests will be conveyed to all staff members.

*** 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.

When professional development is planned for the HCPS district, the Instructional Services team, along with stakeholders—including the senior leadership team, principals, instructional coaches, and teachers—collaborate to design professional learning opportunities that align with the district's needs and goals for student success. Multiple data points, including staff surveys, are used to assess professional development (PD) priorities and gather teacher feedback on their learning needs.

HCPS provides multiple professional development opportunities in areas such as the instructional framework, strengthening NCSCOS standards, 21st-century teaching and learning, blended learning, and literacy across all subjects. AIG Specialists are required to attend PD sessions focused on both general education priorities and AIG-specific topics, ensuring they can support classroom teachers with strategies to meet the needs of gifted learners.

The district's instructional framework, which guides all teachers—including AIG Specialists—centers on rigorous lesson planning, higher-order thinking, and differentiated instruction to accelerate student learning.

To strengthen collaboration and build capacity for AIG instruction, structured opportunities exist for AIG Specialists to work with general education teachers. AIG Specialists regularly engage in county-wide professional learning communities (PLCs), where they co-develop lesson plans and share instructional strategies to enhance differentiation for gifted learners. They also participate in cross-disciplinary PD sessions with general education teachers to integrate AIG best practices into all classrooms. Additionally, some AIG Specialists lead professional development at the school, district, and regional levels, further supporting teacher capacity in gifted education.

As HCPS continues its Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) work, targeted PD on differentiated instruction will be provided to all teachers, ensuring a strong core of instruction that meets the needs of diverse learners. AIG Specialists are also encouraged to attend external professional development opportunities, such as those offered by WRESA, NCCAT, and NCDPI, to deepen their expertise. Through ongoing summer sessions, monthly PLC meetings, and dedicated PD opportunities, AIG Specialists will continue refining their instructional practices while promoting equity and access in gifted services.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

The AIG team will ensure continued information and professional development on meeting the needs of gifted learners is available for classroom teachers.

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * AIG staff professional development presentations
- * LMS classrooms for students/parents and teachers
- * LMS course for gifted learners - number of participants

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.

The AIG department works with others throughout the school community to ensure that partnerships are created and maintained to address the needs of gifted learners. These partnerships are nurtured through meetings and communication in the form of our LMS classrooms and newsletters throughout the year. AIG specialists work to ensure parents and families understand the definition of giftedness and how students are identified in Henderson County. Throughout the year, specialists meet with parents to discuss DEPs, IDEPs, and other issues that are relevant to student needs. Specialists work at their school sites to ensure that all personnel understand what it means to be an academically gifted student or a gifted learner and how these students can be best served. AIG Specialists also serve on many school committees such as the School Improvement Team as representatives of gifted services so that the needs of gifted students are included when schools plan schedules, professional development, etc. AIG surveys will be used to communicate with stakeholders and the responses from these surveys will help guide our AIG services and programming. Specialists maintain LMS classrooms where parents of gifted learners can have access to information, resources, and opportunities. Each school has an AIGIT to facilitate the identification of students and to keep members of the school communities informed of proper procedures. At the middle and high schools, AIG Specialists communicate with students and parents about various course options such as Early College High School, AP/honors classes, and online opportunities. All AIG Specialists provide regular updates in the LMS classroom to let parents know of classroom activities, resources for students and families, and opportunities available to students such as contests and enrichment programs. The AIG team will work collaboratively to plan for school-specific parent nights to provide opportunities for parents of gifted learners to learn more about topics such as programming options for gifted learners in elementary, middle, and high school, social emotional concerns, summer enrichment/opportunities, etc.

*** 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.

The AIG Director partners with community stakeholders to promote collaboration with our AIG specialists and our schools. For example, during one of the monthly meetings for AIG Specialists, a Dean from our local community college came to discuss opportunities at the college for our gifted learners. At another monthly meeting, the district's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director facilitated a training with our career development plan system provider to educate our AIG specialists on how to use the data within the system to provide guidance to our gifted learners. The AIG Director also partners with the district CTE Director to provide information about opportunities with our local business and industry partners for our gifted learners, such as internship and job shadowing positions. Specialists have received community grants to fund projects, and they work with various community organizations and businesses, such as Bullington Gardens, Lowes, and Meta, to help with classroom projects. The county also maintains a strong relationship with our local community college, Blue Ridge Community College. Our Early College High School, which serves several AIG students, is housed here. The college works closely with our Early College to ensure that high school students are successful in the college classes. Blue Ridge Community College and HCPS also enjoy a partnership as they work together in the College and Career Promise program. Qualified students are able to advance their learning and their interests by taking tuition free community college classes. The AIG department has also worked closely with our Henderson County Education Foundation. Specifically, this partnership has provided funding for students to participate in activities such as Governor's School, Robotics Clubs, etc. Many of the AIG students are able to participate in internships in their high school years because of the relationships the county has built with several local businesses. These experiences often can influence students in exciting ways as they plan for their post high school years. AIG Specialists also work with other entities in our community such as the Rotary Club, the Carl Sandburg Home, the League of Women Voters, Wingate University, etc. as they look to enrich student experiences.

