

Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Buncombe County Schools (110) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

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This Local AIG Plan has been developed based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021, and 2024). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide Public School Units (PSUs) to develop, implement, and monitor thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs. The NC AIG Program Standards encompass six principle standards with accompanying practices. These standards articulate the expectations for quality, comprehensive, and effective local AIG programs and related to NC's AIG legislation, Article 9B (N. C. G. S. 115C150.5).

These best practices help to clarify the standard, describe what a PSU should have in place, and guide PSUs to improve their programs. In an effort to continue to transform AIG programs and align to the NC AIG Program Standards, each PSU has participated in a self-assessment process of their local AIG program, involving multiple stakeholders. The data gathered during this process has guided PSUs in their development of this Local AIG Plan for 2025-2028. This Local AIG Plan has been approved by the LEA's local Board of Education or charter school's board of directors and sent to NC DPI for review and comment.

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

* Mission and/or Vision Statement(s)

AIG programming in Buncombe County Schools provides advanced learners with engaging learning experiences that deepen their passion for learning, problem solving and critical thinking skills while supporting intellectual, emotional, and social success.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2025)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* \$ 1,341,765.00	* \$ 174,244.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 0.00

Standard 1: Student Identification

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

* Practice A

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

The Buncombe County Schools screening, referral and identification of gifted students is a comprehensive process developed and revisited over many years through collaboration between all stakeholders. The AIG Parent Advisory Committee, AIG Administrative Advisory Team, district leadership, AIG Specialists, district classroom teachers, and students have all been a part of this process.

There are two initial phases that may lead to the identification of any student in BCS:

1. Mass Screening* or
2. Nomination.

Either of these phases may initiate the AIG Evaluation Process.

*Screening is the annual process of reviewing existing, generally available, or specifically designated data for all students to determine whether students should be referred for identification for gifted services.

*Screening guidelines are not equivalent to identification requirements.

1. Mass Screening

Buncombe County School AIG Specialists conduct an annual formal mass screening in grades 3 - 8 to establish a broad pool of students who may need differentiated services. A comprehensive screening of standardized test scores of the general student population is conducted annually in the Fall Semester. In addition to formal assessments, classroom teachers and/or AIG Specialists collect documentation on students demonstrating outstanding academic ability or potential. This documentation provides evidence of strengths and talents outside quantitative assessment.

The following guidelines are used in the mass screening:

- 85%ile or above on the CogAT Screening Form (administered to all students in the 2nd semester of their 3rd grade year)
- 85%ile or above in Reading and/or Math achievement on the NC EOG or locally normed test
- Exceptional growth and/or proficiency on MAP testing
- Comprehensive data indicating advanced performance based on Local Learning Environments
- Checklist of behaviors for students who speak English as their second language
- Accelerated proficiency on ACCESS testing
- Teacher observations

Talent Development, our nurturing program for 3rd graders who show a need for differentiation, contributes to this pool of candidates for placement as the 4th grade year begins. Talent Development programming provides opportunities for students to showcase strengths and talents through critical thinking, logic and real-world problem based activities. AIG Specialists collect and review data from standardized tests, classroom performance, nominations (from teachers,

parents, and students), and observations of student behaviors. Collaboration with classroom teachers, ML teachers, EC teachers, and other personnel is essential to this initial search, as students manifest strengths and talents in a variety of ways. It is essential to consider the potential of every student while also considering their local learning environments.

2. Nomination for Gifted Services

Nominations may be received from AIG Specialists, teachers, parents, and self-nominating students at all grade levels. Nomination forms are available in multiple languages and are downloadable from AIG Specialist websites and our district AIG website. Nominations must be submitted to the AIG Specialist assigned to an individual school to begin the evaluation process. AIG Specialists also screen students who have been previously evaluated and were not identified, but placed on a “watch list” for future consideration. This “watch list” travels with AIG student folders as students move to their next school within their district.

Data and documentation to support nomination may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copy of student's current academic grades or classroom assessments
- Scores from current achievement tests (current within one year)
- Scores from IQ/aptitude tests (current within 18 months)
- ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) scores from ML testing
- 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)
- A formal letter of recommendation from a classroom teacher supporting a child's unique needs for differentiation
- Comprehensive Student Profile (Student work samples demonstrating outstanding projects, unique ways of doing assignments, outstanding academic achievement, etc.)

- MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) screener test scores
- Watch List - students who have been previously tested but were not placed for formal identification

PROCEDURE FOR AIG EVALUATION

The Procedure for AIG Evaluation consists of four required components:

I. Mass Screening or Nomination for Gifted Services (as outlined above)

Mass screening takes place from the last quarter of 3rd grade through 8th grade, with attention given to students with extreme need for services in other grade levels (K-3, 9-12). Extreme need can be determined through data collection and interpretation (Data Digs) in those grade levels.

II. Student Eligibility Documentation and Academic Assessment

Before student data may be evaluated, parents are notified and required to provide permission to evaluate via standardized form Notice of Nomination/Permission to Evaluate. This form is available in multiple languages.

Once written permission is received, the referral timeline of 50 in-person student days starts, and the AIG Specialist begins documenting student strengths and patterns of progress on the Student AIG Eligibility Form. The AIG Specialist schedules and conducts testing, observations, and evaluations as necessary to document the student need for differentiated services. Observations, evaluations and the teacher nomination form provide multiple pathways for students to show their strengths and talents. All information and documentation of student ability and various strengths is gathered to present to the school-based identification team and then if needed, the district-wide placement team. See the attached Multiple Measures of Aptitude, Achievement, and Potential for assessment options in Buncombe County Schools.

III. School Based Identification Team (SBT) Evaluation and/or District Based Team (DBT) Evaluation

Once the AIG Specialist has collected necessary data and evidence of student needs, he/she convenes the school-based team to review collected data for student evaluation for identification. The SBT evaluates student evidence and patterns of progress in light of the BCS identification criteria and makes the determination relating to placement via the Team Identification Decision form. The responsibility of the SBT is to ensure consistency in determining the degree to which a student demonstrates a need for differentiated services within the gifted program. Each school in the LEA has a school-based SBT to govern the services and opportunities available to students at each school. The school-based team has the knowledge of local learning environments and may take those into consideration when making a decision on placement. Should the SBT at the school level be unable to make a clear determination about the degree to which a student demonstrates a need for additional differentiation, the decision will move to the DBT team (see below).

School Based Identification Teams and District Based Identification Teams

Elementary and Intermediate School - School Based Identification Team:

The SBT consists of a school administrator or designee, the AIG Specialist, and at least two classroom teachers representative of the school population who are licensed or have achieved local credentials in gifted education. School counselors, ML teachers and instructional coaches are invited to participate as appropriate.

Middle School - School Based Identification Team:

The SBT consists of a school administrator or designee, the AIG Specialist, and two classroom teachers who are licensed or have achieved local credentials in gifted education. SBT membership should also cross subject representation and grade levels in order to best represent the school community as a whole. School counselors, ML teachers and instructional coaches are invited to participate as appropriate.

High School - School Based Identification Team:

At the high school level, the SBT meets on an as-needed basis. This team consists of a school administrator, the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist or district middle school specialist, and a counselor. In the event a nomination for services in high school is made, the SBT will assemble for evaluation. Other school personnel are invited to participate as appropriate.

District Based Identification Team

Should the SBT at the school level be unable to make a clear determination about the degree to which a student demonstrates a need for additional differentiation, the SBT may refer the case to the District Based Team (DBT). The DBT is a district-level committee of AIG Specialists from across our LEA who review students for identification when the school level SBT refers students for further consideration as they show a possible need for some level of service.

