

Buncombe County Schools
Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan
Effective 2016-2019

Approved by local Board of Education on: 6-2-2016

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Submitted to NC Department of Public Instruction on: 6-3-2016

Revision Submitted to NC Department of Public Instruction on:

Buncombe County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide LEAs to develop, coordinate and implement thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs.

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

As LEAs continue to transform their AIG Programs and align to the AIG Program Standards, LEAs participated in a self-assessment process of their local AIG program, which involved multiple stakeholders. The data gathered during this process guided LEAs in their development of this local AIG plan for 2016-2019. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's board of Education and sent to NC DPI for comment.

For 2016-2019, the Buncombe County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Buncombe County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Buncombe County Schools' vision is for students to reach their full potential and become successful, responsible citizens in a diverse, global society. Our Gifted Services Plan builds upon this foundation to ensure meaningful student growth through systems of support, comprehensive programming, and gifted advocacy. Populations of gifted students, including those from diverse cultural groups and across all economic strata, will accomplish career and college readiness to become productive, creative citizens capable of succeeding in their area of strength. The Gifted Services Program in Buncombe County Schools will prepare our students to be lifelong learners, effective citizens, and critical thinkers.

Sources of funding for local AIG program (as of 2016)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$1281122.00	\$298487.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A

Articulates and disseminates the procedures for AIG student identification, including screening, referral, and identification processes for all grade levels to school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community-at-large.

District Response: The Buncombe County Schools AIG Plan is available on the district website, as well as, all individual school websites. The Frequently Asked Questions link provides specific information about the screening, nomination, and identification processes for all grade levels. Information on the link is available in English, Spanish, Moldovan, and Russian. School-based AIG Specialists provide yearly professional development for their schools to update staff on the AIG plan, including identification processes and services for identified AIG students.

Rationale:

In our 2014-2015 survey, over 82% of the parents of identified AIG students' parents believed that the processes were communicated effectively, and parent advisory members recommended that we continue to disseminate these processes across Buncombe County.

Practice B

States and employs multiple criteria for AIG student identification. These criteria incorporate measures that reveal student aptitude, student achievement, or potential to achieve in order to develop a comprehensive profile for each student. These measures include both non-traditional and traditional measures that are based on current theory and research.

District Response: Buncombe County Schools utilizes multiple criteria for AIG student identification to ensure student strengths remain the focus. Two levels of review are available: a school based AIG Identification Team and a county-wide AIG Administrative Team. Appendix A provides a graphical version of the Buncombe County Schools Identification pathways.

AIG Transfers

Gifted students who are currently identified in any North Carolina public Local Education Agency maintain their AIG identification in Buncombe County Schools. Student performance and assessment data is used to determine appropriate services. Transfer students identified as gifted in other states or private schools must meet Buncombe County Schools AIG identification criteria.

Identification K-2

Primary students may be identified as gifted in grades K-2 in Buncombe County. The primary student should demonstrate an extreme need for differentiation before being considered for identification.

Primary students must meet the minimum requirements in all of the following:

- Demonstrated extreme need for differentiation as documented through Problem Solver Nurturing Program activities and classroom performance
- Aptitude/IQ of 96th percentile or higher on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test

administered by a licensed psychologist

- 98th percentile or higher achievement in reading and/or math on a nationally normed test
- Work samples demonstrating mastery in reading and math
- Teacher recommendation

If the school-based AIG Identification Team determines that the student does need differentiation, the student will be identified as AG. An Individualized Differentiation Plan (I-DEP) will be developed by the student's AIG Specialist, classroom teacher(s), and parents.

If the K-2 student does not meet all of the above criteria, the school-based AIG Identification team may refer the student to the Buncombe County Schools AIG Administrative Team for review.

Grade Acceleration - Grades K-2

A student may be considered for Grade Acceleration/Double Promotion based on the criteria below:

- 99th percentile on an individual aptitude test administered by a licensed psychologist
- 99th percentile achievement in reading or math on a nationally normed test
- Score on Iowa Acceleration Scale indicating a need for acceleration
- Teacher recommendation
- Parent approval
- Principal approval

Identification Grades 3-8

Students may be identified as gifted grades 3-8 in Buncombe County in these pathways based on the North Carolina definition of Academically or Intellectually Gifted:

(1) Intellectually Gifted (IG) - Pathway I.

- Aptitude/IQ of 97th percentile or higher on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test within the last 18 months. If the IQ test was administered by a licensed psychologist when the student was at least 8 years old, the student's IQ score is reliable and may be used indefinitely.

(2) Academically Gifted in Reading (AR) - Pathway II.

Students must meet the minimum requirements in all of the following:

- Aptitude of 120/90th percentile on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test within 18 months on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test within 18 months. If the IQ test was administered by a licensed psychologist when the student was at least 8 years old, the student's IQ score is considered reliable and may be used indefinitely.
- 93rd percentile or higher in reading on either the NC EOG test or another nationally normed achievement test within 12 months
- Grade of A or B in reading (the most recently completed semester or year)
- Teacher recommendation

OR

Academically Gifted in Math (AM) - Pathway II.

Students must meet the minimum requirements in all of the following:

- Aptitude of 120/90th percentile on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test within 18 months. If the IQ test was administered by a licensed psychologist when the student was at least 8 years old,

the student's IQ score is considered reliable and may be used indefinitely.

- 93rd percentile or higher in mathematics on either the NC EOG test or another nationally normed achievement test within 12 months
- Grade of A or B in math (the most recently completed semester or year)
- Teacher recommendation

(3) Academically Gifted in Reading and Math (AG) - Pathway III.

Students must meet the minimum requirements in all of the following:

- Aptitude of 120/90th percentile on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test within 18 months. If the IQ test was administered by a licensed psychologist when the student was at least 8 years old, the student's IQ score is considered reliable and may be used indefinitely.
- 93rd percentile or higher achievement in reading and/or math on either the NC EOG tests or other nationally normed achievement tests within 12 months. If one score is used to place, then it is recommended that the other score be at the 75th percentile or higher in order to be identified in both reading and math. It is recommended that students in Grades 3 and 4 be identified as AG due to the lack of historical test data to support identification in only one area.
- Grades of A or B in reading and math (the most recently completed semester or year)
- Teacher recommendation

(4) Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) - Pathway IV.

Students must meet the minimum requirements in all of the following:

- Aptitude of 130/97th percentile on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test within 18 months. If the IQ test was administered by a licensed psychologist when the student was at least 8 years old, the student's IQ score is considered reliable and may be used indefinitely.
- 95th percentile or higher achievement in reading and/or math on either the NC EOG tests or another nationally normed achievement test within 12 months. If one score is used to place, then it is recommended that the other score be at the 90th percentile or higher to be identified in both reading and math.
- Grades of A in reading and math (the most recently completed semester or year)
- Teacher recommendation

Students who meet all of the criteria within a pathway will be identified by the school-based AIG Identification Team (AIGIT) and a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) will be developed. If the school-based AIGIT determines there is an extreme need for differentiation, an I-DEP may be developed. Students who are identified as Intellectually Gifted must receive an I-DEP.

If the school-based AIG Identification Team determines that the student does not meet all of the criteria for the AIG pathway being considered and differentiation is not indicated, the AIGIT will recommend that no services be provided at this time and that the student's progress be monitored. The AIG Specialist will notify parents of the team's decision.

Since no one criterion should exclude a child from AIG identification, the school-based AIG Identification Team may refer students to the Buncombe County Schools AIG Administrative Team (AIGAT) for review if a student does not meet all of the identification criteria for the AIG pathway being considered, but the AIGIT determines the student does need differentiation.

Additional documentation should be submitted to the AIG Administrative Team. This documentation

may include:

- Work samples and artifacts demonstrating excellence in reading, writing, math, or intellectual ability.
- Teacher and/or parent rating scales such as the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS) or the Gifted Ratings Scales (GRS)
- A student's previous grades and test scores indicating a pattern of achievement
- A formal letter of recommendation from a classroom teacher supporting a child's unique needs for differentiation

Students who belong to a traditionally under-represented population who show a need for differentiation but do not meet all of the criteria for identification by the school based AIG Identification Team should be referred to the Buncombe County Schools AIG Administrative Team for review.

If the Buncombe County Schools AIG Administrative Team (AIGAT) determines that the student does need differentiation, the student will be identified in the pathway aligned with the student's strengths and a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or an Individualized Differentiation Plan (I-DEP) will be developed by the student's AIG Specialist, classroom teacher(s), and parents.

If the Buncombe County Schools AIG Administration Team (AIGAT) determines that the student does not need differentiation, the AIGAT will recommend that no services be provided at this time and that the student's progress be monitored. The AIG Specialist will notify parents of the team's decision.

Grade Acceleration - Grades 3 - 8

The school-based AIG Identification Team along with the AIG Specialist will determine if there is an extreme need for Grade Acceleration/Double Promotion based on the criteria below:

- 99th percentile aptitude on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test within 18 months. If the IQ test was administered by a licensed psychologist when the student was at least 8 years old, the student's IQ score is considered reliable and may be used indefinitely.
- 99th percentile in reading and/or math on either the NC EOG tests or another nationally normed achievement test within 12 months.
- Grades of A in reading and math (the most recently completed semester or year)
- Score on Iowa Acceleration Scale indicating a need for acceleration
- Teacher recommendation
- Parent approval
- Student desire to be promoted
- Principal approval

Criteria for Differentiated Services Grades 9-12

Honors and Advanced Placement Classes

The Buncombe County School System supports the philosophy of student selection of courses at the high school level and encourages gifted students to enroll in Honors and Advanced Placement courses. Students should strongly consider their past performance in core subjects before making course selections. School counselors, subject area teachers, and AIG Specialists are available to advise students in the decision-making process.

Rationale:

The practice of using multiple criteria for identification is strongly advocated by the research literature in gifted education. Gifted students present an array of characteristics that are manifested differently in home and school environments. Various social, economic, and cultural factors influence academic performance. This mandates casting a wide net in the screening and identification process so as to overcome the under-representation of minority, limited English proficiency, and disadvantaged students in programs for gifted students.

Our current identification model uses school-based AIG Identification Teams (AIGIT) to review data and identify students from grades 3-8. Primary students may also be identified if there is an extreme need for differentiation. Our county-wide AIG Administrative Identification Team (AIGAT) provides a review process that ensures no single criterion eliminates students from identification. Our 2014-15 parent survey revealed that 82% of parents of identified AIG students considered our criteria fair. Our teacher and administrator surveys showed that 85% are aware of our use of multiple criteria for placement and are have a clear understanding of the process.

Practice C

Ensures AIG screening, referral, and identification procedures respond to traditionally under-represented populations of the gifted and are responsive to LEA demographics. These populations include students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.

District Response: Buncombe County Schools AIG Specialists conduct an annual formal mass screening in grades 3-8 in order to establish a broad-based pool of students who may need differentiated services. To increase identification of students in our under-represented populations, we employ a county-wide third grade screening program. All third graders are administered the Cognitive Abilities Test - Screening Form in order to create an equitable, county-wide screening pool. Additional screening data from tests, classroom performance, nominations from teachers, parents, students, and observations of student behaviors are collected and reviewed.

Rationale:

To combat misperceptions of gifted learners, AIG Specialists conduct yearly professional development, including a focus on atypical gifted learners, at each school to ensure teachers understand the identification and referral processes. Particular attention is given to potentially gifted students from these populations: ethnically/culturally diverse, English language learners, economically disadvantaged, or twice-exceptional. Classroom teachers are given suggestions about setting up situations for gifted behaviors to emerge. Project U-STAR materials were purchased and shared with elementary AIG Specialists to provide additional support to classroom teachers.