*** 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.

The HCPS AIG advisory group is involved in developing, implementing, and monitoring the AIG plan. The membership of the advisory group includes AIG Specialists, principals, assistant principals, classroom teachers, school counselors, parents, students, and community members and represents the diversity of the county population. This group meets at least twice during the school year. During these meetings, members will discuss AIG issues and review how the plan is being implemented. AIG stakeholder survey results, NC report card data, and other data sources will also be used to guide meeting agendas. During year three of the plan, the HCPS Advisory Group will also meet to revise the AIG plan for the 2025-2028 cycle. Efforts will be made to continue to add additional stakeholders to the AIG advisory group during this plan cycle. Additionally, each school has an AIGIT committee to help guide AIG discussions and to review identification procedures and AIG placement. These groups include AIG Specialists, grade level teachers, counselors, and a school administrator.

*** Practice D**

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

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

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

It is the practice of the AIG department to share AIG information with stakeholders. This sharing is done through a variety of ways including the district website and individual teacher sites, beginning of the year faculty meetings, newsletters, LMS classrooms, teacher/parent conferences, and parent meetings. The AIG department also works with the school system's public relations officer to ensure timely and relevant information goes out to the public about student, teacher, school, and department accomplishments to give the public a better understanding of AIG. The county website will continue to host an AIG webpage where current information about AIG will be posted. The district's AIG plan is also posted on this webpage. Through the district's Facebook and Instagram pages, AIG news is shared with the community to help develop a clearer picture of AIG in the schools. AIG Specialists provide information and resources to students and parents of gifted learners in the LMS classroom. These classrooms also highlight what specialists have been doing with students so that parents will have information about their students' AIG activities on a regular basis. Opportunities for advanced learning, in-school and within our community, are also communicated via the LMS classroom. Parents will be invited by the AIG Specialist to attend an individualized meeting to review the DEP or IDEP.

All AIG Specialists are available for in-person meetings to discuss specific concerns or opportunities. Additionally, 6-8 AIG Specialists assist students during the transition to high school and 9-12 AIG Specialists help students develop a four-year plan or to review and make changes to a student's schedule as needed.

At the beginning of each year and in faculty meetings or grade-level meetings, AIG Specialists provide information from the local plan that is pertinent to classroom teachers and other school staff such as identification/nurturing procedures and the importance of differentiation for their gifted students. The AIG Director is part of an Instructional Services team that regularly meets with principals and instructional coaches to discuss curriculum topics including AIG.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

The AIG team will monitor parent engagement in the LMS classroom to foster additional methods to increase parent engagement. The AIG team will also continue to cultivate partnerships with community agencies to provide additional opportunities for students.

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * LMS Classroom - parent engagement data
- * Community partnerships
- * AIG Advisory Group meeting notes

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}), based on a comprehensive program evaluation. This Local AIG Plan has been approved by the local board of education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

A local HCPS AIG plan has been developed and maintained over many years. Beginning in 2009-10 when the State Board of Education adopted new AIG standards and practices, the local plan was changed to address the six North Carolina AIG Standards and various practices required by the state. This plan describes the county's AIG program and procedures and is made available to all stakeholders. Over the course of the 2024-2025 school year, the local AIG plan has been updated and revised in accordance with the six North Carolina program standards. Many of the practices of the current plan will still be in place due to their proven effectiveness during the previous plan. After much discussion and review, the plan for the next three years is ready for August 2025 implementation. This plan directs the AIG program and specifically outlines our policies and procedures, especially in the area of identification. Throughout the school year as monthly AIG meetings are held, the plan is reviewed and referenced when making decisions about AIG related services. The plan is presented to our Board of Education and approved prior to being sent to DPI for review.

For programs to work and grow, data must be used to gauge effectiveness. The AIG department regularly reviews the local plan to ensure its efficacy for students across our district. Regular monthly meetings are used for AIG Specialists to communicate with each other about the plan. The AIG Director and the AIG Specialists will review the local plan frequently. Reviews will be based on DPI feedback, survey information, HCPS AIG Advisory Group feedback, and direct information from other stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, counselors, parents, and students. Also, testing data, nurturing and identification data, and subgroup data are extensively examined during the year. While reviewing the plan during the three year cycle, it will be important to gauge the effectiveness of policies and procedures and their impact on students. Specialists are constantly referring to the plan as they receive questions during the year from parents, students, and school staff. This plan serves as the basis of all that is done by the AIG department and for it to be effective, it must be reviewed on a regular basis.

