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

Approved by local Board of Education on:
LEA Superintendent’s Name: Dr. W. Jeffrey Booker
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Revision Submitted to NC Department of Public Instruction on:

Gaston County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide LEAs to develop, coordinate and implement thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs.

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

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

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

Gaston County Schools Vision for local AIG program:
It is the belief of Gaston County Schools that outstanding academic abilities are present in students including those from culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These students have an exceptional academic or intellectual potential, which must be recognized, challenged, and nurtured through differentiated services beyond those which are ordinarily provided by the regular education program.

Services for students must be a part of the overall educational program that supports excellence for all students. This can best be accomplished through collaborative efforts with general education and through the provision of differentiated services that match each student's needs.

The Gaston County Schools AIG Department values gifted and potentially gifted students as diverse learners and is committed to their academic success. Our students are provided with a high level of intellectual stimulation through meaningful, rigorous, and technologically-advanced instruction and opportunities. As educators we strive to empower AIG students to become successful lifelong learners prepared to meet future global challenges.
Sources of funding for local AIG program (as of 2019)

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A
Develops screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels.

District Response:

Gaston County Screening K-12

K-2 Screening
K-2 Screening occurs after 1st semester once county data becomes available.

- Students must show evidence of working two grade levels above on county approved math and/or reading assessments to be referred for possible AIG testing.
- K-2 students are given an Aptitude test (OLSAT, NNAT, CogAT) and Iowa Assessments in reading and math.

Third Grade Screening
Third Grade screening occurs during the first 6 weeks of school.

- Students who score 80% total score on the county approved 2nd grade IQ assessment tools are tested.
- Third grade students are given the Iowa Assessments in reading and math.

Fourth and Fifth Grade Screening
Fourth and Fifth Grade screening occurs during the first six weeks of school.

- Students with 80% or higher on the EOG go on the screening pool.
- Students who score 85% or above on the EOG in reading and/or math are tested.
- Fourth and Fifth grade students are given an Aptitude (OLSAT, NNAT, CogAT) and Iowa Assessments in reading and math.

Sixth and Seventh Grade Screening
Sixth and Seventh grade screening occurs during the 1st six weeks of school or during the summer prior to beginning of middle school due to the Advanced Curriculum placement. Screening pools are sent to the AIG office by a Middle School contact person. If rising sixth grade students score 94% on the fifth grade EOG, they are automatically referred for summer screening.
Screening 1
- Students must score 85% on 2 or more EOGs in the previous 2 years.
- 90 or above class averages in reading and in math.
- No more than 2 EOGs below 75% in the last 2 years.
- Sixth and seventh grade students are given an Aptitude test (OLSAT, NNAT, CogAT) and Iowa Assessments in reading and math.

Screening 2
- Students must score 90% or above on 2 or more EOGs in the previous 2 years.
- 85 or above class averages in reading and in math.
- No more than 2 EOGs below 75% in the last 2 years.
- Sixth and Seventh grade students are given an Aptitude test (OLSAT, NNAT, CogAT) and IOWA Assessments in reading and math.

8th grade Screening/Referral
8th grade screening occurs during the 1st six weeks of school due to advanced curriculum placement.
- A’s in reading and in math.
- 90% or above on 2 EOGs in 6th and 7th grades.
- Nothing below 75% on EOGs in 6th and 7th grades.
- Eighth grade students are given an Aptitude test (OLSAT, NNAT, CogAT) and Iowa Assessments in reading and math.

9-12 Screening/Referral
- Students at the high school level are referred for screening as needed.
- Multiple opportunities for placement are given throughout the school years; therefore, most of our students are identified during the K-8 years.

Students can be screened at the beginning of each school year if they do not place the prior year.

- Students who enter the county who do not have an AIG identification during the school year, and the windows of testing have already occurred, are screened on an as needed basis.
- Students who enter the county, who have an AIG identification, will automatically be screened and placed appropriately. Assessments are administered if needed to determine placement.

Practice B
Establishes a process and criteria for AIG student identification at all grade levels that provides multiple opportunities to reveal a student's aptitude, achievement, or potential to achieve. The criteria may include both qualitative and quantitative data in order to develop a comprehensive learner
District Response: Gaston County Schools AIG Pathways

Kindergarten – GRADE 1 Identification Pathways

Pathway 1
Intellectually Gifted (IG):
● 99th percentile or higher total score on a nationally normed aptitude test.

Pathway 2
Academically and Intelligently Gifted (AI/AR, AI/AM, AI/AIG):
● 93rd percentile or higher on nationally normed total aptitude test score.
● 93rd percentile or higher on nationally normed achievement test.
● Performance.
● Teacher checklist.

Each test percentile, performance score, and teacher recommendation checklist score is given a corresponding point value.

A composite score of 107 points is necessary for identification in reading and/or math.

Grade Acceleration
Aptitude 99%, Reading and Math Achievement 99%, Performance, and Teacher Checklist.

A composite score of 115 points is necessary for grade acceleration.

Grades 2-12 Identification Pathways

Pathway 1
Intellectually Gifted (IG):
● 97th percentile or higher on nationally normed total aptitude test score.

Pathway 2
Academically Gifted (AR, AM, AG):
● 97th percentile or higher on nationally normed/standardized achievement test.

Pathway 3
Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI/AR, AI/AM, AI/AIG):
● 80th percentile or higher on nationally normed aptitude test.
● 80th percentile or higher on nationally normed achievement test.
● Performance of 80 or above.
● Teacher checklist.

Each test percentile, performance score, and teacher recommendation checklist score is given a corresponding point value.
A composite score of 90 points is necessary for identification in reading and/or math.

If grades are not available, a total of 80 points is necessary for identification in reading and/or math.

**Grade Acceleration:**
Aptitude 99%, Reading and Math Achievement 99%, Performance 95% or above, and Teacher Checklist.

A composite score of 115 points is necessary for consideration for Grade Acceleration.

**Level 5 Math Acceleration:**

**Elementary**
Students who score a Level 5 on an End-of-Grade (EOG) math in grades 3 - 5 will be given advanced learning opportunities.

**Middle School**
Students who score a Level 5 on an End-of-Grade (EOG) math score will be placed as a cluster student in the AIG Advanced Math Class.

**High School**
Students who score a Level 5 on an End-of-Grade (EOG) math score will be placed into the next highest level of Math.

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

**District Response:**
GCS is committed to addressing the academic needs of all students regardless of their social, economic or cultural background. To ensure GCS continues to address the needs of the traditionally underrepresented populations, we will:

● Work collaboratively with the Exceptional Children’s Department (EC) and English as a Second
Language Department (ESL) to discuss possible AIG referrals.

- Offer program information on the referral, screening, identification, and service delivery procedures to all stakeholders at all schools.
- Work with the regular classroom teachers to share with the AIG Department information about students who demonstrate exceptional skills in any area for possible AIG referral or screening.
- Use multiple criteria for placement. (Please refer to Standard 1, Practice B).
- Identify and serve underrepresented students through our nurturing program(s) and/or through AIG teacher/classroom teacher collaboration of model and mini lessons.
- Provide services for K-12 students who meet the criteria for gifted placement.
- Improve parent communication by making program information easily accessible via the Gaston County AIG website and AIG teacher.

**Practice D**

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

**District Response:**

AIG teachers follow consistent guidelines for screening, referral, and identification processes in GCS. These teachers meet frequently to discuss the identification process and to ensure that all procedures are clearly communicated and adhered to for all students regardless of grade level or school. We employ the following measures to ensure consistency:

- Teacher work sessions to review processes and completed paperwork.
- Partner system to verify test results and paperwork completion.
- Checklist of procedures to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- New teacher mentors.
- Minutes from AIG teachers’ meetings.
- End-of-the-year paperwork and AIG folder reviews.
- Review of AIG school-based teams notebooks and screening pools.
- The AIG Department shares AIG identification information at district principal meetings.
- Middle School AIG specialist hold beginning of the year and end of the year meetings with our school AIG contacts to discuss screening practices and placements for our secondary students.