Practice D

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

District Response: AIG Specialists are updated annually on screening, referral, and identification processes, and they review procedures with their school-based AIG Identification Teams and staff at their schools. Compliance and completion of procedures are documented on our AIG forms. In addition to Homebase, students who are identified are added to school spreadsheets; those who are referred but not identified are added to our Nomination Database and their academic progress is

monitored. Individual student records of identified and nominated but not-identified students are maintained. Additional documentation is included in our AIG Evidence Notebooks that are reviewed and internally audited yearly. New AIG Specialists undergo training sessions conducted by the Lead AIG Facilitator to ensure consistent implementation and every new AIG Specialist is assigned a mentor to answer questions and provide guidance. A standardized digital presentation is shared with all AIG specialists and is used in school professional development meetings.

Mass Screening

Buncombe County School AIG specialists annually conduct a formal mass screening in grades 3 - 8 in order to establish a broad pool of students who may need differentiated services. The search phase of the placement process includes activities designed to review the general population of students and gather relevant information for instructional decision-making. Screening data from tests, classroom performance, nominations (from teachers, parents, and students), and observations of student behaviors are collected and reviewed. Particular attention is given to potentially gifted students from culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, or disabled populations during this process.

A comprehensive screening of standardized test scores of the general student population is conducted annually in the fall. The following guidelines are used in the mass screening:

- 85th percentile or above on the CogAT Screening Form
- 85th percentile or above in reading and/or math on the NC EOG

Classroom teachers and/or AIG Specialists collect documentation on students demonstrating outstanding academic ability or potential. Collected data may include the following:

- Nomination form or standardized rating scale completed by classroom teacher(s)
- Copy of student's current academic grades or assessments
- Scores from current achievement tests (current within one year)
- Scores from IQ/aptitude tests (current within 18 months)
- Additional data may be included:
 - A student's previous grades and test scores indicating a pattern of achievement
 - Teacher and/or parent rating scales such as the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students(SIGS) and the Gifted Rating Scales (GRS)
 - Student work samples demonstrating outstanding projects, unique ways of doing assignments, outstanding academic achievement, etc.
 - A formal letter of recommendation from a classroom teacher supporting a child's unique needs for differentiation

Identification Procedures and Timeline

The nomination window for most students is the first three months of the school year. However, any time a student shows a need for AIG services, a nomination will be accepted. Except in unusual circumstances, nominations must be made six weeks before End-of-Grade testing begins. Primary grade students may be nominated throughout the year if there is an extreme need for differentiation. Nominations may be received from AIG Specialists, teachers, parents, and self-nominating students. Special attention should be given to students from culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, or twice exceptional populations during the nomination process.

The responsibility of the AIG Identification Team (AIGIT) is to ensure consistency in determining the degree to which a student demonstrates a need for differentiated services within the gifted program.

Every school has a school-based AIG Identification Team.

- At the high school level, the AIG Identification Team consists of a school administrator or designee, an AIG Specialist, a high school counselor, and an Honors or AP teacher(s).
- At the middle school level, the AIG Identification Team consists of a school administrator or designee, the AIG Specialist, and two classroom teachers who are licensed or locally credentialed in gifted education.
- At the elementary school level, the AIG Identification Team consists of a school administrator or designee, the AIG Specialist, and two classroom teachers representative of the school population who are licensed or locally credentialed in gifted education.

The AIG Identification Team (AIGIT) is chaired by the AIG Specialist based in each school. The team reviews the collected data for the purpose of identification. Parents are notified after the AIG Identification Team has matched the students' strengths and abilities with appropriate program service options using the specified criteria for that grade level. A Differentiated Education Plan documents this match.

Students who need specialized services may receive an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan to address their unique needs. Students who may need an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan include the Intellectually Gifted child, the underachieving gifted child, the gifted child with disabilities, the highly gifted child, and the gifted child from a culturally diverse or an economically disadvantaged family.

The county-wide AIG Administrative Team (AIGAT) is chaired by the Lead AIG Facilitator. AIG Specialists representing elementary, intermediate, and middle schools serve on the committee. Monthly meetings are scheduled to review students who are referred to the AIGAT by their school-based AIG Identification Team.

The AIG Specialist develops the Differentiated Education Plan or the Individualized Differentiated Education Plan guided by evidence of student need and AIGIT recommendation. Parents are invited by the AIG Specialist to attend a meeting to review the services recommended and provide input into the recommended services. AIG personnel shall notify parents of the AIG Identification Team placement decision within fifty (50) school days from the date that the AIG Specialist receives the Permission to Evaluate form from the parent.

Rationale:

A formal screening, nomination, and identification procedure is necessary to ensure consistency throughout Buncombe County Schools. All schools have designated an Academically Gifted Identification Team (AIGIT) to ensure consistency in the assessment and placement portion of the process. Multiple pathways have been developed to identify diverse learners. (See Appendix A) School personnel and parents are provided the graphic information demonstrating the AIG pathways, criteria for identification, and service delivery options.

A county wide Academically/Intellectually Gifted Administrative Team (AIGAT) ensures consistency across the county for students who are referred by their School-Based AIG Identification Team (AIGIT) for review.

Practice E

Maintains documentation that explains the identification process and service options for individual AIG students, which is reviewed annually with parents/families.

District Response: Upon recommendation by the AIG Identification Team for placement, a meeting is scheduled with the student's parents or guardians. Translators are provided as needed. During this meeting, the identification process, service delivery options, and student's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) are reviewed. After parents consent to placement indicated by signatures, the student is added to Home Base and the school's AIG student spreadsheet. AIG student folders containing all relevant documentation are kept on file at each school.

An Annual Review form is sent home at the end of each year. The Annual Review includes grades, recommendation for services for the following year, and AIG Specialist's pertinent comments. Any reduction in recommended services requires parental approval. Additionally, a Cluster Differentiation Document indicating content differentiation used by the classroom teacher is filed in the student's folder and sent home each year. AIG Specialists provide parents with quarterly reports on students' progress in AIG Enrichment groups.

Differentiated Education Plans are updated as students progress through elementary, intermediate, middle, and high schools. Updated Differentiated Education Plans are shared with parents during transition meetings.

Rationale:

Parents play an important role in the collaborative development of Differentiated Education Plans for their children. Annual reviews of program options ensure the provision of appropriate service options. Quarterly communication with parents assures that the educational team works to meet the needs of all stakeholders. Transition meetings are provided so parents and students learn about the continuum of services provided by the Buncombe County Schools AIG Program.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

- Publicize identification processes and services to parents and teachers, including teachers of ELL students, Title I, and special needs students
- Distribute identification processes and services to parents at Kindergarten registration and at school Open Houses
- Monitor and analyze sub-group data as part of the mass screening process
- Investigate funding to provide support to AIG students in Grades 9-12
- Include AIG identification processes on third grade parent letter for COGAT screening test notification

Sources of Evidence:

Each AIG Specialist maintains an Evidence Notebook that catalogs school-based documentation in order to assure consistency of AIG plan operations. The Lead AIG Facilitator maintains an Evidence Notebook cataloging county-wide documentation. Documentation includes, but is not limited to:

- District and school websites
- Agendas from presentations at faculty meetings, parent meetings, school board meetings, and AIG advisory meetings
- Student AIG folders
- School-based AIG Identification Team records
- Buncombe County Schools AIG Administrative Team records
- Problem Solvers checklist completed by classroom teacher
- AIG Headcount
- Screening Pool lists
- Database of Nominated Students
- Agendas for monthly AIG PLC meetings
- Classroom Differentiation Documentation forms
- Lists of AIG licensed or locally credentialed teachers within the school

Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

Practice A

Adapts the NC Standard Course of Study (SCOS) K-12, to address a range of advanced ability levels in language arts, mathematics, and other content areas as appropriate through the use of differentiation strategies, including enrichment, extension, and acceleration.

District Response: The Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program builds upon and extends the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. A curriculum map has been developed for problem solver groups in grades 1-2 and enrichment groups in grades 3-8. This curriculum includes advanced content and resources that challenge gifted learners by integrating STEAM units, critical thinking, and technology skills with topics in reading/language arts and math. AIG Specialists, instructional coaches, and teachers developed an Advanced ELA curriculum map and work continues on its revision and implementation. The AIG staff utilized essential questions as a tool to guide curriculum mapping for the AIG enrichment classes. Teachers take into account student learning styles, interests, and readiness to adapt the curriculum via specific instructional strategies.

In a variety of ways, AIG Specialists collaborate with content teachers to support instruction, provide research based strategies for extension, and support individual student needs. Mathematics and ELA classroom teachers complete an annual record of differentiation activities utilized within the classroom to address the needs of the gifted student. This record is shared with parents/guardians via Open House meetings, newsletters, or other communications. Strategies for differentiation include, but are not limited to, anchor activities, curriculum compacting, Socratic seminars, problem-based learning, experiential learning, and tiered assignments. Co-teaching opportunities are available and encouraged as the AIG Specialist's schedule allows.

Rationale:

The NCSCOS is the standard curriculum required for all students in the NC public schools. This curriculum must be differentiated in order to meet the diverse academic needs of our gifted students. Survey data shows that 76-77% of classroom teachers agree or strongly agree that Buncombe County Schools uses challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum to meet the needs of gifted learners. Administrators and parents agree with that assessment with a 72% approval rating. The fact that 27% of administrators disagree that the statement that Buncombe County Schools uses challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum to meet the needs of gifted learners indicates a need for improved communication between specialists and administration.

Our AIG Specialist self-assessment of the current gifted curriculum recognizes strength in humanities-based units and we continue to add resources to keep these units current and timely. Our alignment includes a balance of more STEAM opportunities in order to meet the needs of 21st century learners, encourage hands-on engagement, and allow students to create and produce products that meet real-world needs.

Practice B

Employs diverse and effective instructional practices according to students' identified abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles, to address a range of learning needs at all grade levels.

District Response: Teachers and AIG Specialists support students by offering differentiated instruction that allows for exploration, problem solving, higher order thinking, use of multiple intelligences, and performance-based research products. Teaching strategies apply a variety of teaching formats, address student learning profiles, and require students to derive their own understanding of the content through inquiry.

Gifted students are placed in cluster groups to facilitate the peer interaction necessary for their cognitive growth. Cluster group teachers are required to complete the Buncombe County Schools AIG Local Credentials class. Cluster group teachers describe the methods they use to differentiate the curriculum for their gifted students on an annual record of classroom differentiation activities. A copy of this document is filed in the individual student's AIG folder each year and provided to parents. Flexible grouping options are available in classrooms to meet the unique needs of the gifted student.

Strategies for differentiation include, but are not limited to: anchor activities, curriculum compacting, Socratic seminars, problem-based learning, experiential learning, and tiered assignments.

Rationale:

Gifted learners share the ability to think with more complexity and abstraction than other learners of the same age, experience, and environment. These gifted learners require challenging, differentiated curriculum. According to surveys of administrators, 90% agree that the school provides diverse and effective instructional practices according to students' identified abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles in order to develop the highest potential of the student. Teachers in both elementary and middle school expressed support for this practice with a 78% and 81% survey response respectively. Over 95% of AIG students reported that they learned new information in their AIG enrichment classes, and 93% of AIG students feel that AIG is an important part of their learning experience.

Practice C

Selects and uses a variety of research-based supplemental resources that augment curriculum and instruction.