*** 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 AIG department, through its Director and AIG Specialists, continually monitors the implementation of the AIG plan. Specialists understand the plan and articulate AIG procedures to their schools. Monthly AIG PLCs are also times to discuss and update how the plan is being implemented across the county. The AIG Director also reports directly to the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services about AIG procedures, questions, or issues. The local AIG plan must follow the guidelines of both Article 9B and the state Program Standards as it is being developed, implemented, and maintained. Article 9B states:

"Academically or intellectually gifted (AIG) students perform or show the potential to perform at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experiences, or environment. Academically or intellectually gifted students exhibit high performance capability in intellectual areas, specific academic fields, or in both the intellectual areas and specific academic fields. Academically or intellectually gifted students require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program. Outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor."

Article 9B also requires LEAs to develop three year AIG plans that are approved by the local school boards and sent to the Department of Instruction for review. In July 2009, the state board of education adopted AIG Program Standards to provide LEAs with a framework for quality programming. These standards reflect Article 9B and articulate best practices for AIG programs based on current national research. The AIG Director and AIG Specialists monitor the implementation of the local plan through various means, which include: monthly AIG meetings, continued discussion and meetings with school personnel, HCPS AIG Advisory group meetings, and regular curriculum and instruction meetings. The AIG Director also regularly visits AIG classes during the year, meets with administrators on a regular basis to review AIG matters, and attends various regional and state meetings regarding the implementation of the AIG plan.

*** 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.

It is important that state AIG funds are used to support the local AIG program. While most of the funding supports AIG personnel, money is also used to purchase materials that support the advancement of AIG students. Each year the AIG Director reviews and revises the AIG budget in partnership with the county's Finance Director. Included in this budget is the distribution of state allotted AIG funds. The distribution can include: specialists' salaries, instructional materials, technology, professional development, continuing education (AIG certification), etc. Although the bulk of AIG money goes to pay teacher salaries, the AIG department has been committed to help support teachers' efforts to meet the diverse needs of our gifted learners. Instructional resources that directly benefit AIG students, both identified and nurtured, will continue to be purchased during the next plan cycle. All purchases bought with AIG funds are documented and kept by the AIG Director. The AIG Director meets with AIG Specialists and administrators on an annual basis to discuss AIG needs.

*** 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.

AIG performance growth data is maintained, analyzed, and shared with teachers and administrators at the schools. Drop-out data is also kept at the county level and analyzed frequently. Because student growth greatly impacts accountability scores, our county, and the AIG department more specifically, is prioritizing the implementation of instructional strategies that promote academic growth. The AIG Director will meet with the Director of Accountability to review and analyze the growth of AIG students. Currently, performance and growth data is shared with teachers and principals, and all teachers, including AIG Specialists, have had training in EVAAS, which allows teachers to see the progress of their students across the years. It also allows schools to see patterns of growth and areas where more growth is needed. The AIG Director works with the Director of Accountability and the AIG Specialists to see patterns of growth in grade levels, subject areas, and individual schools for AIG students. This information is shared with administrators, and the AIG department works with schools to

understand the performance and growth of AIG students. Overall achievement data is frequently analyzed, looking for patterns of high achievement across the county in order to replicate successful teaching strategies. Each summer the AIG department pulls yearly EOG data and prepares screening documents for each specialist so that current EOG information is readily available for them when they return to school each fall.

The AIG department also analyzes annual AP data for the high schools, giving principals and teachers helpful information on test data as they plan for and teach AP courses. College and Career Promise data is also given to administrators as it is received from our community college along with HCVPS data, NCVPS data, and other reports for school review and comment.

The AIG department meets with the district's Director of High Schools who maintains drop-out data. They have devised a communication system so that the AIG department is informed when an AIG student has dropped out of school. The AIG teacher at the identified student's middle or high school works in conjunction with the school counselor to follow up with the student via the telephone or home visit to find out why the student dropped out of school and to see if there is anything that can be done to get the student back into school. Regular meetings with the Director of Student Services occur to examine homeless student data in an effort to monitor high achieving homeless students.

At AIG monthly meetings, time is devoted to understanding growth and proficiency patterns of students. Over the last two years, particular attention has been given to our sub group performance, especially at schools where AIG identification is low and does not match up to school demographics. Specialists are continually looking at data, and the department is focused on how to ensure that we are able to serve students who are making gains in performance even if those gains do not allow for full AIG identification. As we move into the 2025- 28 plan cycle, the department will continue to partner with the district's Director of ESL and Director of EC to ensure the inclusion of students in the program.

*** 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.

A continuous review of both identification processes and nurturing services is conducted to monitor who is being served in the AIG program. Particular focus is placed on evaluating the representation of underrepresented populations—including economically disadvantaged students, highly gifted individuals, and twice-exceptional learners—to ensure alignment with the district's demographic data. Data on both identified and nurtured students are regularly analyzed and shared with AIG Specialists, school principals, and the HCPS AIG Advisory Group.

Currently, 7.9% of the district's students are formally identified as gifted, while an additional 15.8% participate in the nurturing program. Notably, there is a significant discrepancy between the percentage of Hispanic students identified as gifted (9.2%) and their representation in the overall student population (29.4%). In response, deliberate efforts are made to engage students from underrepresented populations—including economically disadvantaged students, highly gifted individuals, and twice-exceptional learners—in talent development programming. AIG Specialists actively seek out students who demonstrate high potential but may not yet meet all formal identification criteria, ensuring they have opportunities to participate in pull-out programs and nurturing services.