**Practice E**

Disseminates information regarding the screening, referral, and identification processes to school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community-at-large.
District Response:
Gaston County Schools uses a variety of ways to articulate and disseminate the AIG plan and procedures to all stakeholders:

- Offer professional development at school sites.
- Administer surveys to assess the effectiveness of the screening, referral and identification processes.
- Schedule AIG committee meetings and parental meetings at school sites.
- Post plan on Gaston County Schools' Website, which is linked to individual schools.
- Place copies of the AIG plan in the AIG room and the principal's office at each school site.
- Translate documents into students' native languages when possible.
- Review and revise AIG plan as necessary and/or required.

Practice F
Documents a student's AIG identification process and evidence which leads to an identification decision. This documentation is reviewed with parents/families and maintained in student records.

District Response:
Gaston County Schools AIG Department maintains documentation to ensure students are properly placed and served in their area(s) of identification. This is maintained through the following practices:

- An AIG committee, composed of the AIG teacher, an administrator and at least two classroom teachers, meets as often as needed to review each student's profile on the AIG Referral Form (AIG 1) and determine which students warrant further testing.
- Once testing is completed, the committee reconvenes to review the results of the tests along with all other criteria data.
- If criteria has been met, then the committee signs for the student to be placed in the gifted program.
- The AIG Referral Form (AIG 1) is copied and the original is placed in the student's AIG folder.
- A copy of the AIG Referral Form (AIG 1) and the student's individual service delivery options are listed in the team minutes of the AIG Notebook. This notebook houses all committee decisions and provides documentation of the testing and placement of AIG students. This notebook is kept in a secured file cabinet at the school site.
- Parents are then invited to attend a conference. Assessment scores are shared and the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) is signed for students who qualify for AIG services. The DEP is placed in the student's AIG folder.
- The parents are invited annually to review and sign their child's DEP for the upcoming school year.
- Each student's AIG folder contains all necessary testing and placement data as well as service
delivery options. This information includes the following:
  ● Consent to Test (AIG 3).
  ● Teacher Checklist (AIG 2).
  ● AIG Referral Form (AIG 1).
  ● Request to Conference Form (AIG 6).
  ● DEP.
  ● Student AIG folder is housed in a secured file cabinet at the school site.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:
  ● Continue to increase communication efforts.
  ● Continue to increase multiple screening, referral, and identification processes and testing windows with all stakeholders through multiple avenues.
  ● Work with our English Language Learners (ELL) and Exceptional Children's (EC) Departments to determine additional tools for screening our underrepresented populations.
  ● Look at providing staff development for teachers to review not only the screening/referral process but also to look at the teacher checklist and best ways for it to be filled out.
  ● Continue to increase our number of underrepresented populations identified by introducing the CogAT test this year.
  ● Work on the 9-12 Screening Process, Identification and Service Delivery.

Sources of Evidence:
  ● Gaston County Schools’ Website.
  ● AIG Google Teacher Site.
  ● AIG Plan.
  ● Survey results.
  ● Agendas and presentations at various stakeholders' meetings.
  ● AIG Informational Brochure.
  ● AIG Team Review minutes.
  ● Student AIG folders.
  ● AIG headcount.
  ● Testing calendar.
  ● List of testing instruments.
  ● Documented testing accommodations.
  ● Nurturing program alternative testing procedures.
  ● Nurturing program testing data.
  ● Agendas and minutes from stakeholders' meetings.
  ● DEPs.
  ● IDEPs.
  ● Documentation of parents’ annual review meetings.
Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

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

District Response:
Gaston County Schools has programs and services that address the academic and affective needs of gifted learners in grades K-12. There are AIG certified teachers in every elementary and middle school and AP certified teachers in every high school. These teachers deliver direct and consultative services to qualified students. Programs and services may include:

Elementary School
- Pull out services including:
  - Need-Based Differentiated Instruction.
  - Reading Focus Instruction.
  - Math Focus Instruction.
- Inclusion.
- Flexible Grouping.
- Nurturing Program – Composers.
- Enrichment Groups.
- Book Clubs at the Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) at Pleasant Ridge.
- Small group instruction at the Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) at Pleasant Ridge.
- Strategy group instruction at the Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) at Pleasant Ridge.
- Address social and emotional issues by working collaboratively with the school system's guidance department.
- Provide direct and indirect support to regular education teachers and other staff to better meet the needs of gifted learners through consulting, resource support, and professional development.
- Extra-curricular school and county-wide initiatives and competitions including but not limited to:
  - Math Masters
  - Battle of the Books
  - Poetry and Prose Celebration
  - Chess Clubs
  - Math Olympiad
  - Biztown
  - Robotics
  - Math Fair at Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) at Pleasant Ridge
Middle School

- Daily Reading Blocks taught by AIG certified teachers.
- Daily Math Blocks taught by AIG certified teachers.
- Resources/co-teaching provided by AIG Specialists.
- Differentiated lessons.
- Compacted lessons.
- AIG MS Curriculum developed by the AIG Middle School Specialists.
- AIG extensions for ELA curriculum and compacted math curriculum developed by AIG Specialists.
- Extra-curricular school and county-wide initiatives and competitions including but not limited to:
  - Math Elite
  - Battle of the Books
  - Duke TIPS
  - Coffeehouse 678

High School

- Honors
- Preparation Advanced Placement (AP) Courses
- Advanced Placement (AP) Courses
- Extra-curricular school activities and county-wide initiatives and competitions including but not limited to:
  - High Q
  - Moot Court
  - Governor’s School
  - Commissioners’ School of Excellence
  - Boys’ and Girls’ State
  - Summer Ventures
  - County-Wide AP Review Sessions
  - High School Battle of the Books

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

District Response:
Correlation of the AIG program within Gaston County Schools total instructional program creates a vertically seamless path of learning for gifted students. Gaston County Schools AIG Department consistently delivers services throughout our county that are integrally connected to classroom
instruction by:

- Developing units of study which are correlated to North Carolina Standards.
- Participating in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) at the school and the county level.
- Collaborating with classroom teachers, academic/curriculum facilitators, and administrators.
- Attending in-county trainings, workshops, and virtual professional development which support the vision of our school system.
- Aligning the AIG curriculum with county pacing guides and NC standards.

County initiated diagnostic/prescriptive software is used to determine changes in instruction delivery based on the growth/needs of our identified students using data collected from:

- EVAAS
- NC check-ins
- EOG results
- Standardized Achievement Test Results
- Standardized Aptitude Test Results
- mClass
- iReady (BOY, MOY, EOY)
- Schoolnet

The AIG Department delivers a continuum of programs and services throughout the Gaston County School System.

Elementary AIG teachers are assigned to schools based on the number of identified students at each school. However, the program offerings and service delivery models are consistent.

At the middle school level, the students are served daily in their area(s) of identification. Teachers of the advanced classes are AIG certified and have been trained to use the advanced reading and advanced math curricula and pacing guides to direct instruction. They also meet together to collaborate with one another. If students transfer from one school to another, there should be no disruption in the advanced learning opportunities these students are afforded.

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

**District Response:**
The Gaston County Schools AIG Department will:
● Provide data to administrators for placement of gifted students in a regular classroom setting.
● Provide the classroom teachers materials and instructional strategies that will most effectively address the academic needs of advanced learners.
● Provide inclusion opportunities to model lessons for gifted learners.
● Group students flexibly based on a variety of factors, such as readiness and interest.
● Collaborate and plan with classroom teachers, instructional support staff and administrators during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

**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:**
A partnership is established when teachers, school administrators, and support staff are knowledgeable about all components of the AIG program. This partnership can better support AIG students and their parents as well as assist in helping AIG students reach their full potential. The Gaston County Schools AIG Department and AIG teachers communicate regularly with teachers, administrators, and support staff to keep them informed of AIG program components by:

● Posting information on our county-wide comprehensive website which is dedicated to informing the public and Gaston County employees about the AIG program.
● Participating in PLC meetings during grade level planning sessions and sharing information regarding the AIG plan and instructional delivery.
● Meeting with the AIG school-based committee at each school to determine new or continued placement of AIG students.
● Communicating AIG information at each school during school staff meetings, through email, and/or via handouts.
● Housing copies of the county AIG plan in the principal's office as well as the in the AIG room at each school site.
● Facilitating school and/or parent advisory committee meetings to share information about the AIG program and to field questions from the participants.
● Seeking evaluative feedback from teachers, students, administrators and support staff regarding the effectiveness of the AIG program.