District Response: Buncombe County Schools is committed to the development of locally written gifted curriculum resource units based on state and national standards. These units are challenging and developmentally appropriate for gifted learners. Understanding By Design (UbD) developed by Wiggins and McTighe, as well as gifted curriculum models developed by Sandra Kaplan and Carol Ann Tomlinson, are used as curriculum development guides. Additionally, Buncombe County Schools uses commercially prepared curriculum materials that are especially appropriate for gifted students such as William and Mary units, Tom Snyder problem-based learning, Project U-Star materials, and Marcy Cook math materials. Units will continue to be developed to address the changes that our students will encounter during the transition to a 1:1 technology environment. Canvas training and implementation is especially important to AIG Specialists as we strive to meet the needs of our global learners.

Buncombe County Schools' AIG program employs a wide variety of advanced educational materials and resources to enrich, extend, and accelerate the curriculum. The curriculum maps and units that are used address a wide range of ability levels and include many entry points. AIG Specialists manage resource libraries at the school level to address the needs of classroom teachers; this resource library includes print and digital resources. Members of the AIG staff attend NCAGT and other professional conferences to gather resources and research-based supports that can be shared within the LEA. Resources include, but are not limited to:

- Concept based curriculum units
- Canvas units
- Curriculum maps
- Hands-on Equations
- Caesar's English
- Marcy Cook math materials
- Creative Beginnings materials
- Socratic seminars
- Tom Snyder computer simulations
- Habits of Mind
- Edward DeBono's Six Thinking Hats
- Integrated technology
- Financial Literacy Units
- Stock Market Game
- STEAM curriculum units
- Problem/project based learning units

Rationale:

Our AIG Specialist self-assessment of the current gifted curriculum recognizes strength in humanities-based units and purposeful growth in STEAM units. These STEAM opportunities are designed to better meet the needs of 21st century learners and to support Buncombe County School initiatives. Data shows 80% administration and 73% teacher satisfaction for this practice. In order for sustained curricular growth and vertical alignment, it is essential that AIG Specialists continue working in the PLC model of improvement. Monthly PLC work sessions help assure continuity, growth, and innovation within gifted programming and across the district.

Practice D

Fosters the development of 21st century content and skills an advanced level.

District Response: The Buncombe County Schools AIG curriculum resource units contain a variety of 21st century content and skills. Units focus on high-level content, as well as, critical thinking and creative problem solving. Performance-based assessment is an integral part of the units. AIG Cluster grouped classes provide content acceleration and enrichment. High school Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes offer a rigorous curriculum designed to meet the academic and intellectual needs of gifted students.

Buncombe County Schools Technology Department is implementing a 1:1 student device environment over the 2014-2018 years. A 1:1 environment provides the platform for more differentiated and individualized instruction through the use of adaptive technologies and enriched content. STEAM unit contents currently include computer programming, engineering, applied

technologies, mentorships, and/or integrated science activities. As students gain more individual access to technology, we will integrate 1:1 strategies that address gifted student needs.

Rationale:

Gifted students require authentic, challenging, differentiated curriculum and instruction to meet their intellectual need for complexity and abstraction. Within the context of the NCSCOS, students must also learn essential skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration. Gifted learners must develop these skills in order to become successful contributors to our global society.

Our AIG Specialist self-assessment of the current gifted curriculum recognizes strength in humanities-based units. Our alignment has included a balance of more STEAM units and opportunities in order to better meet the needs of 21st century learners. While reflective evidence indicates strength in the critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and innovation content areas, survey data indicates teachers, administrators, and parents all support growth in applied information, media literacy, global awareness, and applied life skills. We must integrate 1:1 strategies and structure within our curriculum delivery and provide support for classroom teachers as they differentiate instruction for gifted learners.

Practice E

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

District Response: Through the use of locally developed common assessments, state EOG and EOC testing, and informal observations, teachers determine students' current academic performance and ensure their educational needs are met. AIG Specialists collaborate with administrators, classroom teachers, counselors, and others to analyze assessments of gifted students in order to extend or review the curriculum to meet the needs of the gifted learner. The AIG staff uses rubrics to evaluate students' progress through the curriculum resource units in order to support a wide range of student needs and abilities.

Rationale:

Buncombe County Schools uses varied and ongoing curriculum and assessments in order to meet the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners and to provide equity and excellence in the overall educational program.

AIG Specialists are included in all assessment training (EVAAS, PowerSchool, etc.) and meet with county Data Coaches to disaggregate data applicable to AIG students. Specialists access individual growth projections for students in order to identify students who need remediation and/or small group support. Elementary AIG Specialists use CogAT testing in order to assure equitable screening opportunities for all students.

Practice F

Creates affective curricular and instructional practices which support the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

District Response: Affective growth of the child is addressed through the development of persistence, growth mindset thinking, leadership skills, creative thinking, and intellectual risk taking while involved in a supportive, nurturing environment. Affective education lessons are incorporated into the enrichment class curriculum. These lessons help students as they transition into the AIG Program and between school levels. Topics include, but are not limited to: gifted awareness, multiple intelligences, awareness of multiple perspectives, perfectionism, and coping with the unique stress that comes with being gifted. Appropriate counseling and support are available because gifted children have unique social needs and may feel different from peers of their own age, experience, and environment. Children who are gifted require time with others who are similar to them to promote cognitive, academic, and social growth. Cluster grouping is used in grades 3-8 for the areas of reading/language arts and math. The high school counselors and the AIG Middle School Specialists assist with course selection for 9th graders. High school counselors assist students in planning for post-secondary education.

Rationale:

Buncombe County recognizes that gifted learners have unique social and emotional needs; therefore, they require access to appropriate support systems and counseling to assure their affective well-being. Twenty-first century skills emphasize life and career skills including flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility that are equally important for gifted students. To survive in a globally competitive world, gifted children need creativity, problem-solving skills, a passion for learning, dedicated work ethic, a growth mindset, and life-long learning opportunities. The focus of these lessons is to help each student understand and deal successfully with his/her giftedness and address unique educational needs.

Data surveys show that 71% of elementary and 70% intermediate/middle school teachers agree that affective curricular practices meet the needs of our gifted students. Sixty percent (60%) of administrators agree that the LEA's instructional practices support the social and emotional needs of gifted learners always or frequently in their schools.

Practice G

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

District Response: The Buncombe County Problem Solvers nurturing program is available for students in first and second grade who demonstrate a need for enrichment beyond the regular classroom setting. Young gifted children may demonstrate their unusual intellectual skills in a wide variety of ways, with respect to interest, skill level in particular areas, and social development. Since unique patterns of development can be observed in young children, the program is fluid, with students attending Problem Solver groups according to their individual needs at any given time. Students are recommended for participation by their classroom teacher based on intellectual and/or academic ability, creativity, and motivation. Recommendation is based on outstanding performance on these indicators as compared to typical children of the same age in regular educational settings. AIG Specialists collaborate with teachers in grades 1 and 2 to help them recognize potential in children from under-represented groups.

One of our primary tasks is to make appropriate and advanced content available, through the use of higher order thinking skills, manipulative math materials, as well as inquiry through dialogue and

language experience activities. The learning environment should also offer the opportunity to discover intellectual peers at an early age. The nurturing program is called “Problem Solvers” as these students are not formally identified as Academically or Intellectually Gifted.

Curriculum Design:

- The Buncombe County Schools AIG Program curriculum map is used to guide instruction in the Problem Solvers classes.
- Emphasis is on higher order problem solving and information processing that will build upon the child’s existing strengths and abilities.
- Affective growth of the child is addressed through the development of persistence, leadership skills, creative thinking, and intellectual risk taking while involved in a supportive, nurturing environment.

Program Services:

- The AIG Specialist will offer the “Problem Solvers” nurturing enrichment class to students in first and second grades.
- Kindergarten students will receive consultative services.
- Problem Solvers in first grade will meet a minimum of 30 minutes every other week.
- Problem Solvers in second grade will meet a minimum of 30 minutes weekly.
- Letters will be sent to parents of Problem Solvers explaining the nurturing program. AIG Specialists will be available for conferences with parents as needed.

Rationale:

Buncombe County recognizes that gifted learners, including children from poverty, are shaped by their early educational experiences. To insure that their potential is developed and optimized, young children need access to an appropriately challenging and engaging education early in their schooling.

Parent surveys reflect satisfaction with the current Problem Solvers service. First and second grade teachers report a 90% satisfaction with current service provided to their education level.

Administrators expressed an 82% satisfaction rate with Buncombe County Schools’ promotion and development of young (K-3) students.

Practice H

Collaborates with AIG personnel and other professional staff, including regular education teachers, special education teachers, other instructional staff, and administrators, to develop and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction.

District Response: The AIG Staff meets monthly to plan advanced content lessons, review research based strategies, and coordinate alignment of curricular activities. The AIG Specialist collaborates with the classroom teacher as well as other school personnel to plan for the academic needs of the gifted student. Documentation of these meetings will be maintained in each specialist’s Collaboration Log. AIG Specialists participate in grade level Professional Learning Communities as time allows.

Rationale:

Collaboration among AIG personnel, classroom teachers, counselors, administrators, and others related to the gifted student’s success is essential as we implement a differentiated curriculum. AIG

Specialists possess specialized knowledge about instructional strategies and curriculum modifications appropriate for gifted students. AIG Specialists facilitate collaboration with regular education teachers, parents, and other instructional personnel to plan and utilize appropriate materials and strategies.

As AIG Specialists, classroom teachers, and curriculum specialists continue to align curriculum and materials with the NCSCOS, continued collaboration will be essential to facilitating student success.

Practice I

Develops and documents a student plan that articulates the differentiated curriculum and instruction services that match the identified needs of the K-12 AIG student, such as a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). This document is reviewed annually with parents/families to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

District Response: The Buncombe County Schools' DEP articulates the Learning Environment and Content/Process/Product Modifications based on the student's AIG Identification. The DEP is shared with parents during placement meetings, and parent input is welcomed. An Annual Review form detailing student's grades, test data, and services is reviewed with parents at the end of each school year. Differentiated curriculum is documented through the use of the Cluster Differentiation Documentation Form which is completed by the cluster teacher with the support of the AIG Specialist. The AIG Curriculum Map outlines the AIG Curriculum K-12.

Communication and collaboration with stakeholders is necessary to ensure appropriate service delivery. AIG specialists meet annually with parents to discuss program information, share details of curriculum, and review student services. To facilitate transitions between schools, AIG specialists host meetings that assure gifted student and parent needs are met. AIG specialists meet with families of twice exceptional students and special education teachers to ensure that high level programming addresses unique student needs. AIG enrichment class evaluations are sent home quarterly as an additional communication about student progress within enrichment services. Annual reviews are completed in grades 3-8 to highlight student performance and identify recommended services for the following year.

AIG Curriculum Map **Grades K-2 Problem-Solver Goals**

Students in Kindergarten through second grade will:

- Make appropriate use of activities which extend manipulation, experimentation, and application
- Develop reasoning skills through logic and problem solving activities
- Begin to develop a sensitivity to language and an awareness of the functions of words and figurative expressions as they contribute to the appreciation of quality literature
- Develop skills of independent, critical, and creative thinking skills

Grades 3-8 AIG Enrichment Goals

AIG Specialists in grades 3 – 8 will continue to enrich and extend SCOS goals and objectives. Additionally, AIG students will:

- Gain awareness of themselves as individuals who have unique academic and social-emotional needs.

- Engage in meaningful work that strengthens independent, critical, and creative thinking skills.
- Foster independence in identifying and solving meaningful problems.
- Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively in increasingly complex contexts.
- Think critically about humankind and demonstrate social responsibility in a global community.
- Collaborate effectively with diverse teams to accomplish a common goal.
- Commit to learning as a lifelong process and demonstrate accountability for one's own learning.