To better identify English Learners with advanced abilities, AIG Specialists regularly collaborate with EL teachers to recognize students who exhibit high aptitude in their native languages. These students are then monitored for potential inclusion in AIG services.

Retention in the AIG program remains high, with nearly 100% of identified students continuing to receive services. When challenges arise, specialists work collaboratively with teachers, counselors, and parents to support students' ongoing academic growth. Demographic trends within the AIG program and middle/high school honors courses are continually monitored and shared with school staff. At the secondary level, AIG Specialists coordinate with school personnel to place students in advanced classes, with targeted outreach to underrepresented students who may not currently opt into honors coursework.

The AIG Director, in collaboration with the Instructional Services Team, remains committed to ongoing analysis and interpretation of data related to underserved populations, ensuring equitable access to gifted education opportunities.

*** 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.

Data regarding the training and certification of those who serve AIG students is maintained at the district level. The district's Human Resources department maintains data regarding the credentials of all personnel. Current data, which includes certification information and continuing education units, is available at any time to all employees and the AIG Director. The AIG Director also maintains credential information on AIG Specialists, updating it yearly. The county uses LINQ, which streamlines the process of registration for professional development and maintains employee registration and CEUs for all professional development. High school teachers who have AP classes also must attend a summer institute and/or a fall or spring update, and records of this attendance are housed in the AIG department.

Teachers who do not hold an AIG Specialist position but hold AIG credentials teach AIG populations in all grade levels. In middle and high school, teachers who do not hold an AIG Specialist position but hold AIG credentials, teach honors level courses in conjunction with our AIG Specialists at each school. This collaboration allows us to serve a larger population of our gifted learners while also providing talent development opportunities to a greater number of students to help reach those in all subgroup populations.

*** Practice G**

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

Feedback from stakeholders is important in order to ensure that the AIG program is meeting the needs of its students. Feedback, through surveys, meetings, and PLCs is gathered to help the AIG department grow and serve students effectively.

The AIG department uses an electronic survey to get feedback from stakeholders, including parents, students, administrators, teachers, and school staff. Through these survey results, AIG Specialists assess the program needs, especially with the inclusion of information from parents about the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the program. During the 2025- 2028 plan cycle, we will continue to survey stakeholders on a regular basis, so we can respond in a more timely manner to their concerns or questions. Additionally, the HCPS AIG Advisory Group will meet at least twice a year to monitor implementation and effectiveness of the AIG program.

During PLC meetings and other teacher meetings, AIG Specialists are able to collaborate with teachers to provide information and receive suggestions on what is working with AIG students and what could be improved. For instance, in elementary schools, specialists meet with classroom teachers in PLC meetings as available to hear their concerns and suggestions for improvement. Our middle school specialists are involved with grade level and district PLCs, and high school specialists are all part of district content PLCs. The AIG Director works directly with school administrators and the Instructional Services Team to hear their feedback on the AIG program and services. The feedback from all stakeholder groups is reviewed at the monthly AIG Specialists meeting and appropriate responses are developed.

*** Practice H**

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

While maintaining the security of our students' data, the local plan and any data associated with the evaluation of the program is made available to the public via the HCPS website or a hard copy is available for review upon request. This transparency allows for questions to be answered and program criteria to be read and understood by stakeholders.

After being approved by the local school board, the AIG plan is available on the district website for anyone to access. Plans are electronically sent to principals and AIG Specialists prior to school beginning in August. A hard copy is available through each AIG Specialist at each school and the district AIG Director maintains a hard copy for viewing as well. Evaluative data is reviewed by the district AIG Director and shared with the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services and the Instructional Services team. This data is also shared with AIG Specialists and the HCPS AIG Advisory Group. Information is housed in the district AIG Director's office and is available to any interested stakeholders.

* Practice I

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.

The AIG program has policies, procedures, and practices that are in place to protect the rights of all AIG students. The program also encourages parent feedback through various avenues including face to face meetings, email, electronic surveys, and phone contact.

HCPS has well defined policies, procedures, and practices that protect the rights of all AIG students and inform those who work with these students, including parents, of these rights. These procedures can be found in a procedural manual that all specialists have, understand, and follow. In every AIG Specialist meeting, there is opportunity for specialists to bring questions or concerns about the programs. Often these questions come directly from parents while they are meeting with the AIG Specialist to discuss and sign the student's DEP. The AIG Specialists communicate with school personnel and parents regularly to involve them in decisions made concerning students.

The program has developed a written "Procedures to Resolve Disagreements" guide which is routinely given to parents. This document was reviewed by the Board attorney in 2025. HCPS' Strategic Plan is focused on graduating all students ready for their future and the development of a comprehensive framework of aligned resources, programs, and supports to ensure student academic and mental health needs are met. The AIG department, as it follows the AIG plan, focuses on the rights of their gifted students in a routine and precise manner and is devoted to meeting the academic and mental health needs of all gifted learners.