**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:
A consistent delivery of services for AIG students can only occur when there are procedures in place for communication and cooperation among teachers. The AIG Department and teachers work diligently to ensure an effective continuation of AIG services from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school by:

- Completing the identification process before students transition to the next level.
- Providing tours for students entering middle school or high school.
- Working with administrators and guidance counselors to schedule AIG students in the most appropriate classes.
- Offering counseling services for students and their parents as they transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school.
- Facilitating communication between elementary AIG itinerant teachers and middle school AIG specialists.
- Promoting communication between the 8th grade advanced language arts and Math I teachers and the high school 9th grade honors/Pre AP teachers.

Practice F
Addresses the social and emotional needs of AIG students through collaboration among school counseling personnel, regular education teachers, AIG specialists, and others.

District Response:
In order for gifted students to fully realize their academic potential, it is imperative we address their social and emotional needs. The AIG Department must work collaboratively with other school personnel to ensure the affective domain of these students is appropriately addressed. The AIG Department and AIG teachers collaborate with counselors, regular education teachers, EC teachers, ESL teachers, and families to address the social and emotional needs of AIG students by:

- Referring students to school counselors who have been trained to address the unique social and emotional needs of gifted students.
- Providing school and community mentors.
- Beginning each academic year with activities that promote discussions about the challenges of being gifted.
- Encouraging regular classrooms teachers to be cognizant of social and emotional issues that may be present in their students and to refer these students to school counselors when appropriate.
• Offering individual and/or group parent meetings, as needed, to discuss strategies to address the social and emotional issues facing gifted students.
• Providing resources for teachers, parents and students to help them better understand the social and emotional issues facing gifted learners. Resources include a library of social and emotional books housed in the AIG classroom.

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

**District Response:**
Gaston County Schools AIG department has specific procedures in place to address the needs of highly gifted students who warrant accelerative instructional placement. The AIG Department has instructional and placement procedures that are implemented when an appropriate body of evidence indicates acceleration is needed. Specific criteria must be met in order for students to be considered for the following placement options:

• **Early Admission to Kindergarten**
  This option is for students who are working two to three years beyond their age peers. GCS follows NC State guidelines for Early Admission to Kindergarten as stated in the NC General Statute 115C-364.

• **Content Acceleration**
  This option is for students who are working significantly above grade level in a particular content area and meet specific site-based guidelines.

• **Grade Acceleration**
  This option requires observation, testing, AIG team recommendation and site-based administrative decision for a student to be eligible for grade acceleration. Criteria for Grade Acceleration for grades K-12:
   • Aptitude 99% (Reading and Math)
   • Achievement 99% (Reading and Math)
   • Performance 95% or above
   • Teacher Checklist
   • Composite score of 115 points

• **Early Graduation**
  This option is available for students who have received enough credits to graduate early. Detailed information about this option can be obtained from each high school counseling office.

• **Dual Enrollment**
  This option is for high school students who wish to take college level courses while still in high school. Detailed information about this option can be obtained from each high school counseling office.

• **Credit by Demonstrated Mastery**
  This option is for students in grades 6-12 who demonstrate deep mastery of course content through testing and artifacts without actual course seat time. In 2013, the NC Department of
Public Instruction instituted State Board Policy GCS-M-1001-13: Transitioning away from seat time in favor of a structure that created flexibility, allows students to progress as they demonstrate mastery of academic content, regardless of time, place, or pace of learning. CDM allows students to demonstrate mastery of a course’s content and receive a pass/fail grade for the course.

- **Level 5 Math**
  This option allows students who score a Level 5 to be given advanced math learning opportunities.

**Practice H**
Implements intentional strategies to broaden access to advanced learning opportunities for under-represented AIG populations, including culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional. These strategies may include talent development efforts.

**District Response:**
Gaston County Schools AIG Department provides programs, services, and classroom support to discover and develop potential in all students. Gaston County Schools has intentional programming in place or traditionally underrepresented populations.

The AIG Department works collaboratively with Gaston County Schools Accountability Department and Instructional Support personnel to utilize data to meet the needs of all students, including underrepresented populations.

The AIG Department provides programs, services and classroom support to discover and develop potential in students, even those who may not overtly demonstrate academic or intellectual abilities.

The Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) at Pleasant Ridge screens and tests students who would qualify for AIG and/or benefit from differentiation in the AIG classrooms. Students who qualify are either identified as AIG or are in the top 10% of their grade level.

The Composer Program, our nurturing program in select Title 1 schools, provides instructional services for traditionally underrepresented AIG populations, especially culturally/ethnically diverse, English as a Second Language (ESL), and economically disadvantaged. Some measures we have in place are:

- Providing enrichment classes for non-identified students at select schools.
- Using multiple criteria for placement consideration.
- Collaborating with Exceptional Children and English as a Second Language teachers when appropriate.
- Using multicultural literature to promote awareness.
Practice I
Encourages extra-curricular programs and events that enhance and further develop the needs and interests of AIG students.

District Response:
AIG students have interests and needs that may be addressed outside the classroom setting. It is important to seek ways to afford students opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. The AIG Department of Gaston County Schools sponsors, supports and encourages participation in all local, state or national extra-curricular programs and events that support the interests and academic pursuits of gifted students. Information concerning extracurricular activities is made available to all stakeholders through the Gaston County Schools website and individual school communication. These opportunities include but are not limited to the following:

- Math Masters
- Poetry and Prose Celebration
- Chess Clubs
- Math Elite
- Biztown
- Robotics
- Battle of the Books
- Coffeehouse 678
- Governor's School
- Math Olympiad
- Gaston County Commissioners' School of Excellence
- Summer Ventures
- Boys' and Girls' State
- Moot Court
- High Q
- Duke TIP program
- People to People Leadership Development Program
- Summer Imaginarium Camps

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:
- Work closely with administration to encourage the best possible placement for the gifted population in the regular classroom.
- Provide more professional development on social and emotional needs of gifted learners.
- Work on creating lessons and special programs to address the social and emotional issues of AIG
students.

Sources of Evidence:
- Gaston County Schools’ Website.
- AIG Informational Brochure.
- AIG Curriculum.
- Meeting agendas and minutes from faculty meetings, parental meetings, principals’ meetings, school board meetings, AIG Advisory Board meetings.
- Student AIG folders.
- School-based Review Team meeting minutes.
- AIG Plan and survey results.
- Testing calendar and administered instruments list.
- Examples of referrals from teachers and parents.
- List of non-traditional testing instruments.
- Screening pools.
- Composer Program identification process and placement data.
- Documented testing accommodations.
- Documentation of student and parent communications and meetings at key transition points.
- Documentation of consistent AIG services among all Gaston County Schools.
- Documented professional learning opportunities for stakeholders.
- Intentional student programs and instruction as they relate to the affective domain.
- Composer Program curriculum and growth data.
- DEP's/IDEP's/NDEP’s.
- Documentation of student participation in extracurricular activities.
- Evidence of opportunities shared with student, teachers, and parents.
- Data from a variety of county approved assessment tools, standardized testing, and non-standardized testing.
Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction
The LEA employs challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum and instruction K-12 to accommodate a range of academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

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

District Response:
An AIG differentiated curriculum is designed to enrich and extend the NCSCOS. The curriculum is developed by the AIG Department to meet the diverse needs of gifted learners. Gaston County Schools AIG Program utilizes various service delivery options to adapt the NCSCOS to each student's academic ability and to provide appropriate differentiated instruction.