In addition to grade-specific integrated concept based units, AIG specialists will teach lessons from each of the AIG Curricular Strands. Critical and creative thinking skills will be embedded within each strand.

AIG Curricular Strands:

- Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners
- Humanities/ Literacy
- Mathematical/ Logical
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics)

Required Activities in Grade 3

Integrated Unit - People Making a Difference/Leadership

Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners - Gifted Awareness lessons

Humanities/ Literacy - Caesar's English (Lessons 1-4) – advanced vocabulary from classic books and Latin roots

Mathematical/ Logical - Algebra Thinking First Experiences – Lessons 1-5 of Balances and Tables and Pastures (Collections and Balance Logic are optional)

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) - Inquiry and Innovation performance task(s)

Required Activities in Grade 4

Integrated Unit - Our World, Our Future – a concept-based unit on the environment

Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners - Gifted Awareness lessons and introduce Six Thinking Hats (DeBono)

Humanities/ Literacy - Caesar's English – advanced vocabulary from classic books and Latin roots (Lessons 5-12)

Mathematical/ Logical - Algebraic Thinking (Hands On Equations, Level 1)

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) - Inquiry and Innovation performance task(s)

Required Activities in Grade 5

Integrated Unit - Journeys – a concept-based unit on immigration

Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners - Gifted Awareness lessons and continue Six Thinking Hats (DeBono)

Humanities/ Literacy - Caesar's English – advanced vocabulary from classic books and Latin roots (Lessons 13-20)

Mathematical/ Logical - Algebraic Thinking

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) - Inquiry and Innovation performance task(s)

Required Activities in Grade 6

Integrated Unit - Building Bridges – a concept-based unit on understanding cultural differences

Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners - Gifted Awareness lessons

Humanities/ Literacy - Caesar's English – advanced vocabulary from classical texts and Latin roots (Lessons 13-20)

Mathematical/ Logical - Computational Inquiry, Problem Solving, and Logic Applications

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) - Inquiry and Innovation performance task(s)

Required Activities in Grade 7

Integrated Unit - Conflict – a concept-based unit on understanding conflicts, past, present, and future

Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners - Gifted Awareness lessons

Humanities/ Literacy - Argumentative speaking/writing, Socratic seminars, and/or novel study

Mathematical/ Logical - Computational Inquiry, Problem Solving, and Logic Applications

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) - Inquiry and Innovation performance task(s)

Required Activities in Grade 8

Integrated Unit - My Place in the World – a concept-based unit on self-direction and understanding

Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners - Gifted Awareness lessons

Humanities/ Literacy - Universal experience in literature, Socratic seminars, and/or novel study

Mathematical/ Logical - Computational Inquiry, Problem Solving, and Logic Applications

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) - Inquiry and Innovation performance task(s)

The AIG Curriculum Map is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. It is a working document that is continually reviewed and updated to remain current with 21st century skills, new technology, and current research-based practices in general education and gifted education.

Grades 9 through 12

Students will self-select honors, advanced placement or dual enrollment courses. It is recommended that students select courses from their areas of strength, interest, and desire for advanced student.

Rationale:

Gifted learners possess the ability to think with more complexity and abstraction and learn at faster rates. Gifted learners require challenging, differentiated curriculum incorporating rigor, relevance, and relationship. A curriculum map has been developed to ensure an articulated and consistent level of service within the LEA. The curriculum map extends and enriches the NCSCOS.

The Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) and service options are reviewed with parents via an Annual Review document to ensure effective programming, a continuum of services, and school transitions. Yearly meetings with parents ensure open lines of communication and review specific and focused differentiation services for gifted students as they move to each new grade level.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

- Investigate ways to integrate 1:1 technology into current curriculum
- Continue collaboration among content area coaches, classroom teachers, and AIG specialists to improve rigorous instruction and applicable enrichment

- Continue to develop and implement AIG curriculum units focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics
- Update existing curriculum maps with a continued focus on vertical alignment.
- Investigate ways to encourage AIG students to apply their learning in the context of real world situations (mentorships, service learning, opportunities for civic involvement, etc.)
- Conduct AIG needs assessment for high school administration, staff, counselors, students, and parents
- Investigate ways to help support teacher PLC meetings to address needs of gifted learners
- Continue to provide effective staff development for regular classroom teachers to assist them in successfully and appropriately differentiating for the AIG students in their classroom cluster groups

Sources of Evidence:

- DEP's and IDEP's
- Student products and formal and informal student presentations
- Student exit tickets, journal responses, products, and/or rubrics
- Classroom Teacher Differentiation Documents
- Teacher Observation Records
- Samples of Enrichment Class Lesson Plans
- Problem Solver Lesson Plans
- Professional development opportunities for AIG Specialists and classroom teachers
- AIG Specialist's Collaboration Log
- Buncombe County Schools AIG Curriculum Resource units
- Buncombe County Schools AIG Curriculum Maps
- Lists of supplementary instructional resources
- Survey results from administrators, parents, teachers, and students
- AIG and School Staff meetings (agendas and minutes)
- AIG, Parent, and Student Transition meetings (agendas and minutes)
- AIG and Data Coach meetings (agendas and minutes)
- Annual Review Documents
- AIG Notebook Evidences
- Records of county wide curriculum initiatives (Balanced Literacy, Big 6, QTL, Thinking Maps, problem based learning, inquiry science, DMI)
- High school AIG needs assessment data from stakeholders
- State Honors Curriculum Units
- AP National Curriculum
- Monthly AIG PLC Agendas
- List of Problem Solvers from Grades 1-2 in Evidence Notebooks
- AIG Staff Handbook

Standard 3: Personnel and Professional Development

The LEA recruits and retains highly qualified professionals and provides relevant and effective professional development concerning the needs of gifted learners that is on-going and comprehensive.

Practice A

Employs an AIG-licensed educator as lead coordinator to guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program and plan.

District Response: The Buncombe County AIG Program employs a Lead AIG Facilitator to administer the local program. The Lead AIG Facilitator serves under the auspices of the Buncombe County Schools Curriculum Department and in coordination with the AIG Curriculum Specialist.

Lead AIG Facilitator licensure requirements:

- A clear, non-provisional license in gifted education
- Master's degree in Education or extensive experience in the field of gifted education

Lead AIG Facilitator Job responsibilities:

- Sets agenda and chairs meetings for AIG Specialists
- Manages all Buncombe County AIG Local Credential workshops
- Prepares and maintains the Buncombe County Schools Gifted Services Plan
- Coordinates with the Curriculum Department regarding the AIG budget
- Follows up on decisions and informational items from meetings with AIG Specialists
- Facilitates monthly AIG Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings
- Coordinates yearly curriculum development activities for AIG Staff, focusing on special topics in gifted education, development of STEAM and other curricular units, and seminars
- Serves as advisor for AIG staff questions and related issues
- Secures the testing materials needed for the AIG Program
- Chairs the AIG Administrative Identification Team (AIGAT)
- Facilitates collaboration with other district and state leadership to synergize efforts on behalf of gifted students (Title I, North Carolina Virtual Public School, Technology, Curriculum Coaches, etc.)

Rationale:

Because AIG licensed personnel have education and experience in working with gifted populations, it is important that the Buncombe County Gifted Services Plan be developed and maintained by these professionals. Their specialized training and expertise ensures appropriate implementation of the NC Gifted Program Standards and Article 9B. Buncombe County Schools employs a Lead AIG Facilitator to monitor the local AIG program and plan.

Practice B

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

District Response: AIG services are essential to the total instructional program of the school. AIG Specialists must be engaged in training that supports a strongly differentiated program. Collaboration and focused staff development during monthly AIG meetings, meetings with classroom teachers, and staff development at the school level provide task engagement that explicitly addresses the academic, intellectual, and social/emotional needs of gifted learners.

Rationale:

The best teachers of gifted children are those with specific training in gifted education who have a genuine interest in and liking of gifted learners (Karen Rogers). Each AIG Specialist is assigned the task of meeting the academic, intellectual, and social/emotional needs of gifted learners through a comprehensive and appropriately differentiated educational program. AIG Specialists participate in county-wide and individual training to address these needs.

In current survey data, 70% of administrators agree that the academic, intellectual, and social/emotional needs of gifted learners are addressed during the explicit work of the AIG Specialist; 30% of administrators said that AIG Specialists occasionally met those needs. In intermediate and middle grades, 83.6% of instructors agree that AIG Specialists are engaged in tasks that explicitly address the needs of gifted learners. In elementary surveys, 80.5% of educators affirm this practice is being addressed either always or frequently. Parent surveys indicate an 84% satisfaction in the ability of the AIG Specialist to support the varied needs of their gifted learner. Ninety-one percent (91%) of students agree or strongly agree that AIG services are an important part of their instructional services in school. Ninety-two percent (92%) of elementary and middle school parents agree or strongly agree that AIG services are essential to the overall instructional program of Buncombe County Schools.

Practice C

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

District Response: Current AIG Specialists have a clear, non-provisional license in gifted education. However, the AIG Curriculum Specialist and Lead AIG Facilitator may consider applicants without a clear, non-provisional license when there are limited licensed applicants for AIG Specialist positions. Should an AIG Specialist be hired without a clear, non-provisional license in gifted education, the specialist would be required to complete non-provisional AIG licensure within two years.

AIG Specialist Job Description:

- Assists in evaluation of the Buncombe County Gifted Services Plan
- Provides explicit and direct instruction in enrichment groups for identified AIG students in grades 3–8 for a minimum of 45 to 60 minutes per week
- Collaborates with classroom teachers to support classroom differentiation
- Co-teaches in cluster group classes, as time allows
- Supports staff development for cluster teachers
- Provides explicit and direct instruction to Problem Solvers groups for students in grades 1 and 2
- Participates in curriculum development activities
- Communicates with parents and the community regarding AIG services

- Receives and processes nominations for gifted services, including administering and scoring necessary tests
- Serves as chairperson of the Academically or Intellectually Gifted Identification Team (AIGIT) in each school served
- Prepares and revises Differentiated Education Plans
- Maintains local and state headcounts
- Conducts and documents annual reviews of student progress
- Maintains confidential AIG student files
- Participates in monthly PLC meetings

Qualifications for AIG Program Positions:

AIG Curriculum Specialist:

- Overall knowledge of the Buncombe County Schools Gifted Services Plan

Lead AIG Facilitator:

- Clear, non-provisional license in gifted education
- Master's degree in education or extensive experience in the field of gifted education

Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Specialist (K – 8):

- A clear, non-provisional license in gifted education OR approval for employment by the AIG Curriculum Specialist/AIG Lead Facilitator. If not currently licensed, licensure in gifted education must be completed within two years.
- Classroom experience

School Administrator:

- Overall knowledge of the Buncombe County Schools Gifted Services Plan

Classroom Cluster Teacher (Grades 3 – 8):

- Buncombe County AIG Local Credentials (or in process of obtaining Buncombe County AIG Local Credentials)
- or-
- NC License in Gifted Education (K-12)

Teacher of Honors Course (Grades 9 – 12):

- Buncombe County AIG Local Credentials encouraged
- NC License in Gifted Education (K-12) encouraged

Teacher of Advanced Placement Course (Grades 9 – 12):

- Buncombe County AIG Local Credentials encouraged
- NC License in Gifted Education (K-12) encouraged

School Counselor:

- Staff development in characteristics of gifted students
- Staff development in social and emotional needs of gifted students

School Psychologist:

- Appropriate state license

Teacher (includes all licensed instructional personnel with differentiation responsibilities):

- Understanding of the Buncombe County Schools Gifted Services Plan

Other licensed instructional and support personnel:

- Understanding of the Buncombe County Schools Gifted Services Plan

Rationale:

Gifted learners require teachers and other personnel involved in their education to have necessary knowledge, skills, and understandings to provide an appropriate and challenging instructional program. Our current survey data indicates that 100% of our principals agree or strongly agree that there are specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services. Eighty-six percent (86%) of elementary teachers and eighty-nine percent (89%) of intermediate and middle school teachers agree that the professional development required is specific and appropriate. We believe that these high standards for professional development and knowledge of gifted learners contribute to the fact that 92.5% of our surveyed students agree that the AIG program is an important part of their learning experience in Buncombe County Schools.