Process	Procedure
Informed consent for identification	<p>*When a student is considered for identification, the student's information and data is presented to the school based identification team (AIGIT) for review and consent. This team consists of a member from the administration, the school counseling department, a classroom teacher, and the AIG Specialist to ensure that the needs for all areas are being considered and met. When there is a need for additional testing, the parent/guardian is contacted by the AIG Specialist and sent a letter of explanation along with a permission to test request and a copy of the Procedure to Resolve Disagreements document.</p> <p>After the signed permission to test form is received by the AIG Specialist, additional testing is conducted. When a student meets all of the requirements for initial identification and placement into the program, the student's information, including results from testing, is presented to the AIGIT along with a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) that is developed, reviewed, and signed by the team members. Following this meeting, the parent/guardian is invited to a conference to review their child's placement paperwork and fully discuss the gifted program. If the parent/guardian agrees with the decision that the child is showing a documented need for gifted services, the parent/guardian signs and dates the DEP, giving consent for entry into the program. This date becomes the child's initial date of service and entry into the AIG program. The child is placed on the official headcount via the North Carolina Student Information System, and the specialist creates an AIG folder for the student, which follows the student through high school.</p>

Informed consent for placement	<p>*When a student is considered for placement, the student's information and data is presented to the school based identification team (AIGIT) for review and consent. This team consists of a member from the administration, the school counseling department, a classroom teacher, and the AIG Specialist to ensure that the needs for all areas are being considered and met. When there is a need for additional testing, the parent/guardian is contacted by the AIG Specialist and sent a letter of explanation along with a permission to test request and a copy of the Procedure to Resolve Disagreements document. After the signed permission to test form is received by the AIG Specialist, additional testing is conducted. When a student meets all of the requirements for initial identification and placement into the program, the student's information, including results from testing, is presented to the AIGIT along with a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) that is developed, reviewed, and signed by the team members. Following this meeting, the parent/guardian is invited to a conference to review their child's placement paperwork and fully discuss the gifted program. If the parent/guardian agrees with the decision that the child is showing a documented need for gifted services, the parent/guardian signs and dates the DEP, giving consent for entry into the program. This date becomes the child's initial date of service and entry into the AIG program. The child is placed on the official headcount via the North Carolina Student Information System, and the specialist creates an AIG folder for the student, which follows the student through high school.</p>
Transfer procedures	<p>*When students enroll in HCPS and are already identified as AIG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students who meet HCPS identification requirements shall retain identification. Students will be placed in appropriate settings and updated DEPs will be developed. 2. Students who do not meet HCPS AIG guidelines with their current identification information shall retain identification. The AIG specialist will honor and provide the currently identified service level during the year of transfer. After additional data is collected (current year EOG/EOG, current grades, etc.) and/or additional testing occurs, the AIG specialist will review the student's data with the AIGIT to determine the best service option, which can include direct service or consultative service. Testing may include individual aptitude testing or school wide achievement testing. During the time prior to testing, students may or may not receive full AIG school services. For example, a student who is AIG identified from another county or state who has achievement scores less than 80% in math may or may not be placed in the honors math class. The AIGIT committee can elect to keep these students identified based on academic abilities.
Reassessment procedures	<p>*Each quarter, AIG Specialists receive check-in scores and other formative assessment scores and information. Not only are these used to monitor progress for identified students, but they are also used to reassess nurtured students at multiple points during the year. This ensures students are receiving the best- fit service and instruction for AIG pull out groups. Students and teachers understand that nurturing groups are flexible and any student consistently showing mastery and a need to go beyond the standard grade level curriculum may be added to the nurturing groups at any point during the year after reassessment. Parents of nurtured students</p>

	<p>receive a service letter at the beginning of the year to inform them that nurturing groups are flexible, that students after being reassessed quarterly, may be returned to the regular classroom to work on ensuring a solid foundation in reading and math if grade level objectives need strengthening. Students may return to AIG pull-out service when reassessment data checks again show a need for service. Students are also reassessed at the end of each year when EOG achievement test scores become available. Students identified in one area are checked to see if they now qualify to add an additional area. Nurtured students are also reassessed to see if they meet guidelines for AIG identification. Students with a newly qualifying achievement score, who did not meet the county wide aptitude test screening score for placement, will also be reassessed with a new aptitude test to see if they qualify for formal placement in the AIG program.</p>
Procedures to resolve disagreement	<p>*HENDERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROCEDURE TO RESOLVE DISAGREEMENTS REGARDING SERVICES TO ACADEMICALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED STUDENTS</p> <p>The following procedure is to be used by a student's parent/guardian if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the child is not identified as an academically or intellectually gifted student; or 2. the parent/guardian believes that the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) developed for his/her student is not appropriate. <p>STEP 1: AIG IDENTIFICATION TEAM (AIGIT) CONFERENCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. A parent/guardian may make a written request to the school principal for a conference with the AIGIT Identification Team (AIGIT) to discuss concerns about the student's level of need for differentiated services and/or implementation of the student's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). B. The AIGIT, including the Director of AIG Services, if requested by the team, reviews the student's record and nomination, identification and service options decision. The committee may gather additional information about the student from teacher(s) and/or parent/guardian as needed. C. The AIGIT shall schedule the conference within ten (10) school days of receipt of the request and shall respond to the parent/guardian in writing within ten (10) school days after the conference. If the disagreement is not resolved at the AIGIT conference, then proceed to Step 2. <p>STEP 2: APPEAL TO THE SUPERINTENDENT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the school AIGIT in writing to the Superintendent within ten (10) school days of receiving the written response from the school AIGIT. The parent/guardian must, in writing, explain concerns and specific points of disagreement regarding decisions made by the school AIGIT.