Elementary School - Students may receive services through the following methods:
- Weekly pull-outs in both reading and/or math.
- Differentiated curriculum, aligned with NCSCOS and Gaston County pacing guide, for students identified K-5 in reading and math.
- Google Classroom assignments for extensions within the regular classroom.
- Collaboration with classroom teachers to provide differentiated materials for enrichment and extension in small groups.
- Level 5 EOG math students are given advanced learning opportunities.
- Differentiated instruction in the Gifted and Talented Academy at Pleasant Ridge (GTA) utilizes flexible grouping and schoolwide enrichment opportunities.

Middle School - Students may receive services through the following methods:
- Daily advanced language arts and advanced math classes.
- All Level 5 EOG math students are given advanced math opportunities.
• Differentiated instruction in the Gifted and Talented Academy at Cramerton Middle (GTA) utilizes flexible grouping and schoolwide enrichment opportunities.

**High School** - Students may receive services through the following methods:
• Self-selected Honors courses.
• Self-selected Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
• College Board AP Capstone Program at Forestview High School.

**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:**
All AIG students do not learn at the same rate or in the same way; therefore, the curriculum must be enriched, extended, and/or accelerated to accommodate a wide range of ability levels. Gaston County Schools utilizes research-based, diverse instructional practices according to students' readiness and interests.

**Elementary School**
An AIG licensed teacher is assigned to each elementary school to provide rigorous, differentiated instruction and to assist classroom teachers in the implementation of strategies and resources that would enhance the learning environment for all gifted students.

AIG teachers work collaboratively to design curricular units that are aligned with, but also extend and enrich, the NCSCOS. These units are vertically aligned and are inclusive of research-based best practices. Careful consideration is given to the modification of content, process, products, and learning environment as they relate to differentiated gifted instruction. Methods include collaborative learning, choice in product, hands-on activities, technology and flexible seating. Fidelity in the implementation of these units exists through AIG teachers following a quarterly Gaston County pacing guide.

The Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) at Pleasant Ridge Elementary School offers daily instruction in all core subject areas by an AIG certified teacher.

**Middle School**
Gifted middle school students are assigned to AIG licensed teachers for advanced reading and/or advanced math classes.

AIG middle school support specialists, along with AIG licensed middle school teachers, have
developed and implemented extensions and an advanced compacted curriculum aligned with the NCSCOS including enrichment activities and/or independent projects.

The Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) at Cramerton Middle School offers daily instruction in all core subject areas by an AIG certified teacher.

**High School**
In high school, differentiation options are available to gifted learners through self-selected honors courses, Advanced Placement Preparatory courses, Advanced Placement courses, North Carolina Virtual Public School, Gaston Early College High School, Dual Enrollment at our local community college, Gaston County Schools Online courses, and Community College Preparatory (CCP) courses. Many high school teachers have obtained gifted licensure. The majority of them have received Advanced Placement training.

Because it is imperative that AP teachers are fully trained, GCS makes a commitment to provide funding for teachers to attend AP summer institutes in their content areas as well as subsequent one-day updates.

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

**District Response**:
AIG teachers have grade level curriculum notebooks, as well as access to a Google Site with shared lesson plans and resources. The curriculum for the AIG program utilizes the following either through pull-out classes or regular classroom enrichment:

- Marcy Cook Manipulatives
- Hands on Equations
- Math Quest
- Jacob’s Ladder
- William and Mary Problem-Based Learning Units
- Inventory of differentiation materials (Independent Investigation Model {IIM}, Greek and Latin Roots, Math Rules)
- Technology based instruction through digital learning tools, including iPads and apps, Chromebooks, online quizzes, interactive lessons, Annotate, Google apps, Green Screen
- Building Thinking Skills by Sandra Parks & Howard Black
- Primary Education Thinking Skills by Nichols, Wolfe & Merritt (uses Bloom’s Taxonomy & Renzulli’s Triad Model)
- Breakout boxes and digital breakouts
• 3D printing created through Tinkercad
• Junior Achievement BizTown curriculum and on-site simulation
• Reading and math mysteries (Detective Club, Loose Caboose, But I Only Have 45 Minutes, One Hour Mysteries, More One Hour Mysteries, Private Eye Mysteries)
• Paideia and the School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM) in the two Gifted and Talented Academies
• Annual Math/Academic Fair at the Gifted Academy at Pleasant Ridge.

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

District Response:
In Gaston County Schools, the AIG program includes a deliberate focus on providing real world opportunities and materials with our students to develop critical thinking and collaboration skills. This focus includes utilizing a variety of the following:

• Digital learning tools (interactive Smart Board and/or LED displays, iPads, Chromebooks) encourage collaboration and creativity through process and product.
• Assignments and project rubrics provide opportunities for self-assessment and reflection.
• Middle and high school alternative learning opportunities such as NC Virtual School.
• School Choice Academy Programs in elementary, middle and high school which focus on Career, Collegiate Prep, Health Sciences, Leadership, Public Service, Technology and Industrial Engineering.
• Junior Achievement’s Biztown provides elementary educators with lessons and resources to effectively integrate financial literacy as well as work and career readiness, into the differentiated curriculum.
• Math Olympiad provides elementary students the opportunity to compete on an international level while learning rigorous, math problem-solving strategies.
• GCS online courses.
• Commissioner’s School.
• Community Service projects.
• Mentoring, job shadowing, or apprenticeships with local businesses.

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

**District Response:**
Ongoing assessments foster understanding. They inform students and teachers about what students currently understand and how to proceed with subsequent teaching and learning. Gaston County Schools recognizes how important this feedback is for students’ success and supports the use of the following tools to differentiate curriculum and instruction.

- Development and implementation of flexible groups and differentiation for students is based on assessment data including NC Check-Ins, iReady assessments and Standards Mastery, pretests and post-tests, standardized tests, journals, AIG progress reports, and AIG identification assessments.
- AIG teachers have access to data reports in order to collaborate and plan with classroom teachers to encourage growth of all students.
- AIG teachers work collaboratively with classroom teachers to provide resources and materials to enrich and extend the implemented curriculum.
- The Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) at Pleasant Ridge uses the assessment data to formulate flexible grouping, small group math and strategy groups.

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

**District Response:**
AIG students often have social and emotional needs not understood by others. The AIG Department strives to ensure instructional practices support the social and emotional needs of gifted learners at all grade levels in the following ways:

**Elementary**
- Provide a lending library with resources for student check-out that address topics for the social and emotional challenges of gifted learners.
- Provide a lending library for parents with materials that highlight best practice, and characteristics of gifted students including twice exceptional, highly gifted, perfectionism and underachieving gifted students.
- Collaborate, as needed, with counseling department to meet the social and emotional needs of gifted learners.
- Implement curriculum units and student projects that encourage social and emotional self-awareness.
- Provide Summer Imaginarium Camp enrichment opportunities for elementary students.

**Middle/High**
- Provide Summer Imaginarium Camp enrichment opportunities for middle school.
- Provide SAT/ACT preparation summer camp for high school students.
- Provide AP summer opportunities, AP Summer Camp, AP writing camp, and Freshman
Academies.

- Collaborate with counseling department to meet the social/emotional needs of gifted learners.

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

District Response: Young students (K-3) may need nurturing to develop their gifted potential. The Gaston County Schools AIG Department addresses this need through consultative services, AIG identification, and/or then Gaston County Schools Composer Program. Student potential is cultivated and developed in the following ways:

- GCS identifies gifted students and provides direct AIG services in Kindergarten through 12th grade.

- Low socio-economic and culturally diverse populations who are not typically identified through standardized testing are served through our Composers Nurturing Program at select Title 1 schools. The Composer Program begins with second grade identification and continues with direct service through 5th grade.
- The AIG department provides resources for the classroom teachers to use with non-identified advanced K-3 students.