Practice D

Places AIG students in general education classrooms with teachers who have earned an AIG add-on license from an Institute of Higher Education (IHE) or who have met the LEA's professional development requirements for that position.

District Response: In grades 3-8, classroom teachers must complete the Buncombe County Schools AIG Local Credentials course or be in the process of obtaining these credentials to teach clusters of AIG students. Educators who hold NC license in Gifted Education (K-12) are not required to complete the AIG Local Credentials course. AIG Specialists keep documentation of educators who have obtained Local Credentials and/or have achieved licensure in Gifted Education from an Institute of Higher Education (IHE); principals and AIG Specialists review this data annually to assure that students are placed into the most appropriate settings. In the event that students are placed into the gifted program after the school year begins, every effort is made to provide support for teachers who might not have Local Credentials and those teachers are encouraged to begin the process of obtaining credentials.

Our AIG Local Credentials course, Nurturing the Gifted Child, is offered twice each year through a hybrid online course.

Rationale:

Gifted learners require teachers and other personnel involved in their education who have the necessary knowledge, skills, and understandings to meet their needs in an appropriately differentiated instructional program. AIG students are placed into cluster classrooms with teachers who are either NC licensed in Gifted Education (K-12), have obtained our AIG Local Credentials, or are in the process of obtaining these Local Credentials. As evidenced from the survey data identified in Standard 3, Practice C, Buncombe County Schools obtains a high standard of excellence in this staff development component.

Practice E

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

District Response: The AIG Program, in collaboration with initiatives in the Curriculum Department, Title I Services, and the Technology Department, offers ongoing professional development opportunities to build AIG cluster teacher proficiencies and to enhance AIG staff expertise. The AIG Curriculum Specialist and Lead AIG Facilitator align professional development with Buncombe County Schools district initiatives and research-based best practices in gifted education. AIG staff members participate in school-based staff development activities to be knowledgeable of curriculum initiatives in the schools. As funding is available, AIG personnel attend national and state gifted conferences and specific subject area workshops and conferences. Technology workshops within the school system are utilized to provide continued support for AIG Specialists.

AIG personnel work collaboratively with instructional support staff (Title I, ESL, curriculum coaches, etc.) to integrate best practices for gifted learners into professional development offerings throughout the district.

AIG Specialists provide an overview of the Buncombe County Schools Gifted Services Plan annually at each school. AIG staff members are available to provide workshop presentations in differentiation, identification, and the social/emotional needs of AIG students. AIG staff are available for parent workshops regarding the needs of gifted learners.

Additionally, the Buncombe County AIG Local Credentials course, *Nurturing the Gifted Child*, is offered twice each year through an online hybrid format. This Buncombe County AIG Local Credentials course is designed to provide teachers and other certified personnel with the additional expertise needed to meet the needs of gifted students. Competencies in this coursework include:

Content and Overall Knowledge:

- Understand the definition and identification of the gifted child
- Identify gifted characteristics in diverse populations
- Recognize the social/emotional needs of the gifted child
- Put into practice content modifications, as needed, for the gifted child

Specific Skills/Techniques/Methodologies:

- Demonstrate the ability to assess potentially gifted students for nomination using a variety of informal and formal procedures
- Modify the North Carolina Standard Course of Study through content, process, product, or learning environment to meet the needs of the gifted child
- Describe and demonstrate teaching strategies designed to match learning styles of gifted students
- Write lesson plans that demonstrate an understanding of differentiation strategies that will augment the education of a gifted child

In order to obtain AIG Local Credentials, teachers must complete the *Nurturing the Gifted Child* course or complete an AIG licensure class from an accredited Institute of Higher Education. The Lead AIG Facilitator maintains the Buncombe County AIG Local Credentials database and serves as the staff development coordinator for this program. Information regarding NC License in Gifted Education is provided to interested personnel. AIG Specialists offer support as requested by participants in the licensure process.

Rationale:

The Buncombe County School System has a commitment to ensure that the academic, intellectual, social/emotional needs of our AIG students are met. Professional development provides AIG Specialists and other personnel working with gifted students the tools and skills needed to deliver an appropriate differentiated curriculum. For example, our recent survey data indicates that over half of elementary, intermediate, and middle school teachers affirm that this is our current practice. Eighty percent (80%) of local administrators surveyed agree that professional development is aligned with local AIG program goals and district initiatives.

Practice F

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

District Response: The AIG staff meets monthly in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to engage in data analysis, planning, and curriculum development. During these PLCs, AIG Specialists develop and share interdisciplinary units that extend and enrich the NCSCOS. AIG Specialists are able to refine applications of staff development learning as they plan curriculum and collaborate on lessons, activities, and events. AIG Specialists also participate in school-based staff development initiatives as they are available.

The Lead AIG Facilitator conducts a yearly needs assessment to determine the focus of staff development for the coming year. This data collection drives the content of PLC agendas, county support, and training for the AIG department. AIG forms, information, curriculum resources, and documents are housed on Google Drive and are accessible by AIG personnel. This storehouse of resources allows AIG Specialists and the Lead AIG Facilitator instant access to content support and curricular strategies. This digital collaboration does not replace the need to meet as a dynamic PLC, but rather it provides documentation of resources and opportunities for continued collaboration.

Rationale:

For over twenty years, Buncombe County Schools AIG Specialists have met monthly to plan, implement, and refine applications of their professional development. This commitment of time and resources has been instrumental in the professional development of our AIG Specialists and, ultimately, the success of our students. Monthly PLC time allows AIG Specialists time to develop the resources needed to maintain the high level of services designed to meet the needs of gifted learners.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

- Update content and delivery of the AIG Local Credentials course
- Develop and offer targeted professional development on social/emotional needs of gifted students and content differentiation strategies to high school personnel and K-12 guidance counselors

Sources of Evidence:

- AIG Specialist credentials
- Teacher Evaluation Instrument
- Administrative Team Identification records
- AIG staff Handbook
- AIG staff agendas and minutes
- AIG Specialist's weekly schedules
- AIG Specialist's Collaboration Log
- Surveys from administrators, parents, teachers, and students
- School-based and district-wide professional development opportunities
- Professional development plans for AIG Staff
- AIG staff professional development records
- Proposed list of staff development activities based on needs assessment
- Class lists and participation logs of AIG Local Credentials course
- List of school-based staff development initiatives
- District database of AIG licensed personnel
- AIG Local Credentials district database
- Number of AIG students clustered per teacher/course
- Cluster Differentiation Documentation forms

Standard 4: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

Practice A

Delivers AIG programs and services which are comprehensive of the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners across all classroom environments, grade levels, and settings.

District Response:

Core Services for Grades K-2 Problem Solver Nurturing Program

- Kindergarten services are consultative. The AIG Specialist may assist the classroom teacher with materials and strategies for differentiation.
- First grade nurturing program meets a minimum of 30 minutes every other week.
- Second grade nurturing program meets a minimum of 30 minutes weekly.

Elementary, Intermediate School, and Middle School Core Service

Grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 (Required)

- Gifted students are clustered in classrooms with a locally credentialed or North Carolina licensed AIG teacher who differentiates the NC Standard Course of Study across the curriculum to meet the needs of the AIG identified students.
- Gifted students identified in reading and/or math are clustered with a minimum of 5 identified AIG students; however, a minimum of 8 students is recommended. School size may dictate clustering, but every effort should be made to form clusters adhering to the recommendation. This recommendation is based on best practices and data from teacher surveys indicating that over 80% agree that cluster grouping of gifted students helps meet academic needs. Intellectually gifted (IG) students are clustered based on the strengths and needs identified in their I-DEP.
- Gifted students receive explicit and direct instruction from the AIG Specialist in a separate setting for a minimum of 45 consecutive minutes per week for the purpose of implementing the NC Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Program Standards: Standard 2- Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction, as approved by the NC State Board of Education, October 2015.
- Students are not required to complete assignments missed while receiving AIG services.

Any variation from the Gifted Services Plan regarding the required core service delivery model must be submitted in writing and approved by the AIG Lead Facilitator, Curriculum Specialist for Cultural Arts/AIG, and Associate Superintendent for Curriculum. Parents must be notified of approved variations to services in writing.

Extensions of Core Services available based on time, personnel, and student need:

- The AIG Specialist may serve students by co-teaching or assisting the regular classroom teacher with differentiating/planning instructional units.
- The AIG Specialist may provide additional small group instruction to meet the unique

instructional and social-emotional needs of gifted students.

- The AIG Specialist may offer additional advisement in group or individual settings. The emphasis may include study skills, time management, or organizational skills. Extracurricular activities that extend the classroom experience may also be explored.

Middle School Core Service Grades 7 and 8 (Required)

- Gifted students identified in reading and/or math are clustered with a minimum of 10 identified AIG students and scheduled with locally credentialed or AIG licensed teachers. School size may dictate clustering; however, every effort should be made to form clusters adhering to the recommendation. This recommendation is based on best practices and data from teacher surveys indicating that over 80% agree that cluster grouping of gifted students helps meet academic needs.
- Intellectually gifted students are clustered based on the strengths and needs identified in their I-DEP.
- Identified students are clustered with other high achieving students for instruction in Math and English/Language Arts. "High achieving" is defined as students who have scored at a high Level IV or above on the previous year's NC EOG tests. It is strongly recommended that gifted students also be clustered in other content areas, as appropriate. Best practices support providing advanced programming across all content areas.
- Gifted students must receive explicit and direct instruction from the AIG Specialist in a separate setting for a minimum of 45 consecutive minutes per week for the purpose of implementing the NC Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Program Standards: Standard 2- Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction, as approved by the NC State Board of Education, October 2015. Students are not required to complete assignments missed in the regular classroom while receiving AIG services.
- Differentiated reading and math curriculum are provided by the regular classroom teacher who holds AIG Local Credential or AIG license. This class covers advanced content and is delivered at a faster pace.

Any variation from the Gifted Services Plan regarding the required core service delivery model must be submitted in writing and approved by the AIG Lead Facilitator, Curriculum Specialist for Cultural Arts/AIG, and Associate Superintendent for Curriculum. Parents must be notified of approved variations to services in writing.

Extensions of Core Service available based on time, personnel, and student need:

- The AIG Specialist may serve students by co-teaching or assisting the regular classroom teacher with differentiating/planning instructional units.
- The AIG Specialist may provide additional small group instruction to meet the unique instructional and social-emotional needs of gifted students.
- The AIG Specialist may offer additional advisement in group or individual settings. The emphasis may include study skills, time management, organizational skills, career exploration, course selection. Extracurricular activities that extend the classroom experience may be explored.

High School Core Service Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12:

The Buncombe County School System supports the philosophy of student selection of courses at the high school level and encourages gifted students to enroll in Honors and Advanced Placement courses. Students should strongly consider their past performance in core subjects before making course selections.