- B. The Superintendent (or designee) may convene a panel (to be specified by the Superintendent) to review the disagreement within ten (10) school days of receipt of the appeal. The panel will provide a recommendation to the Superintendent/Designee.
- C. The Superintendent (or designee) will respond, in writing, within ten (10) school days to the parent/guardian and to the AIGIT concerning the outcome of the review.

STEP 3: APPEAL TO THE LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION

- A. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.8, the parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the Superintendent to the Local Board of Education within ten (10) days of the decision from the Superintendent. This appeal must be in writing. This request must be made at least by the Monday prior to the next scheduled board meeting in order that this appeal can be placed on the agenda.
- B. The Board shall make a final decision in writing within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written appeal. Mediation conducted by school system staff is an option for the parent/guardian at any step in this process. In the event that the local disagreement procedure fails to resolve the disagreement, the state level disagreement procedure may be requested by the parent/guardian.

STEP 4: STATE LEVEL DISAGREEMENT PROCEDURE

- A. The parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. This must be done within thirty (30) calendar days.

The scope of the review shall be limited to:

- 1. whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an Academically/Intellectually Gifted Student, or
- 2. whether the local plan for Academically/Intellectually Gifted program services has been implemented appropriately in regard to the child.
- B. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge will 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 the parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.
- C. In the event that the parent/guardian prevails in a due process hearing, HCPS is not responsible for parent/guardian attorney fees.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

The AIG team will continue our work on understanding how to best recognize and serve students from underrepresented populations while also continuing to work on strategies and actions that increase our identification of underrepresented populations.

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * AIG identified and nurtured student data
- * Stakeholder feedback
- * AIG department meeting agendas and minutes

Local Board of Education Approval

** Approved by local Board of Education on:*

06/09/202

Glossary

Phrase	Definition
AIGIT	Academically or Intellectually Gifted Identification Team - A school based team chaired by the AIG Specialist consisting of a school administrator or designee, a classroom teacher, a counselor, and others as needed. The team reviews the data collected for the purpose of identification and has the responsibility of determining whether a student demonstrates a need for differentiated services within the gifted program.
Academically or intellectually gifted students	Academically or intellectually gifted students require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program. Outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/ByArticle/Chapter_115C/Article_9B.pdf
Acceleration	A strategy of progressing through education at rates faster or ages younger than the norm. This can occur through grade skipping or subject acceleration (e.g., a fifth-grade student taking sixth-grade math). https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Achievement Tests	Tests designed to measure what students have already learned, mostly in specific content areas. Some examples of achievement tests are the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), End of Grade (EOG) Tests, and End of Course (EOC) Tests .
Advanced Placement (AP)	A program developed by the College Board where high schools offer courses that meet criteria established by institutions of higher education. In many instances, college credit may be earned with the successful completion of an AP exam in specific content areas. The Pre-AP program is offered to younger students as preparation for the upper-level courses. Offering AP courses is not equivalent to offering a gifted program. https://migitfiedchild.org/wp-content/uploads/file/resources/GATE%20Glossary .
Affective Curriculum	Curriculum that focuses on person/social awareness and adjustment, and includes the study of values, attitudes, and self. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Aptitude	An inclination to excel in the performance of a certain skill. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Aptitude Test	A test predicting a student's future performance in a particular domain. Some examples of aptitude tests are the Naglieri (NNAT, NGAT) and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Boost Reading	A personalized reading curriculum based in the Science of Reading. https://amplify.com/programs/boost-reading/
Career and College Promise (CCP)	A program of dual enrollment available to eligible high school students for the purpose of earning college credit while still in high school. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/students-families/enhanced-opportunities/advanced-learning-and-gifted-education/career-and-college-promise
Career and Technical Education (CTE)	A program that allows students to begin pursuit of a diploma or certification in particular career area or technical field. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/career-and-technical-education