The DBT is led by an experienced team member who documents and tracks all records of committee decisions. The committee composition reflects representation from AIG Specialists assigned to elementary, intermediate, and middle schools in various districts within Buncombe County Schools. Monthly meetings are scheduled to review students who are referred to the DBT by their SBT. The DBT ensures that placement decisions are consistent and fair throughout the LEA and provides the opportunity for students' qualitative and quantitative evidence to be considered. Since no one criterion should exclude a child from AIG identification, an AIG Specialist must submit additional documentation to the DBT to provide clarity for placement decisions. The DBT will either ask for more documentation or make an identification decision based on the qualitative and quantitative information provided. This documentation allows the student's strengths, talents and local learning environment to be considered.

Additional documentation submitted to the DBT must include:

- Comprehensive Student Profile (work samples and artifacts demonstrating excellence in reading, writing, math, or intellectual ability) kept during the 3rd grade year of Talent Development (for 4th grade students)
- Consideration of Local Learning Environment; Checklist that includes, but is not limited to:
 - Are the student's scores in the top 10% of their grade-level peers in the school attended?
 - Has the student had a beginning teacher for the past 1-3 years?
 - Is the student attending a low-performing school?
 - Has the student been exposed to above grade-level work through differentiation?

- 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

Additional documentation submitted to DBT may also include:

- Any previous evaluations for AIG that did not result in gifted identification (watch list)
- MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) screener test scores
- Anecdotal records of performance in any school setting
- Letter of recommendation from other source indicating high performance demonstrating talent (i.e. piano teacher, Scout leader, club leader)

IV. Parent Notification

After a determination about student identification is made either by SBT (school-level) or DBT (district level), the AIG Specialist communicates the committee's decision in writing to the parents of the nominated student.

If gifted identification is recommended:

The AIG Specialist hosts a parent conference where a Differentiated Education Plan or an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan is developed based upon the evidence of student need and SBT/DBT recommendations. During this conference, the AIG specialist shares the student evaluation, gifted programming opportunities and the student's differentiated plan is created. Parents must sign the SBT Team Decision Form and give permission for the differentiated education plan as outlined in the DEP or I-DEP before students may be identified as members of the gifted program in PowerSchool and on local AIG tracking lists.

Students who are identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG) must receive an I-DEP since their needs vary greatly based on achievement data and qualitative information. Any I-DEP must be copied and submitted to the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist to allow for district monitoring.

Classroom teachers, data managers, and other appropriate school personnel are notified of the identification decision within a timely manner.

If gifted identification is not recommended:

The AIG Specialist reviews the LEA's identification standards and the student evidence of need via the SBT Decision for Non-Identification form that is sent home to parents. AIG Specialists are available to discuss placement evidence and decisions as requested by parents. The student nomination database and prior evaluation materials are maintained and shared between schools so appropriate monitoring of advanced learners is achieved. Monitoring students after non-placement is essential, as students are continuing to grow in their abilities and talents.

Should a family want to appeal the decision, the first step is to contact the AIG Specialist at the school to schedule a meeting for a full explanation of the evaluation process.

Timeline for Gifted Evaluations

The evaluation procedure shall be completed within **50 in-person student days** of the AIG Specialist receiving parental permission to evaluate a student.

Mass screening occurs in 3rd grade; however, data collected is taken into consideration for formal identification in 4th grade. AIG Specialists screen throughout the 3rd grade school year, gathering data and anecdotal information to assist in identification within the first weeks of 4th grade. Every effort is made to identify students who show a clear and present need for AIG services within the first two full weeks of 4th grade.

The evaluation window for all BCS students is generally within 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 or End-of-Course testing begins to assure that evaluations

are appropriately diagnostic while causing minimal interruption to a student's additional assessment responsibilities. If a nomination is received in the last 6 weeks of school, evaluation will take place at the beginning of the following school year. Primary grade students and high school students may be nominated throughout the year if there is an extreme need for differentiation and/or a case for grade acceleration.

*** Practice B**

Establishes a process and criteria for AIG student identification at all grade levels, K-12, that provides multiple opportunities to reveal a student's aptitude, achievement, or potential to achieve. The criteria may include both qualitative and quantitative data in order to develop a comprehensive learner profile.

Buncombe County Schools utilizes multiple qualitative and quantitative criteria for AIG student identification in grades K-12 to ensure that student strengths remain the focus. Once information is gathered, two levels of review are available: a school-based School Based Identification Team (SBT) and a county-wide District Based Identification Team (DBT) as referred by the SBT.

See the attached Identification Areas for Advanced Learners document for a graphic representation of the varied Buncombe County Schools Identification areas.

IDENTIFICATION GRADES K-3

Primary students may be identified as gifted in grades K-3 in Buncombe County if there is a body of evidence that indicates an extreme need. The primary student should demonstrate a need for differentiation that surpasses services provided in Problem Solvers or Talent Development before being considered for identification.

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

- Demonstrated extreme need for differentiation as documented through Problem Solver nurturing program activities and regular classroom performance
- Performance in the regular classroom at least 2 grade levels above peers (as determined by classroom assessments)

- 97%ile or above on a nationally normed IQ/aptitude test administered by a licensed psychologist via family-provided private testing or previous school testing
- 98%ile or above in achievement for reading and/or math on a nationally normed test administered by a licensed psychologist via family-provided private testing or previous school testing
- Work samples demonstrating mastery in reading and math
- Teacher recommendation

If the school-based SBT determines that the student does demonstrate an extreme need for differentiation, the student will be identified as AIG (Academically/Intellectually Gifted). An Individualized Differentiation Plan (I-DEP) will be developed by the student's AIG Specialist, classroom teacher(s), and parents to match student needs. Any I-DEP must be copied and submitted to the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist for district monitoring. The I-DEP will be transitioned to a DEP once the student reaches 4th grade.

If the K-3 student does not meet all the above criteria, but demonstrates some need for service, the SBT may refer the student to the Buncombe County Schools DBT for further review or may delay placement until further information is gathered to show the need for identification. The student may be served (identified as AIG or not) in our Problem Solver Program.

IDENTIFICATION GRADES 4-8

Students may be identified as gifted in Buncombe County in one of the following areas:

Intellectually Gifted (IG)

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. This identification area is considered when achievement scores do not meet criteria for AIG.

Academically Gifted in Reading (AR)

Students may exhibit giftedness specifically in Reading as they reach 5th grade and up. Content becomes more challenging and giftedness may emerge in specific subject areas.

Students must meet the minimum requirements in all 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.
- 90th 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, student, or parent nomination indicating need

Academically Gifted in Math (AM)

Students may exhibit giftedness specifically in Math as they reach 5th grade and up. Content becomes more challenging and giftedness may emerge in specific subject areas.

Students must meet the minimum requirements in all 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.
- 90th 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, student, or parent nomination indicating need

Academically Gifted in Reading and Math (AG)

Students must meet the minimum requirements in all the following:

- Aptitude of 120/90th percentile on a nationally normed IQ/apptitude 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.
- 90th 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 required that the other score be at the 75th percentile or higher to be identified in both reading and math. It is recommended that students evaluated in grade 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, parent, or student nomination indicating need

*Note: In grades 5-8, students may be considered for identification if they have scored 90%ile or above for 2 consecutive years on state achievement testing, with or without a qualifying aptitude score.

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG)

Students must meet the minimum requirements in all the following:

- Aptitude of 130/97th percentile on a nationally normed IQ/apptitude 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 required 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, parent, or student nomination indicating need

Students who meet all the criteria within an area may be identified by the school-based SBT and referral procedures are followed.

If the SBT determines there is an extreme need for differentiation, an individualized differentiated education plan (I-DEP) may be developed based on student needs. Students who are identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG) must receive an I-DEP since their needs vary greatly based on achievement data and qualitative information. Every I-DEP must be copied and submitted to the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist to allow for district monitoring.

*Should a student's identification area need to be changed as a result of academic performance/achievement, the AIG Specialist will notify parents/guardians and take the request to the DBT for review. (For example, AG Reading Only may need to be changed to AG Reading/Math should Math scores indicate a need for this change).

IDENTIFICATION GRADES 9-12

High school students may be identified as gifted in Buncombe County if there is a body of evidence that indicates a need. The high school student should demonstrate an extreme need for differentiation that is unable to be met via the multiple pathways for differentiated success that are available at the high school level.