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

District Response:
AIG personnel collaborate with other professional personnel to provide AIG students appropriate differentiated instruction. By sharing knowledge and expertise, our gifted students receive challenging educational experiences. Personnel work together in the following ways:

- AIG teachers and classroom teachers discuss individual student needs and strengths to better provide differentiated curriculum and appropriate instruction to promote individual student growth.
- Communication among the Department of Exceptional Children, the Guidance Department, the ESL Department, classroom teachers and the AIG Department exists to provide appropriate instruction for twice-exceptional students.
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:
Ongoing communication exists between the AIG Department personnel and all school support staff and parents. Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) are utilized to indicate the services a gifted student will receive. Initial DEPs are signed when a student is first placed into the gifted program and once a year each subsequent year. If an AIG student is progressing satisfactorily, no changes in placement or service delivery are made. If it is determined changes need to be made, parents and teachers collaborate to make educational decisions that are in the best interest of the student and to ensure the student is challenged appropriately. Communication in reference to students needs and instructional services may include any or all of the following:

- Annual conferences with parents/families.
- Differentiated Education Plan (DEP).
- Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP).
- AIG progress reports.
- Newsletters.
- Parent letters for team and/or club information.
- Email correspondence regarding student needs and/or instructional services.
- The Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) teachers’ newsletters communicate curriculum focuses, upcoming events and research concerning gifted learners.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:
- Opportunities for professional development pertaining to advanced technology.
  Cluster group identified students together in the same classroom when possible.
- Provide training for parents and families to support the social and emotional needs of advanced learners.
- Work with the regular classroom teachers to support K-3 students with possible AIG potential by co-teaching, whole group instruction and small group instruction.

Sources of Evidence:
- Specific curricular units by grade levels, lessons and activities designed for gifted students.
- Student work samples.
- DEP’s/IDEP’s.
Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

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

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

District Response:
Gaston County Schools employs a full time AIG licensed educator (AIG Coordinator) to oversee the K-12 AIG program. This person works under the leadership of the AIG/EC Executive Director. Responsibilities include, but are not, limited to, the following:

- Providing guidance to AIG teachers through monthly meetings and frequent contacts by email or phone.
- Overseeing the development and implementation of accelerated curriculum for both the AIG and Composer Program.
- Overseeing the educational delivery of AIG program goals at each individual school.
● Working with the Gaston County Schools Accountability department to analyze and disseminate growth data for the AIG, Composer, and Advanced Placement (AP) Programs.
● Monitoring, overseeing, and evaluating the local AIG plan annually and making necessary revisions.
● Conducting surveys to elicit feedback from stakeholders.
● Overseeing the plan revision process every 3 years as required by DPI.
● Overseeing the collection and compilation of headcount data for the AIG and nurturing programs, forwarding the appropriate reports to DPI.
● Working with the AIG/EC Executive Director to oversee AIG budget, using state and local allocated funds according to state and local policies.
● Communicating with other Central Office personnel and with the administrators at all school sites to ensure consistent and equitable identification procedures and service delivery models in all grade levels.
● Working with all other departments within the school system to ensure consistency in aligning AIG goals with other county initiatives.
● Overseeing AP teacher training.
● Working collaboratively with high school honors and AP teachers to provide necessary support and materials.
● Assisting high school counselors with the AP exam process and offering countywide AP review sessions for students prior to exams.
● Coordinating the North Carolina Governor’s School application process.
● Organizing and supporting the following district wide competitions and programs: Math Masters, Math Elite, Elementary Battle of the Books, Poetry and Prose Celebration, and Coffeehouse 678.
● Providing current professional articles and books to engage AIG teachers/specialists in continued adult learning regarding high achieving students.
● Attending and actively participating in regional/area meetings, professional development opportunities, and other statewide initiatives to support gifted programs.

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

**District Response:** The Gaston County Schools AIG Coordinator along with the AIG/EC Executive Director work collaboratively with the AIG teachers. Together they merge all programs, strategies and resources to ensure the total child is challenged and enriched. The AIG teachers assigned to GCS schools are AIG-licensed educators whose duties include, but are not limited to the following:

● Overseeing the referral, testing, and placement process.
● Conducting parent meetings to discuss the results of student testing.
● Completing all paperwork as it relates to AIG student placement.
● Serving the AIG students in one or more of the following ways: pull-out services, inclusion, flexible groups, daily advanced reading and/or math instruction in middle and high school.
● Providing consultative services.
● Working collaboratively with the other AIG teachers and/or classroom teachers to plan, develop and implement accelerated curriculum.
● Utilizing research-based resources and materials to enrich and extend the NCSCOS.
● Providing the classroom teachers with resources/materials for differentiation.

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:
Gaston County Schools AIG Department recognizes that the total educational team must be involved in ongoing professional development. The AIG Coordinator and AIG/EC Executive Director establish specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services by:

● Providing opportunities to attend local, state, and national gifted conferences and workshops to promote rigorous and relevant instruction for the gifted learner.
● Scheduling and facilitating beginning of the year and monthly meetings to discuss and plan the implementation of program updates.
● Overseeing AIG Overview Meetings.
● Communicating with school administrators about benefits of various options of instructional delivery such as flexible grouping, inclusion and cluster grouping for specific academic areas.
● Providing monthly professional development for AIG teachers/specialists in Professional Learning Communities (PLC).
● Working with our Gaston County Schools Curriculum Reading and Math Facilitators to ensure all AIG teachers are up to date on all county-wide initiatives and to provide additional training as needed.
● Promoting growth of our gifted population by providing professional development and resources to classroom teachers to help them better understand gifted students, to assist them in the development of differentiated math and reading lessons, and to work with them to strategize ways to best meet the needs of gifted learners.
● Corresponding with classroom teachers, special education teachers and guidance counselors on an ongoing basis.
● Encouraging AIG teachers/specialists to model differentiated lessons for classroom teachers as an extension to the NCSCOS.
Practice D
Provides general education services by personnel who have earned an AIG add-on license or have met the LEA requirements for that position.

District Response:
Gaston County Schools AIG Department believes it is advantageous for all gifted students to be taught by regular classroom teachers who are either AIG licensed or have met local professional development requirements.

Elementary Schools
- AIG students' placement into regular education classrooms is an administrative site-based decision.
- All AIG teachers are required to have or be actively pursuing AIG certification.
- Regular education teachers with gifted learners in their classrooms are not required to hold AIG licensure or to pursue AIG professional development courses; however, regular education teachers are supported by the AIG teacher in the following ways:
  - Providing differentiated services.
  - Meeting to discuss and plan differentiated learning opportunities.
  - Providing resources and materials for acceleration.
  - Meeting jointly with parents and teachers to discuss learning alternatives and extra-curricular opportunities.
- The Gifted and Talented Academy at Pleasant Ridge (GTA) teachers are required to have or be actively pursuing AIG licensure.

Middle Schools
- All AIG teachers are required to have or be actively pursuing AIG licensure.
- Professional development, including face-to-face and asynchronous coursework opportunities, is offered to assist teachers wishing to obtain AIG licensure.
- AIG students are served daily in their area(s) of identification by AIG teachers.
- The Gifted and Talented Academy at Cramerton Middle (GTA) teachers are required to have or be actively pursuing AIG licensure.
- AIG Middle School specialists provide resources and materials and work collaboratively with the AIG middle school teachers to ensure the advanced language arts and advanced math curricula and extensions are taught.

High Schools
- All Advanced Placement teachers are strongly encouraged to attend a week-long summer institute in their respective discipline(s).
- All AP teachers must attend a one-day update every five years in their respective discipline(s).
- Many of the Advanced Placement teachers have AIG licensure; however, licensure is not required.
Practice E
Aligns professional development opportunities with local AIG program goals, other district initiatives, and best practices in gifted education.

District Response:
The AIG Coordinator and the AIG/EC Executive Director collaborate with other members of the Gaston County Schools Academic Services team to align professional development with local AIG program goals, other district initiatives, and best practices in gifted education. Professional learning opportunities include:

- Best Teaching Practices.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLC).
- Training and utilization of iPads, Chromebooks and apps, document cameras, Smartboards/LED displays, voicethread, digital cameras, laptops, multimedia presentations, video conferencing, cooperative learning groups.
- District-wide differentiated professional development focusing on reading and math standards at the annual summer Teaching Learning Conference.
- Ongoing collaboration between AIG support personnel and the math and ELA curriculum facilitators to align differentiated units of study with the NCSCOS and the county pacing guides.
- County pacing guides include extension activities for classroom teachers to use to differentiate each unit of study in math and reading/ELA.
- Advance the NCSCOS using curriculum compacting, problem-based learning, learning contracts, reading extensions, independent studies, etc.
- Plan activities that support and encourage character development and the prevention of bullying.