Cluster Grouping	A grouping assignment for gifted students in the regular heterogeneous classroom. Typically, five or six gifted students with similar needs, abilities, or interests are "clustered" in the same classroom, which allows the teacher to more efficiently differentiate assignments for a group of advanced learners rather than just one or two students. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning - A community designed to make social and emotional learning (SEL) part of a high-quality and equitable education for all. https://casel.org/about-us/
Compacting	An instructional technique that allows teachers to adjust curriculum for students by determining which students already have mastered most or all of the learning outcomes and providing replacement instruction or activities that enable a more challenging and productive use of the student's time. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Creativity	The process of developing new, uncommon, or unique ideas. The federal definition of giftedness identifies creativity as a specific component of giftedness. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)	The process of earning high school credit by demonstrating deep content understanding without course enrollment or seat time. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/students-families/enhanced-opportunities/advanced-learning-and-gifted-education/credit-demonstrated-mastery
Differentiated Education Plan (DEP)	A plan that outlines the differentiated educational services an identified student will receive in our district.
Differentiation	Modifying curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom. Adapting the curriculum to meet the differing needs and abilities of students within a class. One strategy for differentiating the core, grade level curriculum is to modify the content or subject according to the following theories: (1.) Depth (2.) Complexity (3.) Novelty (4.) Acceleration
Differentiation - cont.	(1.) Depth- students go further, deeper and more elaborately within a subject area. (2.) Complexity- students make relationships and associations across and between subject areas. They study relationships over time and from different points of view. (3.) Novelty- students personalize their understanding. They express their knowledge in their own words and way. (4.) Acceleration- students can move at a faster pace or with more difficulty. https://nagc.org/page/glossary and https://mifgiftedchild .
Dual Enrollment - high school	Most often refers to high school students taking college courses, often for college credit. Dual enrollment is viewed as providing high school students benefits such as greater access to a wider range of rigorous academic and technical courses, savings in time and money on a college degree, promoting efficiency of learning, and enhancing admission to and retention in college. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Dual Enrollment - middle school	The term may also be used to refer to middle grade students taking high school courses and earning credit toward graduation. https://nagc.org/page/glossary

Education Value-Added Assessment System	EVAAS - A customized software system available to all North Carolina school districts used to examine the impact of teachers, schools, and districts on student learning. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/office-educator-preparation-and-licensure/evaas#:~:text=SAS%C2%AE%20EVAAS%E2%84%A2%20(Education,improve%20on%20their%20own%20effectiveness.
English Learners (EL)	Department, tests, and instructional support provided to students who are learning English. Also see MLs.
English Language Arts (ELA)	A term used to cover all the subjects and topics related to the written and spoken language. https://www.weareteachers.com/what-is-ela/
Enrichment	Activities that add or go beyond the existing curriculum. They may occur in the classroom or in a separate setting such as a pull out program. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Exceptional Children (EC)	Students with disabilities whose intellectual, physical, emotional, and vocational development is enhanced through the provision of an appropriate individualized education program. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/exceptional-children
Flexible Grouping	An instructional strategy where students are grouped together to receive appropriately challenging instruction. True flexible grouping permits students to move in and out of various grouping patterns, depending on the course content. Grouping can be determined by ability, size, and/or interest. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Gifted and Talented Students	The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act defines gifted and talented students as "Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities." [Title IX, Part A, Definition 22. (2002)] Many states and districts follow the federal definition.
Henderson County Public Schools (HCPS)	A school system located in Western North Carolina comprised of four school districts (East, Hendersonville, North, and West) with a total of 23 schools. https://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/district/about-us/
Henderson County Virtual Public School (HCVPS)	A collection of flexible online courses offered to HCPS students and taught by HCPS instructors. https://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/district/about-us/distance-learning-opportunities/
Higher order thinking skills	Abstract reasoning, critical thinking, and problem solving abilities. https://mifgitedchild.org/wp-content/uploads/file/resources/GATE%20Glossary.pdf
Identification	The process of determining students qualified for gifted or advanced programming. Identification most commonly occurs through the use of intelligence or other testing. Many researchers place emphasis on using multiple pathways for identification, adding teacher, parent, or peer nominations or authentic assessments such as portfolios of student work to the process. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Independent Study	A self-directed learning strategy where the teacher acts as guide or facilitator and the student plays a more active role in designing and managing his or her own learning, often on a topic of