Nominations for student identification (grades 9-12) should be submitted to the Secondary Specialists. Nominations may be received from teachers, counselors, parents, or self-nominating students. In tandem with the high school counselor, the Secondary Specialist is responsible for completing the referral process as outlined in Practice A.

Students must meet the minimum requirements in all the following:

- 95th percentile or higher achievement in reading and/or math on either the NC EOC tests or another nationally normed achievement test within 12 months. If one score is used to place, then it is required 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)
- High School counselor recommendation for services

The body of evidence to determine identification may also include:

- A formal letter of recommendation from a classroom teacher supporting a child's unique needs for differentiation
- Anecdotal records of performance in any school setting
- Letter of recommendation from other source indicating high performance demonstrating talent (i.e. piano teacher, Scout leader, club leader)
- Demonstration of exceptional performance on NCFEs, AP Exams, or EOCs.

Students who meet all the criteria within an area may be identified by the school-based decision team. This team should include the Secondary Specialist, the counselor, and the principal. If the team determines there is an extreme need for differentiation, an individualized differentiated education plan (I-DEP) may be developed.

Students who are identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG) must receive an I-DEP since their needs vary greatly based on achievement data and qualitative information. Every I-DEP must be copied and submitted to the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist to allow for district monitoring.

CCP-Specific Identification Pathway

In the case of rising 9th or 10th graders seeking to take community college courses (AB Tech), according to legislation NCGS 115D-20(4.a.3.II), Session Law 2019-185, Senate Bill 366 (see CCP 9th and 10th Grader College Transfer Pathway document), BCS will follow this legislation.

For this CCP-Specific Pathway students must meet the following criteria:

- 90% or higher on any nationally or state normed assessment (PSAT, Math 1 EOC, EOG, etc)
- Pattern of high academic performance for preceding 2 years
- Counselor referral
- Qualifying score on AB Tech RISE test

If students are identified as gifted according to the above criteria, they will receive an DEP with their service delivery listed as CCP selected courses.

GRADE ACCELERATION - GRADES K-8

**The protocol for this process can be found in Standard 2, Practice G.*

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

*Aptitude test administered by a BCS school psychologist is only an option with principal referral and scheduling opportunities.

Once a student is being considered for grade acceleration, a team will be formed to gather information and make a decision. This team is led by the principal and should have the following members: AIG Specialist, current grade-level classroom teacher, future grade-level classroom teacher representative, and the parents. While the SBT is not part of this process, they may be consulted for recommendations. (See Standard 2, Practice G for details.) The AIG Specialist must submit a recommendation to the team based on the criteria established and evidence-based practices; however, the principal will make the final decision regarding grade acceleration.

AIG TRANSFERS

Gifted students who are currently identified as AIG in any North Carolina public Local Education Agency with a NC state Gifted Services Plan will maintain their previous AIG identification when transferring into Buncombe County Schools. However, current student performance and assessment data must be reviewed to determine the most appropriate services.

A Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) will be created and will govern the services that are available to the student in Buncombe County. The DEP will match the student's demonstrated needs and BCS service delivery options.

Transfer students identified as gifted in other US states or from private and charter schools with no approved NC AIG Plan must complete the Procedure for AIG Evaluation and meet Buncombe County Schools AIG identification criteria. Every effort will be made to showcase talents as perceived by the previous school.

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*** Practice C**

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

For a complete list of measures used to evaluate student needs, see the attached Multiple Measures of Aptitude, Achievement, and Potential document.

To ensure that our procedures are considerate and responsive to the needs of all populations, Buncombe County Schools:

- Conducts an annual formal mass screening in grades 3-8 in order to establish a broad-based pool of students who may demonstrate a need for differentiated services. We screen all students who score greater than or equal to 85%ile or above on standardized state testing.
- Takes local learning environments into consideration when conducting mass screenings. While 85%ile is the benchmark for screening, in schools where the top 10% of students score at a lower percentile, those students are screened as well.
- Employs a county-wide third grade screening program that occurs during the second semester of third grade. All third graders, regardless of previous testing or demonstrated ability, are administered the Cognitive Abilities Test - Screening Form in order to create an equitable, county-wide screening pool.
- Allows for additional screening data from student portfolios that may include tests, classroom performance, nominations from teachers, parents, students, and observations of student behaviors and performance in the local learning environment.
- Requires professional development to achieve local credentials in gifted education that includes purposeful instruction in the unique needs and characteristics of this population. One of the 5 modules in the local credentials course is dedicated to the topic: What do Advanced Learners Look Like? This module explores all student populations with the latest research on why some students are overlooked and how to find advanced learners.
- Supports classroom teachers in designing situations and learning experiences for students where gifted behaviors and talents may emerge. Because opportunities for higher level thinking, reasoning and problem solving showcase the talents of our students, our AIG Specialists work with classroom teachers through the local PLC to assist in providing those opportunities for all learners.
- Utilizes assessment instruments that minimize language and/or experience barriers. The TONI-4 and the Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities tests are evaluations of aptitude that do not require mastery of the English

language and take into consideration a student's potential limited background knowledge via non-verbal administration.

- Conducts annual school-based reviews and professional development that include the identification and referral processes for gifted services.
- Pushes into 1st grade classrooms the first 9 weeks of school to “scout” Problem Solvers. Works with the 1st grade teachers to offer opportunities to show talent and then target students for the Problem Solvers nurturing program.
- Extends nurturing into 3rd grade via our program called Talent Development. This pool of students is served based on student strengths. EC, ML, Title 1 and school counselors are consulted to determine a need for service through this talent development. Talent Development groups are fluid and flexible, allowing for expansion of students being monitored.
- Collaborates with BCS Language Services Department to secure interpreter services for parent conferences and meetings and to translate communications and official forms into major languages to ensure equitable communication and understanding among represented language groups.
- Our highly gifted students fall into the AIG or IG identification. Students who are AIG receive a DEP. Students who are IG are provided with services via the I-DEP based on their unique needs.
- Promotes the use of the Administrative Placement Team (DBT) to consider identification cases where unique factors may be reflected in student patterns of progress or data record. When appropriate, the DBT team may invite relevant personnel to assist in the decision-making process (i.e. ML Coach, EC Coach, Student Services staff, etc.). The DBT looks closely at local learning environments in the decision making process; subtests, top 10% scores in local learning environment, teacher experience, and other environmental factors.

Percent Ethnicity Identified as AIG

	Asian %	Black %	Hisp %	Native Amer %	Multi %	Pac Islander %	White %

Female	20.14%	<5%	<5%	---	9.86%	---	15.72%
Male	21.32%	<5%	5.04%	---	8.99%	---	17.83%
Total	20.73%	<5%	<5%	---	9.44%	---	16.81%

Percent of Total AIG Students Identified as Dual Exceptionality

<5%

* Practice D

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

A formal screening, nomination, and identification procedure is necessary to ensure consistency throughout Buncombe County Schools. All schools have designated a School Based Identification Team (SBT) to ensure consistency in the assessment and placement portion of the process. Additionally, the consistency of screening, referral, and identification processes within the LEA is ensured in the following ways:

- AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist leads monthly PLC meetings with AIG Specialists to ensure consistency in expectations regarding screening, referral, and identification processes. This mutual collaboration time is essential to the equity in identification processes across the district.
- AIG Specialists chair the SBT in schools to which they are assigned. AIG Specialists design SBT updates, agendas, and activities during monthly PLC meetings to ensure consistency across the district.
- Compliance and completion of procedures are documented in our AIG Evidence Notebooks, data records, and in student AIG folders. In addition to PowerSchool, 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. Each student record of evaluation is maintained and the evaluation information transitions between schools as students advance. Additional documentation is included in our AIG Evidence Notebooks that are reviewed and internally audited yearly for compliance.
- New AIG Specialists receive training from the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist to ensure consistent implementation, and every new AIG Specialist is assigned a mentor to answer questions and provide guidance.