School counselors, subject area teachers, and AIG Program staff are available to advise students in the decision-making process. Online courses are also offered in the high schools as alternatives for advanced study as are many options for dual enrollment at local and community colleges. Early College is a non-traditional high school for students who would like an alternative to the district high schools. Gifted students may apply for admission and enroll in this alternative program. Nesbitt Discovery Academy (BCS STEM high school) provides opportunities for gifted students who are especially interested in STEM areas. Gifted students may apply for admission and enroll in this alternative high school program.

Rationale:

AIG services are essential to the total instructional program of the school. In response to this statement, surveys of parents indicate a high level of satisfaction with 92% of elementary and middle school parents agreeing. Instructional programs in Buncombe County Schools are driven by the implementation of research-based service delivery models.

Practice B

Aligns AIG programs and services with each area of AIG identification, goals of the program, and resources of the LEA.

District Response: Practice 4A describes the service delivery plan for our AIG program. This service delivery plan has been written to align with the identification criteria, the overall goals of the program, and the state allocated resources [see Appendix A]. Optional core extensions (i.e. clubs, small groups, extracurriculars) are based on scheduling, resources, and student need.

Rationale:

Gifted learners possess the ability to think with more complexity and abstraction and learn at faster rates; therefore, they require challenging, differentiated curriculum and instruction which are developmentally appropriate and will prepare them for the 21st century. Gifted students have different learning needs; therefore, they need time with others who are similar to themselves in order to establish cognitive relationships and to facilitate their academic, intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Through cluster grouping and the AIG service delivery plan, the gifted learners' needs are addressed.

Practice C

Delivers AIG programs and services that are integral and connected to the total instructional program of the LEA in policy and practice.

District Response: Buncombe County Schools' AIG curriculum units are extensions of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and are therefore connected to the total instructional program. AIG Specialists and AIG Credentialed teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of our gifted students. AIG Specialists collaborate with the AIG Cluster Group Teachers to assist with differentiation

resources, planning instructional units, and providing additional services.

Gifted learners require time with others who are similar to themselves in order to facilitate their academic, intellectual, social, and emotional growth. In Practice 4A, cluster grouping is recommended in grades 3 - 8. Cluster grouping numbers, as defined in Practice 4A, are reported by each school.

The AIG Lead Facilitator collaborates with the curriculum staff to ensure alignment of AIG curriculum with the NCSCOS. To facilitate this collaboration, the AIG Lead Facilitator serves under the auspices of the curriculum department.

Rationale:

It is imperative that gifted learners are provided programs and services that reflect equity and excellence and are an integral part of the comprehensive instructional program. Gifted learners require challenging, differentiated curriculum and instruction; yet, their curriculum must evolve from the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. This requires the development of curriculum, programs, and services that connect to the NC SCOS but meet gifted students' academic and intellectual needs. The majority of stakeholders in Buncombe County Schools state that AIG services through the pull-out enrichment program are a significant part of the gifted students' school experience.

Practice D

Informs all teachers, school administrators, and support staff about delivery of differentiated services and instruction for AIG students, regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program and plan.

District Response: AIG Specialists present information about the Gifted Services Plan and the delivery of services directly to school staff at school faculty meetings. A county-wide digital presentation is presented to every school by the AIG staff to ensure consistency of information to all stakeholders.

The AIG Local Credentials course, *Nurturing the Gifted Child*, is offered twice each year for the purpose of training and supporting all educators who work with gifted students. Cluster teachers will be required to earn local credentials; however, all teachers are encouraged to enroll in the class. Characteristics of gifted students including the atypical gifted student, methods of differentiation, and instructional strategies especially appropriate for gifted students are included in this class.

Rationale:

Since gifted students have different needs, they require teachers and other personnel who have the necessary knowledge and understandings to be involved in their education. Receiving information, such as the current Gifted Services Plan, Article 9B, and other standards related to gifted education, enables teachers, school administrators, and support staff to fulfill their role in the AIG student's overall educational program. Even though this information is now accessible through Buncombe County Schools' website, over half of elementary and middle school teachers state that only occasionally or seldom does Buncombe County Schools inform all personnel about the delivery of differentiated services and instruction for gifted students, regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program and plan. This is a clear need that must be addressed.

Practice E

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

District Response: AIG specialists have monthly Professional Learning Community meetings. These meetings provide the opportunity to analyze data regarding gifted students' performance, develop and exchange curricula, discuss specific students who have transferred or transitioned to a different school setting, and receive specialized training on critical AIG related topics.

Elementary AIG Specialists complete Differentiated Education Plans for students entering sixth grade, in collaboration with the Intermediate or Middle School Teacher. In addition, intermediate and middle school specialists work closely with students and their families as they transition from elementary or intermediate school to middle school, as well as from middle to high school. AIG Parent meetings are conducted at each transition point in order to support students and parents.

Student AIG folders are housed in each school and provide historical data about AIG services, student performance, and previous service delivery options. These AIG folders follow student transitions and are managed by a student's current AIG Specialist. For students who transition between schools within a district, AIG specialists host student meetings with the next level AIG Specialists to assure effective transitioning. High school honors class enrollment is tracked, and school-wide meetings with transitioning students are scheduled and conducted. Middle school AIG Specialists manage AIG folders for identified high school students.

Rationale:

The majority of school personnel states that there is communication among and between teachers and schools to ensure an effective continuation of K-12 gifted services. Gifted learners form a diverse group of students with a variety of academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs different from those of their peers similar in age, experience, and environment; therefore, they require an effective continuation of services throughout their K-12 school experience. Continued communication with stakeholders is important to ensure continuity throughout the gifted program.

Practice F

Facilitates collaboration among school counseling personnel, regular education teachers, AIG specialists, and others to address the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

District Response: AIG Specialists collaborate during monthly PLC meetings. Central office instructional staff, representing all content areas, are regularly invited to present information on current trends, strategies, and best practices in their respective disciplines. AIG Specialists attend school staff meetings and school-based staff development to collaborate with regular education teachers and other instructional staff to facilitate the implementation of the school improvement plan and other curricular initiatives.

AIG Specialists detail the various ways they provide support and facilitate collaboration by maintaining yearly AIG Specialist Collaboration Logs. These logs authenticate the collaborative partnerships between the AIG Specialist and other stakeholders, including classroom teachers, content specialists, counselors, parents, and administrators.

AIG Specialists utilize existing school-based collaborative team structures, like PLCs, to share tools

and resources with teachers in order to support the social and emotional development of gifted students. Stakeholders who may be consulted for the development of the IDEP for twice-exceptional students include the school EC teacher and/or ELL teacher.

Rationale:

While the majority of stakeholders agree that there is collaboration and involvement among a variety of school personnel, administrators, and parents to provide differentiated services and programming, surveys indicate that less than half of elementary and middle school teachers feel that this collaboration at least frequently addresses the social and emotional needs of gifted students. Gifted learners have different social and emotional needs than their peers; therefore, they require teachers and other personnel involved in their education who have the necessary knowledge, skills, and understandings to meet those needs.

Practice G

Articulates and implements opportunities for acceleration, including compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, subject and/or grade acceleration when an appropriate body-of-evidence indicates the need.

District Response: Buncombe County Schools offers many opportunities for acceleration, including grade acceleration and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery. At the high school level, there are opportunities for enrichment, advancement, and acceleration through hybrid courses with the NC School of Science and Math, Governor’s School, AP courses, dual-enrollment with IHEs, and the NC Virtual Public High School.

Grade Acceleration/Double Promotion Grades 3 – 8

A school-based team including the AIG Specialist, principal, parent, and current and/or future classroom teachers will determine if there is an extreme need for grade acceleration/double promotion based on the criteria below:

- 99th percentile on an individual aptitude test administered by a licensed psychologist
- 99th percentile achievement in reading or math on a nationally normed test
- Score on Iowa Acceleration Scale indicating a need for acceleration
- Teacher recommendation
- Parent approval
- Principal approval
- Student desire to be promoted

Credit By Demonstrated Mastery

Credit By Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is the process by which Buncombe County Schools will, based on a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without the student being required to complete the classroom instruction. “Mastery” is defined as a student’s command of course material at a level that demonstrates a deep understanding of the content standards and application of knowledge. BCS offers the CDM process for any course taught within Buncombe County Schools. All students in Buncombe County Schools are eligible to request this opportunity to earn credits for high school courses in grades 9-12 and high school courses offered in grades 7-8 in middle school via CDM.

Policies and procedures that govern CDM are posted on the Buncombe County Schools website, and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section provides additional information for parents and students. An informational PowerPoint also reviews the program components for interested parties and has been shared with district educators.

CDM is not a replacement for differentiated services to meet the learning needs of students. CDM is in fact a way to differentiate and personalize learning based on individual student needs of content replacement. CDM does not replace the typical accelerated pathways of learning compacted curriculum by groups of advanced students. CDM should not replace current compacted pathways for groups of students. Likewise, CDM should not be an additional requirement to determine who will work at a faster rate within the classroom. CDM is meant for individual students who need content replacement and subject acceleration clearly, without any learning of the content in the school setting.

Rationale:

Gifted learners form a diverse group of students with a variety of academic and intellectual needs, and the ability to learn at a faster rate. They require a range of service options with a challenging curriculum that is developmentally appropriate within a comprehensive program. Although differentiation is provided through AIG services and classroom strategies, there may be a body of evidence that indicates a need for compacted content, grade acceleration, or Credit by Demonstrated Mastery.

Practice H

Provides intentional programming for traditionally under-represented AIG populations, including culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.

District Response: The Buncombe County School System is a diverse school system, especially in terms of the English Language Learners. We have a large population of Ukrainian, Russian, and Hispanic children. There are over 44 languages spoken in this school system. We also have a large population of economically disadvantaged students which leads most of our elementary and middle schools to be classified as eligible for Title One support. We have invested in culturally unbiased tests, NNAT and TONI-III, to assist in identifying these students.

AIG Specialists collaborate with the exceptional children's teachers to identify potential in learning disabled students who may need a twice-exceptional identification. As the Asperger's population grows, we explore learning styles and instructional strategies these unique individual needs in order to maximize their learning potential. AIG Specialists support the regular classroom teacher in developing differentiation strategies for these gifted students.

Rationale:

Because underrepresented populations do not always meet the criteria for gifted identification and services, a process must be in place to consider identification for students who do not meet the criteria for the AIG program. The system-wide AIG Administrative Team (AIGAT) meets to review all data in these special cases. According to surveys, the majority of administrators and teachers agree that Buncombe County Schools provides gifted services for traditionally underrepresented populations. Because these gifted learners in underrepresented populations require purposeful and intentional support to ensure their potential is recognized, developed, and served, we continue to explore ways to

identify and serve these gifted students. We continue to provide staff development opportunities to assist the AIG staff in understanding the learning differences that influence a gifted child's educational experience.

Practice I

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

District Response: Buncombe County Schools provides an array of K-12 extracurricular programs both during and outside school hours. These opportunities range from school-based weekly enrichment groups and special interest groups to local, statewide, and national contests and programs that address the diverse needs of our gifted students. Current opportunities may include, but are not limited to: MathCounts, Geography Bee, Scripps Spelling Bee, Odyssey of the Mind, Battle of the Books, Duke TIP, Science Olympiad, and Governor's School. We also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate some of the interests explored during the school year. For example, Maker Madness demonstrates student interests in STEAM-based curriculum.

AIG Specialists notify parents of these activities through newsletters, emails, and websites. AIG Specialists maintain a list of these opportunities in the AIG Evidences Notebook and share applicable events, clubs, and groups during transition meetings and placement meetings.

Rationale:

The majority of all stakeholders agree that Buncombe County Schools encourages extracurricular programs and events that enhance and further develop the needs and interests of gifted students. Gifted students are a diverse group of learners with a variety of academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs. To meet their needs, a range of service options and extracurricular programs are necessary.