	special interest to the student. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Individualized Differentiated Education Plan- IDEP	Some students require this document to focus more directly on specific needs. All IG students have this document. Some students can have both a DEP and an IDEP, depending on need.
Intelligence	The ability to learn, reason, and problem solve. Debate revolves around the nature of intelligence as to whether it is an innate quality or something that is developed as a result of interacting with the environment. Many researchers believe that it is a combination of the two. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Intelligence Quotient (IQ)	A numerical representation of intelligence. IQ is derived from dividing mental age (result from an intelligence test) by the chronological age times 100. Traditionally, an average IQ is considered to be 100. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
iReady	An adaptive diagnostic and personalized instructional tool. https://www.curriculumassociates.com/programs/i-ready-learning
Learning Management System (LMS)	A digital platform that facilitates the organization and distribution of materials to students. https://ctl.wustl.edu/resources/glossary-of-pedagogical-terms/
mClass Reading 3D	A Science of Reading based system used for universal screening, dyslexia screening, progress monitoring, and instruction for grades K-6. https://amplify.com/programs/mclass/
Mentor	A community member who shares his or her expertise with a student of similar career or field of study aspirations. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Multilingual Learners (MLs)	Students developing proficiency in multiple languages. Special consideration should be taken to identify these students properly for gifted programming. Also see ELs.
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)	MTSS is a school improvement framework that encompasses academic, behavioral, social, and emotional instruction and support. In North Carolina, MTSS employs a systems approach using data-driven problem-solving to maximize growth for all. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/integrated-academic-behavior-systems
Norm-Referenced Testing	An assessment that compares an individual's results with a large group of individuals who have taken the same assessment (who are referred to as the "norming group"). Examples include the SAT and Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
NCCAT	North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching - An establishment created to aid in fostering the continual intellectual and professional development of North Carolina teachers. https://www.nccat.org/about-us
NCDPI	North Carolina Department of Public Instruction - An agency charged with implementing the state's public school laws for pre- kindergarten through 12th grade public schools at the direction of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/about-dpi
North Carolina Final Exam (NCFE)	Standardized tests, provided by the NCDPI, to assess the performance of students at the end of courses that are not part of the EOG or EOC State Testing Program (6th-8th Social Studies, Math 2, English I, etc.). North Carolina stopped using NCFEs (North Carolina Final Exams) beginning with the 2020-2021 school year; however, released tests are available for school use.

NCSSM	North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics - A public NC high school emphasizing STEM education. https://www.ncssm.edu/
NCSCOS	North Carolina Standard Course of Study - Documents that define the appropriate content standards for each grade or proficiency level and each high school course to provide a uniform set of learning standards for every public school in North Carolina. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/office-teaching-and-learning/standard-course-study
NCVPS	North Carolina Virtual Public School - A collection of flexible online courses offered to NC students and taught by highly-qualified NC licensed teachers. https://ncvps.org/
Perfectionism	The desire to execute tasks flawlessly. Gifted children may develop perfectionism after entering school, as they perform better than their classmates. Later, such perfectionism may lead to avoiding challenges so as not to appear imperfect. https://mifgiftedchild.org/wp-content/uploads/file/resources/GATE%20Glossary.pdf
Portfolios	An alternative or supplement to traditional measures of giftedness. Portfolios offer a collection of student work over time that can help to determine achievement and progress. Many of the elements found in portfolios cannot be captured by a standardized test. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Problem-Based Learning (PBL)	A curriculum and instruction model that asks students to solve real-world, complex, or open-ended problems by using research, decision-making, creative and critical thinking, and other 21st-century skills. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Professional Development (PD)	Professional learning designed for educators to develop the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions they need to help students perform at higher levels. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/professional-development
Professional Learning Community (PLC/PLCs)	An ongoing, collaborative framework for job-embedded learning among educators. https://allthingsplc.info/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Terms.pdf
Pull-Out Program	A program that takes a student out of the regular classroom during the school day for special programming. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Reading 3D	See mClass.
Rubric	A rubric is a chart composed of criteria for evaluation and levels of fulfillment of those criteria. A rubric allows for standardized evaluation according to specified criteria, making grading simpler and more transparent. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Social-Emotional Needs	Gifted and talented students may have affective needs that include heightened or unusual sensitivity to self-awareness, emotions, and expectations of themselves or others, and a sense of justice, moral judgment, or altruism. Counselors working in this area may address issues such as perfectionism, depression, low self-concept, bullying, or underachievement. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Standardized Test	A test taken by many students under identical conditions which allows results to be compared statistically to a standard such as a norm or criteria, such as an EOG/EOC. https://mifgiftedchild.org/wp-content/uploads/file/resources/GATE%20Glossary.pdf

STEM	An acronym for the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Providing STEM curriculum is encouraged as a way to grow students' interests and potentials in these areas. Some researchers lump the arts (STEAM) into this category of instruction. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Talent Development	Programs, curricula, and services for students that can best meet their needs, promote their achievements in life, and contribute to the enhancement of our society when schools identify students' specific talent strengths and focus educational services on these talents. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Twice Exceptional	A term used to describe a student who is both identified as gifted and identified as an exceptional student. These students may also be referred to as having dual exceptionalities or as being gifted with learning disabilities (AIG/LD). This also applies to students who are gifted with ADHD or gifted with autism. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Underachieving/Underachievement	A term used to describe the discrepancy between a student's performance and his or her potential or ability to perform at a much higher level. https://nagc.org/page/glossary
Western Region Education Service Alliance (WRESA)	A collaborative nonprofit responsible for the creation, design, and delivery of professional development and other programming for the region's teachers and administrators. https://wresa.org/about-wresa/
Yearly Performance Review (YPR)	A document sent to parents/guardians at the end of each school year to summarize services provided throughout the school year.
Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)	Specialized training for adults to support youth experiencing mental health challenges. https://ncymhfa.org/overview/