- A standardized digital presentation of our AIG Plan, including screening, referral and identification processes is shared with all AIG specialists and is used in school professional development meetings and SBT meetings. This digital presentation is provided at full staff meetings in each school at the beginning of a new plan cycle and then through PLCs in subsequent years.
- Records of screening, referral, and identification processes are kept at each school. Internal auditing occurs at the end of each school year, as AIG Specialists review records of other schools to ensure accuracy. Records moving to the next school in a transition (i.e. elementary to middle school) are also audited by the AIG Specialist in the receiving school.

* Practice E

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

It is important that screening, referral, and identification processes be clear across the district. For that reason, those policies must be easily available to school personnel, parents/ families, students, and the community-at-large. Digital and/or print copies of the current BCS AIG Plan may be obtained by any interested person(s) via contact with any school-based AIG Specialist or the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist at the district Central Office.

A digital copy of the Buncombe County Schools AIG Plan may be downloaded from the BCS Curriculum and Instruction Department webpage or from any individual AIG Specialist's school-based webpage. Additionally, the AIG district webpage contains links to individual AIG Specialist's webpages, AIG Curricular Goals, the Procedure for AIG Evaluation, and Frequently Asked Questions about the screening, nomination, and identification processes for all grade levels. Information on the link is available in English, Spanish, and Russian.

Because the AIG Plan is easily available and accessible, AIG Specialists use the plan language in regular communications and share it at meetings with parents. This provides a familiarity with our plan and increases parental understanding of expectations and practices. The AIG Plan is also shared annually with school personnel at staff meetings to ensure that all school-based personnel understand the collective responsibility for equitable identification practices. School-based AIG Specialists provide yearly professional development as needed in other faculty meetings or PLC meetings to update staff on the AIG plan and the needs of special populations represented in each school. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist presents at the Kindergarten community meeting to make parents aware of gifted programming in the district.

Buncombe County Schools is committed to providing information in a variety of modes to ensure all stakeholders are informed of AIG programming. Through staff meetings, parent meetings and Open Houses, digital accessibility and communication, our parents, guardians, students and colleagues are provided with our AIG Plan, access to pertinent links and information, and provided opportunities for questions and clarifications through consistent communication.

Communication to Specific Stakeholders

Students:

- Students are made aware of the screening and referral process as evaluation begins.
- Students are invited to parent/guardian placement conferences where screening, referral, and identification processes are reviewed and discussed.
- In AIG Enrichment courses, students are made aware of their ability and the process to make AIG referrals of peers.

Parents/Guardians:

- Parents/guardians can visit the AIG Webpage for the district or the webpage of the AIG Specialist assigned to their child's school where screening, referral and identification are laid out in a step-by-step process.
- Parents/guardians can talk to their child's classroom teacher to determine if a student has been screened, referred or identified for gifted services.
- Parents/guardians are provided with screening, referral and identification procedures in 3rd grade when students are administered the CogAT aptitude Screener. Also, a letter is sent home to students in 3rd Talent Development Groups explaining the evaluation process.
- Parents/Guardians can contact school personnel including, but not limited to, the AIG Specialist, classroom teacher, principal, counselor, or EL teacher for information regarding screening, referral and identification

procedures.

Colleagues:

- Presentation of the AIG Plan at a staff meeting in the first month of school that includes a visual image of gifted identification areas. Presentation is for full staff in a new plan year; can be done full staff or at grade-level PLCs in other years.
- Use of plan language in professional communication regarding screening, referral and identification.
- Referencing of the Plan in PLCs and other meetings (MTSS, SIT) where gifted services and talent development are addressed and/or considered.

AIG Advisory Boards:

- The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead shares AIG Plan initiatives that include screening, referral and identification procedures with the Administrative and Parent/Guardian Advisory Boards throughout the school year.

Community:

- BCS AIG Plan is available on our district website for review.
- FAQ section provides clarity for those community members who may not have a student in Buncombe County Schools.
- Our AIG Specialists and AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist are all available to discuss the screening, referral and identification process with our community partners (i.e. UNC-Asheville, businesses, local non-profit organizations).

* **Practice F**

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

Careful documentation is kept throughout the screening and referral process. Once an AIG Specialist has received a formal nomination for evaluation, the following documents are gathered and kept to indicate a full body of evidence to be considered for the purpose of identification:

- Nomination for Gifted Services
- Notice of Nomination/Parent Permission to Evaluate
- Student AIG Eligibility Form
- SBT Decision Form
- DBT Decision Form, if available
- Differentiated Education Plan or Individualized Differentiated Education Plan
- Any other pertinent documentation (Gifted Rating Scale, ML Access testing scores, ML Checklist of Gifted Behaviors, anecdotal records of observations, teacher letters, etc.)

If gifted placement is recommended by the SBT or DBT team, the AIG Specialist creates an AIG student folder containing all relevant identification documents for the student; this AIG student folder is kept on file at the school to which the identified student is assigned and transitions with the student between schools in Buncombe County. This AIG student folder and all contents are reviewed with parents/guardians during initial placement conferences and other subsequent conferences. A placement conference with parents/guardians is required before services can begin. In addition to the sharing of evidence for placement, parents/guardians are given the opportunity to share their own observations, questions and concerns.

If gifted placement is not recommended, the AIG Specialist maintains the record of the evaluation in a Non-Placement folder. This record of students who have been evaluated but did not show a need for additional differentiated instruction also transitions with students between schools in Buncombe County. These non-placement records are revisited during

mass screening and considered in future student evaluations to make certain that the most appropriate testing options and student performance data are considered.

The goal of every AIG evaluation is to get the best possible picture of a student's strengths and needs to ensure that every student is challenged in the most rigorous setting possible. To that end, all data and evaluations are critical to be considered as a snapshot of student needs at any given time in the educational journey. The documentation maintained in students' AIG folders are kept five years post-graduation. At that time, all records are purged and shredded once approved by the Buncombe County Board of Education.

*** Practice G**

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

In Buncombe County Schools, when a student is identified as gifted, a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) is generated as part of the initial placement process. This DEP articulates the learning environment and differentiation modifications that are required for individual student success. The DEP is based upon the student's documented needs/identification area. The DEP is created/reviewed during student placement meetings, as parents and the AIG Specialist work together to match student needs with the learning environments.

This DEP is revisited at any parent conference as parent input is necessary to ensure that services are responsive to student needs. Parental permission is required and documented before any change in student service may be implemented as documented on the DEP. It is revisited at the end of every school year and at key transition points, as students move ahead to the next school in their progression. AIG Specialists between schools (at transition points) meet to discuss each students' needs and service options as indicated on the Annual Review and DEP.

Additional required documentation assures uninterrupted programming across the student's educational experience regardless of transitions between district schools. An Annual Review details student performance, AIG Specialist observations, and continuing levels of service for each identified student. The Annual Review prompts AIG Specialists and parents/guardians to reassess student needs and then any necessary changes on the DEP.

In addition to the Annual Review, a Cluster Differentiation Documentation Form is completed throughout the year and highlights the classroom instructional strategies specifically used to challenge advanced learners. Copies of the DEP, Annual Review, and Differentiation Documentation for grades 4-8 are maintained in each student's AIG folder and sent home at the end of each school year. The DEPs for all other grade levels are kept at the assigned school of the student and reviewed annually by the AIG Specialist. Again, should changes need to be made on the DEP to match changing student needs, parents/guardians are notified and a conference takes place.

The continuum of service options on the DEP include, but are not limited to:

- AIG Consultative Support
- Flexible Grouping within Class and Within teams
- Enrichment groups
- Cluster Grouping in English/Language Arts
- Cluster Grouping in Math

Along with the continuum of service options, the DEP lists Content/Process/Product Modifications as recommendations. These modifications are for the regular classroom as well as the AIG Enrichment groups based on student needs and identification area. Included are: Anchor Activities, Curriculum Compacting, Performance-based Assessments, Problem Based Learning, and other differentiation strategies as listed on the Differentiation Documentation.