Practice J

Utilizes intentional, flexible grouping practices to facilitate effective instruction and support the growth of AIG students.

District Response: Gifted students are cluster grouped in grades 3-8, with clusters becoming larger in grades 7-8. Additionally, middle schools prepare students for Math I in eighth grade by providing compacted curriculum work in seventh grade mathematics. Within the AIG cluster groups, flexible grouping is used for remediation, enrichment, and acceleration.

AIG Specialists and AIG cluster teachers consider the growth of all students during PLC meetings. Pre-tests, formative assessments, and summative assessments provide documentation of individual student needs. Students are flexibly grouped based on these and other measures, such as readiness, interest, and learner profiles.

Rationale:

Gifted students are a heterogeneous group with a variety of academic strengths and weaknesses. Flexible grouping for specific content, as well as for social and emotional needs, allows for enrichment and remediation based on summative and formative assessments.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

- Investigate research-based curriculum approaches where STEAM and Problem-Based Learning are included in elementary and middle school enrichment classes.
- Investigate and develop a service delivery plan for the newly recognized Pathway IV identified students in elementary and middle schools
- In addition to existing high school services, create a systematic way to ensure all aspects of student development (academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs) are addressed within each grade level, classroom environment, and setting
- Conduct annual meetings with teachers, administrators, and support staff to inform them about the local Gifted Services Plan, and state legislation regarding gifted education, with a specific focus on the implementation of the new plan
- Develop a plan during AIG PLC meetings to address the social and emotional needs of gifted students system-wide.
- Enhance articulation between elementary and middle school stakeholders to identify students who would benefit from acceleration and plan accordingly
- Locate and access staff development opportunities to prepare AIG Specialists with strategies to identify and serve underrepresented populations, such as: twice exceptional, highly gifted, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students
- Monitor a variety of existing local and statewide assessment data to determine effectiveness of current grouping practices

Sources of Evidence:

- DEPs/IDEPs
- Program Descriptions of Extensions of Core Services
- AIG Specialists' Schedules
- AIG Student Folder
- List of LEA and school staff development opportunities
- Cluster grouping data (reported by schools)
- AIG Specialist Collaboration Log
- Digital Presentation of 2016-2019 Gifted Services Plan
- Agendas from School Faculty Meetings
- Data including, but not limited to, teacher/staff newsletters, memos, minutes of meetings, and websites
- Service Delivery notebooks
- Agendas from meetings with transitioning students and parents
- Agendas from AIG staff meetings
- Agendas from school-based meetings where AIG business is conducted
- AIG specialists professional development data
- LEA and school websites
- Parent newsletters
- Student progress reports
- Student contracts
- AIG Administrative Team Data
- EOG data (trends for identification of underrepresented populations)
- Data illustrating student participation in extracurricular activities (i.e. MathCounts, Odyssey of the Mind, Battle of the Books, Duke TIP, Science Olympiad, Governor's School)

- School-level and AIG PLC notes and agendas
- Data of students growth on specifically targeted skills where appropriate
- Records of flexible grouping
- Flexible grouping data as shown in AIG

Standard 5: Partnerships

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

Practice A

Develops partnerships with parents/families and the community that are intentional and meaningful to support the following needs of AIG students:

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional

District Response: Buncombe County Schools encourages a high level of parental and community involvement. Each AIG Specialist develops partnerships with community agencies including local universities and businesses. Representatives from Buncombe County Schools provide pre-service training to university students who are interested in gifted education. Guest speakers and professionals are invited into schools to share their experiences about a variety of topics. AIG Specialists pursue grants from community partnerships including French Broad EMC Bright Ideas grants and Buncombe County Schools Foundation grants to provide curricular materials and technologies. Many of our AIG Specialists use Donors Choose to obtain resource materials such as novels and technology for their gifted students. AIG Specialists may also participate in partnerships with NC Science Festival's Celebrate STEM, Destination Imagination, Math Counts, Odyssey of the Mind, Battle of the Books, or a variety of extracurricular activities.

AIG specialists collaborate with parents and guardians to make sure that AIG student needs are met. In response to evidenced needs, AIG Specialists host placement conferences, disseminate curriculum resources, arbitrate student concerns, and facilitate transition meetings. AIG Specialists also provide necessary recommendations of student abilities for extra-curricular activities and high school placements. AIG Specialists document these partnerships with parents and guardians in the AIG Evidences Notebook at each school.

Rationale:

According to Using the National Gifted Education Standards for Teacher Preparation by Dr. Susan K Johnsen, "partnerships should be a cyclical relationship involving IHEs, Pre-K-12 schools/districts, and the larger community to support a continuum of services...to high ability students." These strong partnerships provide critical support for the needs of gifted learners.

Yet, despite collecting evidence of collaboration with parents, families, and community, AIG survey data indicates a need to increase these meaningful partnerships. Forty-one percent (41%) of elementary teachers and forty-four percent (44%) of intermediate/middle school teachers agree that BCS intentionally involves parents, families, and the community in meaningful ways to support gifted education. Only 48% of our AIG parents feel they are involved in meaningful ways. We clearly see a need to build more productive partnerships with parents, and administrators, and the community in the future.

Practice B

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

District Response: The Gifted Services Plan is posted on the Buncombe County Schools' website, and each AIG Specialist maintains a website at the school level that identifies the policies and procedures for student identification. Information regarding the local Gifted Services Plan is shared at staff meetings in each school yearly.

The Gifted Services Plan is shared with families as students are identified and placed into the program. AIG Specialists also communicate policies with parents about the AIG program and special events through newsletters, quarterly reports, emails, and automated phone calls. AIG Specialists maintain a current database of parent emails and/or addresses in order to facilitate communication; these databases are part of the AIG Evidences Notebook.

AIG Specialists collaborate with the Buncombe County Schools Communication Department to keep community and parent stakeholders abreast of programs, events, and initiatives within their schools and districts.

Rationale:

The communication of AIG services, policies, and procedures are necessary and crucial. Buncombe County Schools shares communication with stakeholders to assist in the collaboration and implementation of the local Gifted Services Plan. However, only 41% of parents feel there is adequate communication about the local Gifted Services Plan and AIG program. We will continue to explore various means of communication to ensure that all families understand our plan and our program.

Practice C

Establishes and utilizes an advisory group to develop, implement, and monitor the local AIG program and plan. This advisory group is representative of the diverse populations of the district and is at least comprised of community members, AIG parents and families, AIG teachers, and other instructional and support staff.

District Response: Buncombe County Schools serves over 25,000 students; as a result, we decided to have two advisory committees. A Parent Advisory Committee representing each of the six districts in Buncombe County Schools meets throughout the school year. Parents are representative of the diverse populations in the county. A Teacher-Administrator Advisory Committee meets throughout the year. Both advisory committees have been instrumental in developing, implementing, and monitoring our local AIG program.

Rationale:

Article 9B requires that each LEA develop a plan to involve stakeholders in implementing, monitoring, and integrating a local gifted program. Due to large size of Buncombe County Schools, two advisory committees were created. These committees include representatives from parents, teachers, administrators, central office representatives, and the AIG department.

Practice D

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

District Response: AIG Specialists inform parents/families and the community of opportunities available to gifted students on an ongoing basis and in their native language through their websites, quarterly AIG reports, emails, school newsletters, and other communication. Examples of this

communication includes, but is not limited to, notification about Duke TIP program, Battle of the Books, Odyssey of the Mind, Destination Imagination, Math Counts, Governor's School, and Science Olympiad.

The AIG Department works with the BCS School/Family Support Specialist to obtain written translations of pertinent documents, forms, and notifications in the native languages of our student population. Interpreters are scheduled as needed for AIG placement meetings and/or DEP meetings.

Buncombe County Schools also partners with Nesbitt Academy and Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College to offer Early College for those students for whom this is an appropriate placement. NC School of Science and Math also offers residential or online opportunities. Credited by Demonstrated Mastery options are also available and communicated to families.

Rationale:

The importance of equitable opportunities requires the support of ESL personnel and interpreters. As under-represented populations grow, we want to ensure that these families have access to outside partnership resources. Roughly 70% of parents report being informed of opportunities for their gifted students.

Practice E

Forms partnerships with institutions of higher education, local business and industry, and other stakeholders within the community to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services.

District Response: All Buncombe County Schools offer gifted students and their families multiple opportunities to be involved in the education process. Individual conferences are held throughout the school year as student needs arise. AIG Specialists participate in Open House and parent night events at individual schools. Transition meetings are held as students move from elementary to intermediate/middle schools and from intermediate/middle school to high school. AIG Specialists compile parent email databases for the purpose of regular communication and send home quarterly AIG reports so parents are aware of upcoming opportunities. Field trips are offered specifically for gifted students as needed.

Buncombe County Early College and Nesbitt Discovery Academy (BCS' STEM-focused high school) are appropriate options for some gifted students. The Early College is housed on the campus of AB-Tech, our local community college. Nesbitt Discovery Academy is located at the Buncombe County Schools administrative offices site. At the high school level, counselors provide information about programs at IHE to gifted students.

Rationale:

Partnerships provide a framework for decision-making and continuous program improvement (Reis 2006) and help maintain the integrity of the Gifted Services Plan. Gifted students are members of their larger community; therefore, it is important to develop partnerships with local industry, businesses, and Institutes of Higher Education.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

- Conduct yearly school-based AIG Parent meetings.
- Investigate ways to strengthen our partnerships with local industries and universities

Sources of Evidence:

- Buncombe County Schools' Gifted Services Plan
- Yearly Gifted Services Plan evaluations
- Survey results from administrators, parents, teachers, and students
- Agendas and minutes from meetings with stakeholders
- School-based Evidence Notebooks
- Disaggregation of EOG data and other performance indicators
- Annual Reviews (in each AIG student record)
- Cluster Teacher Differentiation Documentation forms
- Ongoing budget documents maintained by the Lead AIG Facilitator
- Yearly headcount and individual AIG staff yearly reports
- Record of AIG personnel schedules and caseloads
- Monitoring of course selection for high school gifted students
- Dropout data for gifted students
- AIG Specialist Communication Logs
- School-specific email databases
- Sign-in sheets from parent meetings
- Newsletters

Standard 6: Program Accountability

The LEA implements, monitors, and evaluates the local AIG program and plan to ensure that all programs and services are effective in meeting the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

Practice A

Develops a written AIG plan to describe the local AIG program, in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy (N.C.G.S. 115C-150.5-.8 [Article 9B]), which has been approved by the LEA's school board and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

District Response: Buncombe County Schools' Gifted Services Plan was developed with input from regular education teachers, AIG Specialists, administrators, parents, and county-wide administrators. A Parent Advisory group met periodically to evaluate our current plan and offer suggestions to improve our new plan. An advisory group of principals, central office administrators, AIG Specialists, and regular education teachers also met throughout the year to evaluate our current plan and provide input into the development of our new plan. Our plan includes a process for yearly evaluation and continual monitoring for effectiveness. An annual survey of students, parents, teachers, and administrators is used to help evaluate the effectiveness of gifted programming.

Rationale:

A successful gifted program requires the development of a comprehensive Gifted Services Plan that is developed collaboratively with input from all stakeholders, implemented system-wide to ensure equity and excellence, continuously monitored, and evaluated for effectiveness. Over the past three years, our AIG Specialists have actively solicited parents to serve on our advisory group, and this has been effective. Our Parent Advisory group is representative of the diverse populations in our six districts. Over 83% of parents surveyed were aware of the Buncombe County Schools AIG advisory group.