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

District Response:
AIG teachers benefit from collaboration with one another as well as with classroom teachers. Opportunities to meet together on a consistent basis strengthen and refine the gifted program. The AIG/EC Executive Director and the AIG Coordinator provide these opportunities in the following ways:

- Facilitating regularly scheduled planning meetings.
● Developing, sharing, and implementing differentiated AIG/Composer curriculum.
● Sharing materials, resources, ideas and/or accelerated lessons through courier, Google Drive, email and/or personal contacts.
● Attending NCAGT and other workshops/conferences on both county and state levels.
● Purchasing resources/materials to ensure implementation of new strategies.
● Providing curriculum planning days throughout the year to ensure continued alignment of the AIG curriculum with the county pacing and unit guides.
● Creating and continually updating the AIG Google Classroom to provide professional development for elementary classroom teachers and other school personnel.
● Creating an AIG Google Site to provide teaching resources and extensions for AIG middle school classroom teachers.
● Utilizing Train the Trainer Models.
● Offering Paideia training to teachers at the two Gifted and Talented Academies.
● Supporting monthly meetings of the AIG lead teacher and the staff of the Gifted and Talented Academies to align program standards.
● Providing opportunities for a select group of AIG teachers from the Gifted and Talented Academies to annually attend Confratute at the University of Connecticut for professional development regarding best teaching practices for gifted learners and the implementation of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM).

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**
● Encourage AP teachers to participate in AIG professional development.
● Encourage the regular classroom teachers to seek AIG licensure and/or to attend AIG professional development.
● Extend professional development opportunities through the AIG Google Classroom for various stakeholders including classroom teachers, school counselors, special education teachers, ESL personnel, and administrators.
● Survey certified staff and principals to determine areas/topics of interest for AIG/gifted learners in-service training opportunities.

**Sources of Evidence:**
● Gaston County Schools’ AIG Coordinator’s Job Description.
● AIG teachers’ qualifications/certifications.
● AIG Teachers’ school assignments and daily schedules.
● Professional development needs assessment.
● Schedules, agendas and attendance rosters of Professional Learning opportunities.
● Documented meeting notes and agendas.
● Examples of resources produced through collaboration.
● Google Classrooms.
● Google Sites.

Standard 5: Partnerships

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

Practice A

Develops partnerships with parents/families that are intentional and meaningful to support the following needs of AIG students:
● Academic and Intellectual
District Response:
The AIG/EC Executive Director, AIG Coordinator and the AIG teachers/specialists are committed to establishing strong partnerships with stakeholders to foster support of our gifted students. Partnerships are utilized to provide support in all areas in the following ways:

- Parent conferences for initial placement and annual reviews.
- Phone and/or e-mail contacts with parents and families.
- Gaston County AIG web page to provide information on the components of the gifted program as well as showcase student enrichment opportunities and highlight student accomplishments.
- Gifted Education Program Informational Brochure to provide parents written, accurate information about the AIG program options. Copies available to interested parents at each school site and at the Gaston County Schools Central Office building.
- Quarterly Newsletters and semester report cards detailing the curriculum and standards taught.
- Parent and student surveys conducted annually to identify areas of strength and need in the AIG program design and implementation procedures.
- Parent Advisory Board meeting at least semi-annually to address issues as they relate to gifted education. Board will review the AIG plan and make recommendations for program improvement.

The group may be comprised of the following:
- AIG/EC Executive Director
- AIG Coordinator
- AIG teachers from both elementary and middle schools
- Advanced placement and honors teachers from high schools
- School principals/assistant principals
- Central Office representatives
- School Board representative
- Representatives from Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)
- Community members

- Connect-Ed (Gaston County Schools phone messaging system).
- Distribution of information from Community support groups (Gifted, ADHD, ODD, OCD, Depression, Perfectionism, etc).
- Channel 21 (GCS news channel).
- Collaboration with GCS Communication Department.
- Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Children resource library available for parents and students.

The AIG department implements initiatives for student benefit and intentionally attempts to involve parents, families, and the community in supporting gifted education through activities such as:

- Teacher and/or student-led conferences.
- Battle of the Books.
- Math Masters.
- Poetry and Prose Celebration.
● Math Elite.
● Coffeehouse 678.
● Parent/Community curriculum events (providing Social and Emotional resources).
● Annual Math Fair at the Gifted and Talented Academy (GTA) for students and parents.
● Schoolwide Enrichment Showcase (SEM) at the Gifted and Talented Academy twice yearly, allowing students the opportunity to showcase and share products and/or performances created during their Enrichment Clusters with parents and the community at large.

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:
Gaston County Schools AIG teachers/specialists communicate with stakeholders both formally and informally to share information regarding the AIG program and to review policies as related to gifted education. We encourage parents to be active participants in their child’s educational pursuits, and we welcome their input.

The AIG Department shares information about program services, local plan components, and gifted education policies with all stakeholders through:

● Specific information that directly relates to the AIG program and placement procedures.
● Annual parent conferences.
● Rights and services provided.
● Service delivery models and amount of service time.
● AIG Parent Advisory Board.
● Gaston County Schools Board of Education.
● Gaston County Schools Website.

The AIG Department communicates to stakeholders in following ways:

● AIG teacher newsletters.
● Annual parent and student surveys.
● Parent conferences.
● AIG Parent Advisory Board.

● AIG Brochure.
● Channel 21 (GCS news channel).
● Class Dojo.
● Google Classroom.
● Email.
● The Gifted and Talented (GTA) weekly/biweekly classroom newsletters sharing curriculum updates and research for gifted learners.

**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:**
In order to effectively involve our stakeholders in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG program and plan, Gaston County Schools AIG Department will continue to:

- Conduct surveys of all stakeholders.
- Share survey results with all stakeholders.
- Promote diversity among members of the AIG Parent Advisory Board.
- Establish a leadership group that provides feedback about the GCS AIG Program.
- Plan ways to promote the gifted program and to seek more parental involvement to allow parents opportunities to make suggestions for improvement and assist in determining ways to address issues.

The AIG Parent Advisory Board meets twice a year to address issues as they relate to gifted education. It reviews the AIG plan and make recommendations for program improvement.

The group is comprised of the following:
- AIG/EC Executive Director
- AIG Coordinator
- Elementary and middle school AIG teachers/specialists
- High school advanced placement and honors teachers
- School principals/assistant principals
- Central Office representatives
- Parents from all three academic levels
- Representatives from Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)
- Community members

Parent Advisory Group Sources of Evidence:
• Invitations and membership rosters for various AIG related committees.
• Documentation of suggestions and decisions made by various committees.
• Evidence of a diverse representation of stakeholders, including members of the community.
• Documentation of agendas and meeting notes.
• Survey results.

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 personnel strive to inform parents of educational opportunities that will expand the horizons of gifted students. We are mindful of our diverse population and make every effort to notify parents in their native language. We work collaboratively with the Gaston County Schools English as a Second Language (ESL) Department to ensure non-English speaking parents and students are informed of available educational opportunities. The AIG Department works to inform all parents/families and the community of available opportunities for AIG students through:

• Newsletters about local events.
• Communication about events at Schiele Museum of Natural History Programs.
• Summer camps.
• Duke University TIPS program.
• Programs from private and government agencies.
• District initiatives such as Battle of the Books, Math Masters, Math Elite, Poetry and Prose Celebration, Quiz Bowl, Moot Court, Debate Teams, Chess Clubs, Biztown, Coffeehouse 678.
• Gaston County School’s Science Fair.
• Robotics Competition.
• Governor’s School.
• North Carolina School of Science and Math.
• Summer Ventures.
• North Carolina Girls' and Boys' State.
• Gaston County Commissioners’ School of Excellence.

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

**District Response:**

Much expertise abounds within our institutions of higher learning, local businesses and industry, and other community stakeholders. Encouraging partnerships with these groups provide opportunities for the AIG Department to utilize the knowledge they possess and to seek their academic support. Working together as a unified group helps us to foster the development of marketable skills and to provide alternative ways to enhance the educational pursuits of our gifted learners.