It is important that service options and recommendations match the needs of each student. Learner-centered decisions are revisited as student needs develop and change. For example, a student may need AIG Consultative Support only for support in organization, homework, friendships, etc. Later, the student's needs develop and they begin attending Enrichment Groups.

Buncombe County Schools' teachers and AIG Specialists continuously monitor students' academic growth and social development in order to match services with specific needs.

* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard

- Pilot and monitor the effectiveness of the Local Learning Environment (LLE) form for consideration of cases at the District Based Team (DBT), formally APT.
- Ensure there is communication between AIG specialists, ML Specialists, and Classroom Teachers so that all are utilizing the ML Checklist.
- Any new school staff will receive training from the school's AIG specialist related to identification and services.
- The AIG Coordinator will attend the BOY Dual Language staff meeting to discuss AIG identification and services

Planned Sources of Evidence

* District, School, and AIG Specialist Websites



* Agendas from presentations (faculty meetings, parent meetings, school board meetings, AIG Advisory meetings)


* Student AIG Folders


* Nomination Database

* Non-identification and placement records

* SBT (School-based team) record of decision making	
* BCS DBT (District-based team) record of decision making	
* Talent Development participation/attendance records	
* Problem Solver participation/attendance records	
* Screening Pool lists for each school	
* AIG Monthly Meeting agendas	
* Classroom Differentiation Documentation	
* List of teachers in each school with local/regional AIG Credentials or holding AIG licensure	

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	 <u>BCS Multiple Measures of Aptitude, Achievement and Potential</u>  <u>Identification Areas for Advanced Learners 2025-2028</u>

 CCP Freshman and
Sophomore Referral Process

 Career and College Promise
Freshman_Sophomore
Permission Form

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

Buncombe County Schools (110) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

* Practice A

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the academic and intellectual needs of AIG students, across all grade levels, K-12, and learning environments, through collaboration with a variety of personnel. Services are aligned to students' advanced learning needs and AIG identification.

BCS gifted programming is designed to provide services that range from developing gifted potential to addressing the needs of students who clearly demonstrate advanced skills and abilities. This student-centered approach includes the talent development of potential student placements and the collaboration of school support personnel to meet the social and emotional needs of gifted learners. AIG Specialists, classroom teachers, and appropriate support staff (e.g. school counselors and social workers, EC and ELL teachers) collaborate to deliver comprehensive services for gifted students through appropriate learning environments, content differentiation, and special programs. These different learning environments permit AIG Specialists and classroom teachers to deliver services through flexible clustering and differentiation options. AIG Specialists and classroom teachers also work together to differentiate content, processes of learning, and product choices for gifted students through enrichment, extension, and/or compacting of the regular curriculum. We seek to follow the vision of our current ELA program: Every BCS student will become a seeker of knowledge who engages in critical thinking by reading complex text and deepening learning through writing, speaking and listening.

Services are as follows and based on each student's individual advanced learning needs as well as their AIG identification area:

K-3, Developing and Nurturing Talent in our Youngest Students

BCS provides early primary enrichment opportunities with the intention of cultivating potential in every K-3 student. Programming includes all grade levels; in elementary schools, talent is cultivated through school-wide programs that provide access to activities that develop talents (i.e. Thinking Thursdays).

******It is important to note that any student participation in our programming to nurture talent is not AIG identification. Parents are notified of participation and are strongly encouraged to support students at home while understanding students are not being formally identified as gifted; groups are flexible and fluid.

Developing Talents in Kindergarten

Our Kindergarten services are consultative. This means that while we are “scouting” for talent through assessments and qualitative data, we are also supporting classroom teachers and parents. AIG Specialists are available to attend PLCs in schools and/or provide differentiation strategies or professional development as needed. AIG Specialists are also available for parent conferences with advanced learners in Kindergarten to provide support for parents seeking to enrich students at home.

First grade- Problem Solvers

**Flexible*

First grade students receive both direct and indirect services. During the first quarter of the school year, the AIG Specialist observes first graders in the regular classroom; then the AIG Specialist and classroom teacher will nominate students for the Problem Solvers enrichment model based on observations and small group activity student performance.

At the beginning of the second quarter, first graders work directly with the AIG Specialists for a minimum of 30 consecutive minutes every two weeks. Participation in Problem Solvers is flexible and fluid based on regular classroom and enrichment class performance.

AIG Specialists communicate, consult, and collaborate with teachers, providing additional indirect services for these advanced learners. Additionally, AIG Specialists and teachers regularly review summative assessments, formative assessments, benchmark assessments, and/or universal screening assessments to identify students who are performing well above grade level or who are considered advanced learners within their local learning environments.

Second grade- Problem Solvers

**Flexible*

Second grade students also receive direct and indirect services. Second graders participate in our Problem Solvers enrichment model for a minimum of 30 minutes weekly. Teachers use a standardized checklist of gifted behaviors to recommend students for participation; AIG Specialists collaborate with teachers to ensure that students from special populations are recognized and included. Advanced learners within their local learning environments are also served through the Problem Solvers enrichment model.

AIG Specialists and teachers regularly review summative assessments, formative assessments, benchmark assessments, and/or universal screening assessments to identify students who are performing well above grade level or who are considered advanced within their local learning environments. Consultative service through collaboration between the AIG Specialist and the classroom teacher provides additional support to these advanced learners.

Third grade - Talent Development Program

**Flexible*

Because third graders experience a large amount of standardized evaluations due to state requirements, an additional year of developing talent is implemented to both minimize student stress and strengthen the body of evidence required for AIG identification. Also, talents are developed another year in our special populations of advanced learners, laying the groundwork for future AIG identification in those populations.

Third grade students receive direct and indirect services from the AIG Specialist. Students receive enrichment through the Talent Development Program for a minimum of 45 consecutive minutes weekly. Students can be recommended for Talent Development groups by their teachers at the end of the 2nd grade year and/or by their 3rd grade teachers throughout the school year. A variety of data is used for these recommendations, with focus on student performance in local learning environments.

Through participation in grade-level PLCs and school-wide “Data Digs”, AIG Specialists and teachers regularly review summative assessments, formative assessments, benchmark assessments, universal screening assessments, Reading-Beginning of Grade Test, and/or End of Grade (EOG) Tests to identify students who are consistently performing well above grade level in their local learning environments. Multiple indicators are considered

on an ongoing basis through communication and collaboration between the AIG Specialist and classroom teacher. In addition to Talent Development pull out groups, consultative service through collaboration between the AIG Specialist and the classroom teacher is provided for all advanced learners.

AIG Services, Grades 4-12: Overview

In most cases, students are formally identified as gifted beginning in 4th grade in BCS; groups are no longer flexible and fluid, but based on identification areas. While talent development can and does continue for students who show a need, most students who meet identification criteria are placed at the beginning of 4th grade. Students are at the center of decisions surrounding talent development, nomination, placement, and services.

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 also meet gifted students' academic and intellectual needs.

Services must match the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) of each student identified. The DEP is aligned with the identification area, thus the needs of the student. For example, if a student is identified as AM (Academically Gifted in Math), service on the DEP would include Math clustering, math pull-out enrichment, and heterogeneous grouping within clusters in the math classroom.

Required Core Services, Grades 4, 5 and 6:

Cluster grouping ensures that a rigorous and differentiated reading and math classroom experience is provided for gifted students; core classroom instruction for this group includes advanced content and is delivered at a challenging pace to meet the needs of advanced learners. Cluster grouped sections are led by the regular classroom teacher who holds BCS Local Credentials for Gifted Education or North Carolina licensure in Gifted Education. Cluster

groups shall contain a minimum of 5 identified AIG students, though a minimum of 8 students is highly recommended. School size may dictate clustering, but every effort should be made to form clusters adhering to the recommendation. Intellectually Gifted (IG) students are clustered based on the individual strengths and needs

identified in their I-DEP. Every effort is made to cluster advanced learners in 4th grade as determined by participation in Talent Development in 3rd grade, principal/AIG Specialist collaboration, and formative test data.