Practice B

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

District Response: Buncombe County Schools' Gifted Services Plan provides a number of strategies to ensure continuous monitoring at the school and system-wide levels. At the school level, records are kept in AIG Evidence Notebooks to ensure compliance. Planned sources of evidence for each standard are maintained in AIG Evidence Notebooks at each school. At the district level, the Lead AIG Specialist offers assistance to the AIG Staff in program compliance, testing administration, and the implementation of NC AIG standards. The AIG Specialists' PLC meets monthly and monitors the implementation and evaluation of our goals. Interim reports are completed as required and sent to the State Director.

Rationale:

A successful Gifted Services Plan provides a framework for decision-making and continuous program improvement (Reis 2006) to maintain the integrity of the Gifted Services Plan. An explicit and comprehensive plan for monitoring the Gifted Services Plan ensures system wide equity and excellence. Efforts have been made and will continue to include more stakeholders in the monitoring

process via advisory councils and surveys. The Buncombe County Schools AIG Department has consistently implemented and monitored our local Gifted Services Plan.

Practice C

Uses and monitors state funds allotted for the local AIG program according to state policy.

District Response: Buncombe County Schools prepares an annual AIG program budget to ensure proper allocation of funds. We receive local and state funding to maintain our program. All funds are directly tied to our AIG program. The Buncombe County Curriculum department oversees the use of AIG program monies.

Rationale:

State allocated budget funds must be used for AIG programming purposes according to state policy, and Buncombe County Schools has consistently used state funds appropriately.

Practice D

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

District Response: Buncombe County Schools conducts a yearly analysis of student performance data from EOG test scores and dropout data. BCS Data Coaches facilitate disaggregation of this data as an AIG department, geographic district, and individual school. Data is shared with county-level administrators, individual school administrators, AIG specialists, teachers, and other stakeholders. Growth statistics are used to monitor, develop, and strengthen programs for gifted students. Parents receive student data via Annual Review documents and quarterly enrichment class evaluations.

Rationale:

Gifted learners form a diverse group of students with a variety of academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs. To ensure that their potential is developed and optimized, collection and analysis of student performance data occurs. Buncombe County Schools' Data Coaches have been instrumental in helping us examine the data for AIG students annually, and we have shared this information with school personnel. The graduating classes of 2012-15 saw over 95% of the AIG students graduate with their four year cohort. Though this is a strong graduation rate, we still need to disaggregate the data to determine why only 95% are graduating.

Practice E

Monitors the representation, performance, and retention of under-represented populations in the local AIG program, including students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.

District Response: Buncombe County Schools conducts a yearly analysis of student performance data from EOG tests and gathers dropout data. Under-represented AIG student group data is disaggregated and disseminated to county-level administrators, building administrators, AIG specialists, and other stakeholders. AIG Headcount data is disaggregated to provide the subgroup representation in the AIG population.

Rationale:

Gifted learners from under-represented populations are often overlooked in gifted programming; therefore, they require purposeful and consistent monitoring to ensure that their potential is recognized, developed, and served. In an effort to identify students from under-represented populations, the COGAT screening test is given to all third grade students. The COGAT has given us another tool to identify students from under-represented populations; however, other measurements and indicators are utilized when the COGAT does not show full potential of these students. Monitoring performance on these indicators is necessary, not only for placement and service decisions, but also to ensure that the potential of these populations is recognized.

Practice F

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

District Response: Buncombe County Schools requires AIG Specialists to be licensed in Gifted Education K-12 or enrolled in current IHE coursework with completion of the program expected within two years. AIG cluster group classroom teachers are required to have the Buncombe County Local AIG Credentials, be in the process of obtaining these credentials, or be licensed in Gifted Education K-12. Local AIG Credentials courses are offered twice annually.

At the individual school level, AIG Specialists maintain documentation of educators who have obtained the AIG Local Credentials or Gifted Education K-12 licensure. This data is shared annually with administrators. County-wide data is maintained by the Lead AIG Facilitator.

Rationale:

Gifted learners require teachers and other personnel involved in their education who have the necessary knowledge, skills, and understandings to meet the specialized needs of gifted students. The Buncombe County Schools AIG Department has continuously maintained a database of the credentials of personnel serving AIG students including AIG Specialists, cluster teachers, and AIG licensed personnel.

Practice G

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

District Response: Buncombe County Schools' AIG Program conducts yearly surveys of students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders to elicit feedback regarding the quality and effectiveness of the local AIG Program. Survey questions are aligned with state standards and provide specific information for monitoring and growth. AIG Specialists maintain a list of parent email addresses and physical addresses in order to assist with communication and surveys. Survey reminders are sent in multiple formats, including county-wide phone calls and in print. All communication and surveys are available in multiple languages.

Rationale:

In order to provide a differentiated education where gifted learners thrive, to maximize potential, and to promote cognitive and affective success, gifted learners must have their needs addressed. A rigorous, supportive environment will lead to students to become valuable, successful contributors to our society. Regular feedback via yearly surveys of parents, students, teachers, and administrators is essential when for monitoring and addressing the needs of our AIG students. Eighty percent (80%) of

parents surveyed agree that Buncombe County Schools gathers regular feedback from parents.

Practice H

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

District Response: The Buncombe County Schools' Gifted Services Plan is reviewed annually. Data is collected by the AIG Staff from each school and assimilated into a written evaluation for the local LEA. Data sources include, but are not limited to:

- Surveys of administrators, parents, teachers, and students
- Formative assessments of student understandings
- Student performance tasks and rubrics
- Summative assessment data (EOGs, EOCs, etc.)
- AIG Headcount data
- Advisory groups minutes and agendas

A yearly meeting with the AIG Staff is held in June to document accomplishments and set goals for the coming year. Surveys of stakeholders are also used to evaluate the program. Goals are set for the following year based on feedback received from the various stakeholders.

Rationale:

A successful AIG Program requires continuous review and revisions from all stakeholders to ensure the quality and effectiveness in meeting the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners. Our AIG program is constantly being evaluated and improvements to our program are made as necessary.

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of administrators agree that BCS elicit regular feedback from students, parents/families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the quality and effectiveness of the local AIG program. Ninety-five percent (95%) of students indicate that AIG Specialists prepare challenging lessons, and ninety-four percent (94%) agree that they learned new material in the AIG Enrichment class.

Practice I

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

District Response: The AIG Specialists collect data from administrators, parents, students, and teachers through yearly surveys; data is shared with AIG specialists and administrators. Results from the surveys are used to recognize trends and determine goals for our Gifted Services Plan. Results are shared with parent advisory groups. Student performance evidences are shared quarterly with parents via enrichment class evaluations.

AIG performance data on EOG tests is analyzed to determine the percentage of AIG students making growth on the EOG Reading and Math tests and Math I EOC. Our Gifted Services Plan evaluation is shared with district-wide leadership and AIG Advisory groups.

Rationale:

Recognizing that educating our AIG students is a shared responsibility with all stakeholders, a variety of data is collected and shared with school personnel to continually monitor and improve the Gifted

Services Plan. However, efforts to improve the public dissemination process are ongoing.

Practice J

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

District Response: Written policies are in place that safeguard the rights of AIG students and their parents/families. Copies of these policies are in the Gifted Services Plan and the AIG Specialist Handbook. These policies include, but are not limited to, identification, placement, reassessment, transfer procedures, and grievance procedures.

TRANSFER STUDENT POLICIES

Gifted students who are currently identified in any North Carolina public local education agency will maintain their AIG identification in Buncombe County Schools. Student performance and assessment data will be used to determine appropriate services. Transfer students identified as gifted in other states, private schools, or non-public charter schools must meet Buncombe County Schools' AIG identification criteria for services.

PROCEDURE TO RESOLVE DISAGREEMENTS

The following procedure is used by a student's parent/guardian (1) if the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision regarding identification; or (2) if the parent/guardian believes that the Differentiated Education Plan for the child who is identified as gifted is not being implemented as written.

STEP 1 - AIG IDENTIFICATION TEAM CONFERENCE

A parent/guardian may make a request, preferably in writing, to the school principal for a conference with the AIG Identification Team to discuss concerns about identification decisions and/or implementation of the child's Differentiated Education Plan.

- A. The AIG Identification Team, including the school principal, 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 the parent/guardian as needed.
- B. The AIG Identification Team grants the conference within five (5) school days of receipt of the request. The AIGIT responds to the parent/guardian in writing within five (5) school days after the conference indicating the team's decision regarding the dispute.

If the disagreement is not resolved at the AIG Identification Team conference, then proceed to Step 2.

STEP 2 - APPEAL TO THE DIRECTOR OF ACADEMICALLY/INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED SERVICES

- A. The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the school AIG Identification Team in writing to the Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted Services within five (5) school days of receiving the written response from the school team. The parent/guardian must, in writing, explain concerns and specific points of disagreement with the school's AIGIT decision.
- B. The Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted Services (or designee) will convene a panel to review the disagreement within ten (10) school days of receipt of the written Step 2 appeal.

This panel will include the superintendent (or designee) and other members at the discretion of the director.

- C. The Director of Academically/Intellectually Gifted Services (or designee) will respond to the parent/guardian and principal, in writing, within five (5) school days of the panel review concerning the outcome.

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 3 - 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:
- i. whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an Academically/Intellectually Gifted student
or
 - ii. whether the local plan for Academically/Intellectually Gifted Services has been implemented appropriately in regard to the child.
- B. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings of fact and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on 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, Buncombe County Public Schools is not responsible for parent/guardian attorney fees.

Rationale:

Educators of the gifted are guided by the NC Teacher Code of Ethics and Buncombe County School Board policies regarding the conduct of teachers. The AIG Staff must maintain confidential communication about individuals and their families. Transparency and communication are necessary for all stakeholders to know the policies within the LEA.

Parents must have the ability to dispute identification decisions and gifted service delivery implementation in a manner that is equitable and consistent. Procedures must be clearly articulated and communicated. Seventy-three percent (73%) of parents surveyed said that BCS always or frequently protects the rights of AIG students through policies, procedures, and practices.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

- Collect, analyze, and share gifted student performance growth and dropout data with all stakeholders
- Collect and share gifted subgroup data from EVAAS with all stakeholders
- Identify subgroups of under-represented populations of gifted students in our program and create a system for monitoring their services, academic progress, and ongoing participation
- Conduct exit interviews with gifted students who have dropped out

Sources of Evidence:

- Buncombe County Schools Gifted Services Plan
- Yearly Gifted Services Plan evaluations
- Survey results from teachers, students, administration, and parents
- Agenda and minutes from meetings with stakeholders
- School based Service Delivery Notebooks
- EOG and EOC data
- Performance Indicator Data (i.e. math assessments, M-Class)
- Cluster Teacher Differentiation Documentation
- Ongoing budget records maintained by Lead AIG Facilitator and Curriculum Director
- AIG headcount
- AIG staff annual reports
- AIG personnel schedules and caseload documentation
- Student Annual Reviews (identified gifted students in grades 1-8)
- Course selection for high school gifted students
- Dropout data for high school gifted students
- Data regarding referral and identification trends of under-represented populations
- Enrollment of under-represented populations in high school honors and AP courses
- Program retention data
- Graduation data
- List of teachers with Gifted Education K-12 License
- List of teachers with AIG Local Credentials
- All credentials of AIG Staff (i.e. MaEd, NBCT)
- Evidences of newsletters, emails, and other forms of parent/specialist communication

Appendix (optional):

Appendix A Identification Pathways.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)

Appendix B MultipleMeasuresofAptitudeAchievementandPotential.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 2*)