Partnerships are formed within the community to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services. Some of the agencies and/or groups we envision continuing our partnership with include:

- Junior Achievement’s Biztown.
- AIG Advisory Board.
- Faith community (AIG Elementary and Middle School Competitions are held at a local church).
- Channel 21 (Gaston County’s Educational Television Channel).
- Gaston Gazette.
- Local industries and businesses.
- Schiele Museum of Natural History.
- UNCC Dr. Gilson - Local consultant for Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM).
- National Paideia Center in Asheville (Gifted and Talented Academies at Cramerton Middle and Pleasant Ridge Elementary).
- UCONN-Confratute - Teams from each of the magnet schools attend week-long differentiation training as prescribed in the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM).
Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:
● Encourage participation in AIG Parent Advisory Board.
● Encourage parent attendance at county-wide competitions and initiatives.
● Publicize existing partnerships and establish new ones.
● Work with Gaston County Schools Business Partnerships Director to establish new partnerships with area businesses.

Sources of Evidence:
● Gaston County Schools website.
● AIG Website.
● AIG Informational brochure/newsletters.
● Gaston County Schools phone messaging system.
● Email to parents.
● Documentation of parental meetings.
● Translated documents.
● Survey results.
● AIG parent advisory meetings’ agendas and minutes.
● Documentation of parent workshops/meetings and school-related activities.
● Documentation of community partnerships.
● Documentation of presentations by community experts.
● Award and recognition presentations at county-wide competitions/initiatives.
● Copies of faculty meetings' notes and presentations.
● Invitations and membership rosters for various AIG-related committees.
● Documentation of suggestions and decisions made by various committees.
● Evidence of a diverse representation of stakeholders, including members of our community at large.
● Documentation of agendas and meeting notes.
● Established partnerships.
● Family involvement programs.
● Grant applications.
● Channel 21 (GCS news channel).
Standard 6: Program Accountability

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

Practice A
Develops a written AIG plan to describe the local AIG program, in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy (N.C.G.S. 115C-150.5-.8 {Article 9B}), which has been approved by the local board of education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

District Response:
Gaston County Schools develops and maintains a three year comprehensive AIG plan that supports and assures the incorporation of programs and services that are legislated by the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction. The plan is reviewed and evaluated annually and any changes that are deemed necessary are made at the time of review. However, every three years, as mandated by the state, our plan is revised by a committee of stakeholders. At this time, each component of the plan is discussed and necessary revisions are made to ensure the continuation of programs and services which address the unique academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners. When changes are made, the AIG/EC Executive Director and the AIG Coordinator submit the changes to the local board of education for final approval. The revisions are then forwarded to the Department of Public Instruction.

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:
Gaston County Schools is committed to ensuring conformity in the implementation of our AIG plan. The identification processes and service delivery models are consistent across the county. The AIG teachers meet frequently to plan, develop and strategize ways to maximize the teaching/learning opportunities for identified students. As referred to in other parts of this plan, a number of researched-based programs, resources and units of study are utilized consistently in each school at each grade level.
Also, the same identification process is utilized across the county. K-12 teachers responsible for the referral, testing, and placement processes are properly trained to ensure consistency in the service delivery models offered county-wide to our students.

All procedures are shared with regular classroom teachers, administrators, parents, and all other stakeholders on a yearly basis. This information is also posted on the AIG website.

The AIG/EC Executive Director serves as a member of the district level instructional team allowing for direct sharing of program information and monitoring of program implementation.

**Practice C**

Develops and monitors a budget using allotted state funds, and local funds if applicable, to address the needs of the local AIG plan in accordance with state policy.

**District Response:**

Gaston County Schools AIG/EC Executive Director oversees the expenditures of the state funds and works collaboratively with the county’s finance department to ensure that all allocated funds are appropriately dispersed. The state funds allocated for the local AIG program are used in the following ways:

- AIG licensed teachers' salaries and benefits.
- Curriculum resources and materials.
- Curriculum development.
- AIG/Advanced Placement teacher training.
- Advanced Placement course resources.
- Digital Learning Tools.
- Workshop expenses.
- Field Trips (as related to gifted education).
- AIG sponsored county-wide competitions and initiatives.
- Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) Training for Gifted and Talented Academies (GTA).
- Paideia Training for Gifted and Talented Academies (GTA).
- Gifted and Talented (GTA) expenses.

**Practice D**

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

**District Response:**
On a yearly basis, Gaston County Schools maintains, analyzes, and shares student performance growth data (in grades 3-8) with all stakeholders including the local school board, central office personnel, school administrators, teachers and parents. We assess yearly growth as well as growth over time in both elementary and middle schools. AIG teachers and regular classroom teachers use this data to plan and implement appropriate educational opportunities for gifted learners. The growth data we analyze and share includes:

- End of Grade tests- reading results.
- End of Grade tests - math results.
- End of Grade tests - science results.
- NC Check-Ins (benchmark scores).
- i-Ready and mClass scores and data.
- Portfolios of student work.
- Quarterly classroom performance data (report cards).
- Progress reports completed by the AIG teacher.
- Rubrics as they relate to student projects.
- Informal/Formal assessments.
- Teacher-led conferences with students, identifying areas of strength and weakness.

The data we use to determine growth consists of ongoing assessments and periodic formal assessments at the end of units of study.

In high school, we evaluate the growth of students taking Honors and AP Courses. With the inclusion of AIG as a subgroup, we are now able to disaggregate the data based on AIG identification.

Each year, during the headcount process, we become aware of the number of students who have dropped out during that school year. High school counselors work with both students and parents and are often able to intervene and suggest alternatives when students seek to withdraw from school.

**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:
Gaston County Schools AIG Department has worked diligently to be more inclusive of underrepresented populations. The Composer Program, our nurturing program in select Title 1 schools, has given us an opportunity to identify students who demonstrate gifted potential. Many of these students eventually meet the criteria for placement in the gifted program. As a result our percentage of identified minority and low-socioeconomic students and twice-exceptional students is on the rise. Partnering with the elementary math and reading curriculum facilitators we are now able to monitor the information and procedures for this data.

Annually we support and encourage the representation and retention of underrepresented populations in our local AIG program in the following ways:

● Implementing our Composer Program, a nurturing program in Grades 2-5, for minority and low socioeconomic students who demonstrate gifted tendency.
● Working with the ESL Department of our local school system to identify English Language Learners who are very strong mathematically.
● Working with special education teachers to identify students who have dual exceptionalities and offering accommodations to ensure them successful learning experiences.
● Utilizing alternative assessments and nonverbal tests to assist in the identification of students.
● Offer accelerated services such as grade and/or content acceleration, early college, AP coursework, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, etc. for our highly gifted students.
● Encouraging students to participate in extracurricular opportunities that support academic excellence such as High Q, Moot Court, Robotics, Chess Club, Governor’s School, Commissioners’ School of Excellence, Battle of the Books, Math Masters, Math Elite, Poetry and Prose, Coffeehouse 678, etc.

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

District Response:
All AIG teachers who currently serve students in grades K-5 must have AIG licensure. Teachers serving students in grades 6-8 either have AIG licensure, are taking the AIG Praxis or are actively pursuing licensure from an accredited university. Teachers work with the AIG Department and the Human Resources Department in regards to AIG licensure and other Professional Development requirements.

Teachers in grades 9-12 who are teaching AP classes have already attended or will be attending College Board Summer Institutes for their respective disciplines. At least once every five years,
AP teachers are required to attend a College Board sponsored one-day update training session. The AP teachers also are encouraged to network with other AP teachers from across the county who teach the same AP courses.

**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:**
Annually students, parents, teachers, and administrators are given an opportunity to complete a survey to share positive aspects and well as points for growth. When the plan is revised every three years, an extensive online survey is completed by all stakeholder groups. The results of this survey are used to evaluate and revise the plan and are shared with all stakeholders yearly. We make this information available to our stakeholders through:

- Scheduled parent meetings.
- Faculty meetings.
- Principal/Assistant Principal meetings.
- AIG website/webpage.