Gifted students shall receive explicit and direct instruction from the AIG Specialist in a separate setting for a minimum of 45 to 60 consecutive minutes per week for the purpose of enrichment and continued extension of NCSCOS standards. The AIG Curriculum Strands located in Standard 3 are focused on during this time. AIG Specialists reference students' DEPs to match direct instruction activities with needs of students.

*Because activities, instruction, and thinking tasks are often well above grade level during this time, AIG students are not required to complete classroom assignments missed while receiving AIG services.

*Classes where greater than 75% of students are formally identified as gifted have the option for full push-in services where the AIG Specialist delivers the AIG Curriculum to the entire class.

Required Core Services, Grades 7 and 8:

Cluster grouping ensures that a rigorous and differentiated reading and math classroom experience is provided for gifted students; core classroom instruction for this group includes advanced content and is delivered at a challenging pace to meet the needs of advanced learners. Cluster grouped sections are led by regular classroom teachers who hold BCS Local Credentials for Gifted Education or North Carolina licensure in Gifted Education. When BCS Local Credentials cannot be obtained due to extenuating circumstances for specific teachers, the AIG Specialist works closely with those teachers to ensure understanding of differentiation strategies and advanced learning opportunities. Should these extenuating circumstances occur, there are 2 options:

1. The school's principal is required to submit a letter of clarification to the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist and the Director of Curriculum for Buncombe County Schools.
2. The cluster teacher can take a "Provisional Credentials" abbreviated course where he/she will get the basics of gifted programming and differentiation strategies based on student needs.

Cluster groups shall contain a minimum of 8 identified AIG students. School size may dictate clustering, but every effort should be made to form clusters adhering to the recommendation.

Intellectually gifted (IG) 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 indicated on their DEP or I-DEP. Best practices support providing advanced programming across all content areas.

Gifted students shall receive explicit and direct instruction from the AIG Specialist in a separate setting for a minimum of 45 to 60 consecutive minutes per week for the purpose of enrichment and continued extension of NCSCOS standards. The AIG Curriculum Strands located in Standard 3 are focused on during this time. AIG Specialists reference students' DEPs to match direct instruction activities with needs of students.

***Because activities, instruction, and thinking tasks are often well above grade level during this time, AIG students are not required to complete classroom assignments missed while receiving AIG services.**

Variations of AIG Required Core Services, Grades 4-8

Any variation from the Gifted Services Plan regarding the required core service delivery model must be submitted in writing and approved by the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist, Director of Elementary and Intermediate Schools and/or Director of Middle Schools, and Associate Superintendent for Curriculum. Parents must be notified of approved variations to these required services in writing as changes may impact a student's ability to receive services effectively. Should a parent request a change in service for their student, that request must be submitted to the AIG Specialist in writing.

Optional Extensions of Core Services, Grades 4-8

Extensions of Core Services are available to students in AIG cluster classrooms 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 advising 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 offered.
- The AIG Specialist may serve small groups of high-achieving students who are not identified as AIG to develop strengths and talents.

Required Core Services, Grades 9-12

Buncombe County Schools supports the philosophy of student choice at the high school level and encourages gifted students to pursue specifically differentiated academic options for services, including but not limited to: Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS), College and Career Promise (CCP) dual enrollment, Buncombe Virtual Online Academy (BVOA), Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM), Cooperative/Innovative High School (CIHS) choices, and other options tailored to meet individual needs.

Buncombe County currently is home to three CIHS options - Nesbitt Discovery Academy, BCS Early College, and Buncombe County Center for Career Innovation.

A system of support at each high school includes counselors, Career Development Coordinators, social workers, graduation initiative specialists, parents, and school-based mentors who assist AIG students in developing an understanding of personal skills, talents, interests, and strengths that will prove useful in creating short-term goals, long-range plans for course selections, and post-graduation and/or career plans.

Middle School AIG Specialists continue to provide consultative services for high school students as they access these various options. These secondary specialists work with students as they transition into the high school as freshmen, are available for AIG referrals and evaluations, monitor DEPs, and work with counselors and/or an AIG contact teacher to provide academic and SEL support. AIG Specialists collaborate with high school counselors, specifically a high school AIG Contact Counselor, and students during the registration process to ensure that students are selecting courses that provide advanced learning opportunities.



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*** Practice B**

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



We believe that social and emotional needs are at the heart of well-being and the foundation for achievement for all children. The Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework provides a comprehensive approach to evaluating, identifying, targeting, and supporting student needs in both academic and emotional areas. Despite the myth that gifted students are somehow buffered from issues in these areas, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) reminds us that "many gifted children need targeted assistance with peer relationships, perfectionism, asynchronous development, situational stressors, and post-secondary planning" in order to succeed.

Our district AIG Specialist PLC meetings provide a specific collaborative setting for considering the various needs of our advanced learning population. District Specialists from various departments are regularly invited to present information on current trends, strategies, and best practices in their respective disciplines. This includes but is not limited to: Student Support teams, Exceptional Children Coaches, subject specific specialists, EL Coaches, and school counselors. This regular opportunity for collaboration at the district level allows all personnel to share information and problem solve issues around supporting the holistic development of gifted learners.

To document this essential, comprehensive collaboration that contributes to the social and emotional needs of our gifted students, AIG Specialists detail the various ways they provide support and facilitate collaboration by maintaining yearly Evidence Notebooks. Meeting agendas, parent conference documentation, DEPs, lesson plans, emails, and other formal and informal sources of communication authenticate the collaborative partnerships between the AIG Specialist and other stakeholders, including classroom teachers, content specialists, counselors, parents, and administrators. Collaboration that is specific to social and emotional needs is documented alongside other collaboration evidence. In addition to this holistic approach, various program options address the social and emotional needs of our gifted students.

Program/Activity Options:

- Gifted Awareness lessons and activities
- Targeted special AIG groups based on the unique needs of gifted students including, but not limited to: friendship skills, study skills, organizational skills
- Extra-curricular clubs and activities as well as specialized opportunities within the school curriculum (i.e. Leader in Me, Student/Classroom SEL)
- Collaboration with Dual Language teachers through Problem Solvers, Talent Development, AIG (4-12), and Global Education & World Languages Specialist
- Middle School access to Social and Emotional Gifted Teen Series workbooks (Leutenberg & Liptak, 2018)
- Elementary/Intermediate access to The Gifted Kids Survival Guide (Galbraith, 2009)
- Middle School-focused options on high school opportunities

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* **Practice C**

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

A rigorous and differentiated curriculum is essential to the instructional programming in Buncombe County Schools. AIG Specialists are an integral part of that service as they collaborate with BCS locally credentialed teachers to assist with differentiation resources, planning instructional units, and additional services for students who are clustered in the regular classroom. This collaboration between the AIG Specialist and the classroom teacher also provides information on differentiated services and enrichment opportunities to parents/guardians. AIG Specialists and AIG cluster teachers consider the growth of all student groups during PLC meetings. Pre-tests, formative assessments, and summative assessments provide documentation of individual student needs as AIG Specialists work to generate effective strategies to meet those needs.

Connecting and Integrating District Initiatives and Practices

Buncombe County Schools initiatives are summarized in the BCS Strategic Plan, 2024-2027. Core beliefs of our district as outlined in the Strategic Plan include:

- Engage Students in Meaningful Ways
- Collaborate and Connect
- Build Strong Family and Community Partnerships
- Support Educators
- Invest in Excellence

As an extension of the Strategic Plan, BCS is developing an Instructional Framework that lays the foundation for every classroom in the district to be an optimal learning environment.

It is clear how the NC Standards for Gifted Programming directly align with the initiatives in our district. Our district's response to those AIG standards line up with the vision, mission, and core beliefs listed in our strategic plan.