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

**District Response:**
Gaston County Schools AIG Department uses multiple sources of data to assist with program and plan reviews and revisions including:

- Student, parent, teacher and administrator survey results.
- Parent Advisory Board’s feedback.
- End-of-Grade/End-of-Course/Advance Placement test results.
- Students’ classroom performance.
- Gaston County’s vision for academic success.
Practice I
Disseminates all data from evaluation of the local AIG program to the public.

District Response:
Gaston County Schools AIG Department recognizes the need to disseminate program evaluation data to stakeholders. Since this data is used to evaluate and revise the local plan and programs, we believe it is imperative to make this data readily accessible to stakeholders. Ways to accomplish this task include sharing data with the following groups:

- Staff members at individual school sites.
- AIG Parent Advisory Board.
- Instructional Committee of the Gaston County Board of Education.
- Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council.
- Principals and Assistant Principals.
- AIG students on all three academic levels.

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:
Gaston County Schools AIG Department protects the rights of AIG students by requiring parental consent for student identification and placement, providing parents a copy of Gaston County Schools Procedures to Resolve Disagreements, housing AIG student folders and personal information in locked file cabinets and securing all student information that is transmitted electronically.

Gaston County Schools Gifted Education Program goals, objectives and service delivery options are clearly communicated to parents.

Parents who have questions or concerns should first talk with the regular education teacher, the Academically Gifted teacher and/or the school principal. In the event the parents/guardians disagree with a decision, it is hoped that the concerns may be resolved at the local level.

If the parents/guardians disagree with a decision, Gaston County Schools AIG Program has leveled procedures for resolving disagreements. This begins with a school level meeting with the AIG team, and progresses to an administrative review at the system level, including the AIG/EC Director.
If disagreement is not resolved, the grievance can be taken to the local school board for review, mediation, and/or Administrative Law Hearing.

The following procedures should be followed to resolve any disagreements:

- **Level 1 – School Site Review**
  If parents have a disagreement concerning search and nomination, identification or services, they may request in writing a meeting with the principal to discuss their concerns. The principal may convene the school’s AIG Team to review referral and placement records and the student’s current performance.

- **Level 2 – Administrative Review**
  If the disagreement is not resolved at the school site, the parents may request an administrative review at the system level. This request should be made in writing within 10 days of the school site decision and sent to the Director of the AIG Program, the Deputy Superintendent of Instruction or the Superintendent.

- **Level 3 – School Board Review**
  If agreement cannot be reached administratively, the parents may appeal to the Gaston County Board of Education. The Board will offer a written decision to parents within thirty days.

- **Level 4 – Mediation**
  Parents, administrators or the Board of Education may request mediation by an impartial facilitator.

- **Level 5 – Administrative Law Hearing**
  If mediation fails to resolve the disagreement satisfactorily, the parents may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the North Carolina General Statutes. According to the law, “The scope of the hearing shall be limited to: (i) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted student, or (ii) whether the local plan developed under G.S. 115C-150.7 has been implemented appropriately with regard to the child.” Following the hearing, the administrative law judge will make a decision based on the findings of facts and conclusion of the law. The decision of the administrative law judge is final, is binding on all parties and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. Legal fees are the responsibility of the parents.

The following forms, processes, and policies are used to safeguard students’ rights:

**AIG Forms**
- **AIG 1 - Student Referral Forms** - These forms record student data and indicate whether or not the student meets the criteria for placement.
- **AIG 3 - Consent for Evaluation Form** - The parent signs this form giving the AIG teacher permission to administer testing to determine AIG placement.
- **AIG 4 - Differentiated Education Plan (DEP)** - The parent signs this form giving permission for his/her child to receive AIG services.
- **AIG 5 - Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP)** - This form is used if a student has special concerns that must be addressed individually. This form is often used if a student has dual exceptionalities or special needs for modifications to occur.
- **AIG 6** - Invitation to Conference Form - This form invites parents to come for a conference to sign initial paperwork or to attend an annual DEP review.
- **AIG 8** - Student Exit Form - Parents must sign this form if they wish to exit their child from the AIG program.
- **AIG 9** - AIG Team Review Minutes Form - This form records the placement decision for all students who have been referred for AIG placement.
- **AIG 10** - K-2 Screening Profile - This form is used by regular classroom teachers to refer K-2 students who have been referred for AIG placement.
- **AIG 11** - Transfer or Exit Form - This form is used when a student transfers to another school within Gaston County or when a student exits the program because he/she has moved out of Gaston County Schools.
- **Procedures to Resolve Disagreement** Form - This form is used to inform parents of the process to address concerns about AIG nomination, identification, and service delivery.

Written policies and procedures are also in place for students who transfer from school to school within the county, from other LEAs within the state, or from other states.

For transfers from schools outside our system:

**Elementary Students**
- Students are placed in appropriate grade-level classrooms.
- If a student transfers during the school year, school personnel notify the AIG teacher assigned to that school and appropriate placement is determined after reviewing the student’s most current testing data and classroom performance.
- Additional testing is warranted.
- AIG Team takes appropriate action.

**Middle School Students**
- Summer testing is offered if student records show a need for AIG identification.
- If a student transfers during the school year, school personnel notify the AIG Department and the appropriate placement is determined after reviewing the student’s most current testing data and classroom performance.
- Additional testing is administered if warranted.
- AIG Coordinator notifies the student’s school to ensure appropriate class placement.

**High School Students**
- Students self-select classes using criteria for honors and advanced placement course offerings.
- High school ensures the student is scheduled into the appropriate classes.

Transfers from schools within the system:
Elementary Students
● AIG teachers use the AIG 11 to notify the AIG Coordinator and AIG Admin as well as the receiving school. Change is made to the local AIG headcount.
● AIG folder is hand-delivered to the receiving school.

Middle School Students
● AIG Contact person and/or counselor use the AIG 11 to notify the AIG Coordinator and AIG Admin as well as the receiving school. Change is made to the local AIG headcount.
● AIG folder is hand-delivered to the receiving school.

High School Students
● AIG Contact person and/or counselor use the AIG 11 to notify the AIG Coordinator and AIG Admin as well as the receiving school. Change is made to the local AIG headcount.
● AIG folder is hand-delivered to the receiving school.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:
● Continue to utilize AIG Professional Learning Communities (PLC), staff input and surveys to monitor the successes and challenges of the AIG program. Based on the challenges and successes noted, adjustments should be made to the AIG program as necessary.
● Work with the GCS Accountability Department as well as GCS Curriculum Facilitators to monitor growth of AIG students K-12.
● Offer additional Professional Development through a Google classroom for AIG licensure course classes.

Sources of Evidence:
● AIG Plan.
● Annual AIG Review.
● Service delivery options at each school site.
● Documentation of consistent county-wide identification procedures and curriculum offerings.
● Disaggregation of EOG and EOC results.
● Survey results.
● Data regarding referral and identification of subgroups.
● Data on Composer Program students who meet criteria for AIG placement.
● Enrollment data for upper level courses.
● Presentations of stakeholders’ meetings or professional learning opportunities.
● Documentation of teachers’ AIG licensure.
● Documentation of AP training.
● Records of professional learning opportunities.
● Use of PRC 034 funds.
● AIG students’ class placement.
● Agendas and minutes of AIG Parent Advisory Committee Board.
● Invitations and other communications to committee members.
● Documentation of presentations to other stakeholders, stakeholders’ survey results, interviews, focus groups with related stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators, etc.).
● Documentation of suggestions/recommendations/concerns shared by parents during yearly annual reviews.
● Review of growth data for all AIG identified students.
● Review comments by DPI.
● Revisions submitted to the local board of education and DPI.
● Information posted on Gaston County Schools website shares data with local board of education.
● Communication with parents and other stakeholders through newsletters, e-mails, etc.
● Copy of Gaston County Schools Procedures to Resolve Disagreements.
● Documentation of complaints and subsequent responses and changes.
● Interviews with parents/guardians and school personnel where disagreements have occurred.
Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):