In BCS AIG, we continuously seek to engage our students in meaningful ways. Through hands-on project based learning, real world problem solving, and deeply digging into content across all subject areas, we work diligently to engage our advanced learners in meaningful ways. As professionals, we collaborate and connect, expecting and encouraging our students to do the same. Standard 5 is titled, "Partnerships", and our response includes the many ways we create and sustain partnerships between departments, colleagues, students, and in the community. In gifted programming, we support educators through attendance at PLCs where we lift up our gifted students and advocate alongside our peers, provide PD opportunities for teachers, and train cluster teachers through our Credentials Course. Lastly, we are committed to excellence! BCS AIG Department's rich history of continuous improvement and focus on our students has proven our commitment and intertwined us with our district's Strategic Plan.

Connecting Departments

The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist collaborates with curriculum district leaders to ensure alignment of the AIG curriculum with the NCSCOS. To facilitate this collaboration, the AIG Department works under the direction of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead and AIG Specialists participate in curriculum activities, committee meetings, and professional development across all departments (i.e. Science, Math,

ELA, STEM, EC, student services, ML, counseling, etc.). The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist also attends curriculum meetings at the district level every two weeks throughout the school year. Through our AIG departmental PD, the leads of other departments become our best resource for improving and implementing policy to address the needs of AIG and advanced learners. These leaders are invited to present, inform, collaborate and learn with AIG Specialists throughout the school year.

Integrating AIG Curriculum with Core Instruction

During the specialized services for advanced learners, Buncombe County Schools' AIG staff implements curriculum units that are connected to the total instructional program. Because gifted and advanced learners possess the ability to think with more complexity and abstraction and learn at faster rates, they require challenging, differentiated curriculum and instruction which is developmentally appropriate and will engage them in the classroom and better prepare them for their future. The AIG curriculum, as outlined in Standard 3, is aligned with state standards for each grade, deepened and broadened as student ability and readiness allows. While AIG enrichment and extensions are firmly planted in the NCSCOS, opportunities for critical thinking, problem solving, independence, and student collaboration are prioritized to meet the needs of gifted and advanced learners.

In our youngest learners, K-3, AIG Specialists work with classroom teachers to seek opportunities for students to use core instruction as a foundation to grow individual talents and advanced learning potential through differentiated instruction.

*** Practice D**

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

Buncombe County Schools believes that data is a critical component of a well-structured, responsive learning environment where intentional, flexible grouping is practiced. BCS uses data, along with classroom observations and student interest, for grouping practices that are varied among grade levels and schools.

BCS requires all teachers to utilize standards-based purposes, daily learning targets, daily formative assessments, and agendas to enhance student learning in every classroom across all content areas and grade levels. These daily formative assessments provide the groundwork for matching student proficiencies to flexible grouping practices based on measures such as readiness, interest, and learner profiles. While cluster grouping addresses the advanced learner's need for time with others who are similar to themselves in order to facilitate their academic, intellectual, social, and emotional growth, flexible grouping provides a fluid response to particular skill and practice needs that facilitate further growth.

BCS 3rd grade Talent Development programming takes all advanced learners' needs into account as varied formative and summative assessments are used to make participation decisions. At the end of 2nd grade, teachers can make recommendations for students to participate in Talent Development groups. These groups are flexible, as recommendations can continue to be made throughout the 3rd grade year and as advanced learners' talents emerge. This is not formal identification in the AIG program. Consistent Professional Learning Community (PLC) work allows educators to build these daily formative assessments into practice and to create structures for flexible grouping to exist. Working in these flexible groups across interests, abilities, achievement, and grade levels allows all students to grow in their background knowledge, communication, and collaboration skills all while deepening understanding of content across the curriculum. In our BCS PLC Cycle, we question, "What will we do if students have/have not learned it?" We determine which group(s) of students are in need of extra support or extension. Then, an implementation plan is created. Implementation can include, but is not limited to, small group, in-class enrichment with the AIG Specialist or classroom teacher, pull-out groups to do research in the library or with another specialist, participation in "spin-off" projects by group to extend the core.

BCS has many grouping options for learners who show a need. Flexible grouping in AIG Enrichment and in the regular classroom offers opportunities to facilitate the achievement and growth of AIG and other students with advanced learning needs.

*** Practice E**

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

Careful and clear communication is essential to our plan's fidelity across the district and for all stakeholder groups. Due to the diverse nature of stakeholders and their access points to information, BCS AIG works to deliver all information

about our program and plan in a variety of formats. Because gifted students have specific needs requiring teachers, counselors, administrators and other support staff who have the necessary knowledge and understandings to be involved in their education, receiving relevant information enables teachers, school administrators, and support staff to fulfill their role in the AIG student's overall educational program.

The BCS Board of Education approves the BCS AIG Plan at the beginning of each new plan cycle. The AIG Coordinator and AIG Specialists update school and district webpages to include approved plan information, Frequently Asked Questions sections, and updated contact information. A link to the BCS AIG Plan can be found on the district, school, and specialist webpages. District and school approved standardized forms are also updated and distributed. A new, bound AIG Plan book is created to reflect district changes and includes these new documents. Each AIG Specialist is given the AIG Plan book to keep with them at all times as a reference for use, ensuring the plan is being followed and stakeholders are being informed as written and updated (i.e. PLCs, parent/guardian meetings, staff meetings, district collaboration meetings).

Administrators, Teachers, and Support Staff

A digital AIG Plan presentation is created at the district level and then shared annually at each school by the school's assigned AIG Specialist. The presentation includes, but is not limited to, programming highlights, nomination and identification procedures, and the AIG Curriculum mapping. Having a uniform presentation ensures the consistency of information to all stakeholders and clarifies our shared responsibility for advanced learner growth. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist attends district level principals' meetings to present the updates to AIG programming, gain feedback, and inform administrators about best practices in gifted education. Strategies for effective differentiated instruction are also shared at PLC meetings at the school-level with classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, and administrators as needed throughout the school year.

NCDPI AIG Booster Shots and Learning Labs are available on our Buncombe County Schools Canvas page and can be shared by AIG Specialists at PLC meetings at the schools.

NCDPI Booster shots and Learning Labs are also shared with Dual Language classroom teachers through the Dual Language Departmental meetings and professional development.

The Buncombe County Schools' AIG Local Credentials Course is a foundational pathway to make all new professional stakeholders aware of gifted programming and our AIG Plan. The BCS Credentials Course is a professional

development opportunity designed to train and support all educators who work with gifted students. The course is presented on an online platform every year and provided free of charge. The Credentials Course is self-paced with quizzes, assignments and collaboration opportunities embedded throughout. It is a 10 hour course. Classroom teachers are required to earn local credentials through this course before leading clusters of identified students; however, all teachers are encouraged to enroll in the professional development. This course is also open to new AIG Specialists, support staff (i.e. Art, Music, Counseling, and Media staff).

Educators who participate in the BCS AIG Credentials Course will:

- Understand the current Buncombe County Schools AIG Plan and the shared levels of responsibility in meeting the needs of gifted learners within our county.
- Recognize gifted learners and understand their unique educational and social-emotional needs.
- Learn research-based methodologies to differentiate the NCSCOS in daily instruction.
- Collaborate with AIG specialists to adapt units of study for advanced learners.
- Teach and reflect upon a differentiated lesson in collaboration with an AIG Specialist.
- Upon completion of the AIG Credentials Course, professionals are considered to have greater knowledge of gifted students and local gifted programming. This knowledge not only facilitates successful differentiation for cluster teachers, it contributes to meeting the needs of gifted and advanced learners throughout the district.

*** Practice F**

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

Transitions often heighten anxieties and highlight asynchrony in and between the cognitive, emotional, and physical development of gifted individuals (National Association for Gifted Children NAGC, 2019). For that reason, Buncombe County Schools is proactive in planning transition experiences that: create parental and student awareness of any expected AIG service delivery changes, highlight the unique enrichment and extension opportunities available at each school, and respond to parental and student need for connection and belonging.

AIG Specialists host a minimum of two annual meetings to support transitions; these meetings include standardized service delivery expectations but are also personalized to fit the needs of the individual school and its population. Meeting agendas and sign in sheets of attendees are maintained in the AIG Evidence Notebook. Collaborations with administrators, counselors, and other specialists are encouraged so these meetings are useful and comprehensive. District leaders are encouraged to attend as available (i.e. Dual Language Coaches, EL Specialists, Curriculum directors). Meetings include, but are not limited to, initial placement conferences, Open House Events, and in-class transition meetings with AIG Specialists.

Specialists facilitate smooth transitions in a variety of ways. These may include visiting students at the feeder schools, feeder school visits to the receiving school, and/or parent meetings. The intent of these experiences is to highlight the curriculum, answer questions, share activities and opportunities at the partner school. Our middle schools and high schools partner to have “Advanced Learning Nights” that inform parents of incoming high school students of the registration process and opportunities available. These meetings are informative; they deep dive into what high school looks like for advanced learners and forge partnerships with students, parents, and counselors!

Because the effective transition of student information is essential to the integrity of the AIG Program and its documentation, 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.

*** Practice G**

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

Buncombe County Schools Board Policies Series 3000 governs the educational programming of our district. BCS offers many opportunities for acceleration that include digital, hybrid, and face-to-face options to match student needs.

Although substantial 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. For that reason, Buncombe County Schools provides options that allow for acceleration.

We offer early entrance to Kindergarten for children "who demonstrate an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity" (BCS Board Policy 4100-R). At the middle school level, students may earn high school credit through NC Virtual Public High School (NCVPS).

At the high school level, there are opportunities for advancement and acceleration through hybrid courses with the NC School of Science and Math, AP courses, Career and College Promise dual-enrollment with IHEs, NCVPS, and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM).

Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Buncombe County Schools School Board Policy 4100-R provides opportunities for young, precocious children to enter Kindergarten early. Because entering Kindergarten a year early is interpreted by the board as the equivalent of whole grade acceleration, several considerations are made, including assessment data. The assessment data and other information must present a body of evidence that the child is "precocious in academic and social development."

Once a request is made for students to gain early entrance, the principal at the school to be attended convenes a committee of educational professionals who will assist him/her in making decisions about each individual child. (See attached: 4100-R, Early Entrance to Kindergarten)

Compacted Content

Content is compacted based on student needs. Individual teachers and subject PLCs may compact content as students show mastery of skills and collaborate with AIG Specialists on resources for students. Compacting content allows teachers to make adjustments to curriculum for students who have already mastered the material to be learned, replacing content students know with new content, enrichment options, or other activities.

Grade Acceleration, Grades K-8

A student may be considered for grade acceleration (also referred to as double promotion) in grades K-8.

Decision for grade acceleration (double promotion) should be made based on the following criteria:

- 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 (classroom performance)
- Parent approval
- Principal approval

The following protocol will be used in grade acceleration requests:

1. Recommender (parent/guardian, teacher, AIG Specialist) should contact the principal, in writing, with the recommendation.
2. The principal, in consultation with the AIG Specialist, will then make a determination if the recommendation should move forward. If so, the principal/designee will secure permission from the parents for the student to be evaluated for grade acceleration.
3. Once a student is being considered for grade acceleration, a school team is formed to gather information. This team is led by the principal and will have the following members: AIG Specialist, current grade-level classroom teacher, future grade-level classroom teacher representative, school counselor, and the parents/guardians.
4. The AIG Specialist will gather and submit information to the school based team that includes, but is not limited to, Iowa Acceleration Scale and any other pertinent data.
5. The decision will be made by the school based team if acceleration is recommended.*
6. Should the team decide not to accelerate, the AIG Specialist will work with the classroom teacher(s) on differentiation strategies for the student.
7. Should the team decide to accelerate, the principal will decide timing; timing is based on the end of a grading period, a holiday break, assessment schedule, etc.

8. Any accelerated student will take the standardized testing that matches the grade level in which they are enrolled at the time of testing.

*Should there be a disagreement on the recommendation, the final decision rests with the principal.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is the process by which Buncombe County Schools, based on a body-of-evidence, awards 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/or for high school courses offered in grades 7-8 in middle school. CDM is meant for individual students who need content replacement and subject acceleration clearly, without any learning of the content in the school setting.

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 is available to district educators.

*** Practice H**

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

Buncombe County recognizes that gifted learners are shaped by their early educational experiences. To ensure that their potential is developed and optimized, young children need access to an appropriately challenging and engaging education early in their schooling that builds upon the concept of flexibility and response to student indicators.

Nurturing Giftedness in Young Children by Wendy Roedell asserts that "it is important to remember that these children very often do not develop evenly. In fact, young gifted children frequently show peaks of extraordinary performance

rather than equally high skill levels in all cognitive areas". The child who learns to read at age 3 or who shows unusually advanced spatial reasoning ability, for example, may not be the child with the highest IQ or the earliest language development. Unique patterns of development can be observed within a group of gifted children, and uneven development is frequently evident in the pattern of a single child. In some cases, it seems as though children's abilities develop in spurts, guided by changes in interest and opportunity."

Our Problem Solvers program responds to these characteristics of student development. The Buncombe County Problem Solvers program is available for students in first and second grades who demonstrate a need for enrichment beyond the regular classroom setting within their local learning environments. Problem Solvers participants are not formally identified as gifted, but the needs of these advanced students in first and second grade are addressed through activities that foster creativity, curiosity, critical thinking, and provide access to advanced content. Since unique patterns of development can be observed in young children, the program is fluid and flexible; designed so students can attend Problem Solvers groups according to their individual needs at any given time.

Students are recommended for participation by their classroom teacher and/or the gifted specialist based on intellectual and/or academic ability, creativity, motivation, and other assessments or observations by the gifted specialist or other school personnel.

Recommendation is based on outstanding performance on these indicators as compared to typical children of the same age in their local learning environment. AIG Specialists collaborate with teachers in grades 1 and 2 to help them recognize potential in children from under-represented groups. Resources such as Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) and Thinking Skills & Key Concepts by Parks and Black assist teachers in recognizing above average performance.

Classroom teachers, AIG personnel, and other instructional staff collaborate and develop differentiated curriculum and instruction to cultivate potential in K-2 learners. Our primary tasks include making appropriate and advanced content available via higher order thinking skills, manipulative math materials, inquiry through dialogue, and language experience activities. The learning environment also offers the opportunity to discover intellectual peers at an early age.

K- 2 Program Services:

Kindergarten

Services are consultative. AIG Specialists work with Kindergarten teachers to differentiate curriculum and provide options to parents for differentiation at home. Our BCS Kindergarten Enrichment Team provides newsletters to teachers and parents with resources, differentiation strategies, and signs of early giftedness.

1st and 2nd Grades

The AIG Specialist leads Problem Solver groups where students are provided with enrichment activities and exercise of their critical thinking skills.

Problem Solvers first grade participants will meet a minimum of 30 minutes every other week. Problem Solvers second grade participants will meet a minimum of 30 minutes weekly.

Problem Solvers participation letters explain the nurturing program to parents and clarify that services are fluid, flexible, and separate from any future AIG evaluation or service. AIG Specialists are available for conferences with parents of K-2 advanced learning students as needed.

Buncombe County Schools serves 3rd grade through our Talent Development program. This is addressed in Standard 2, Practice A.

*** Practice I**

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

The Buncombe County School System is very large and includes many communities. We have large numbers of Ukrainian, Russian, and Hispanic students; there are sixty-two languages spoken in this school system. We also have a large population of economically disadvantaged students. As a result, most of our elementary, intermediate, and middle schools are classified as eligible for Title I support.

We seek to continuously develop our mindsets, policies, and practices to broaden the scope of access to advanced learning opportunities for all students in our district.

Mindsets:

During the 2023-2024 school year, Buncombe County AIG Specialists focused professional development on learner-centered classrooms. Collectively, we read and studied the book, *So Each May Soar*, by Carol Ann Tomlinson, 2021. During our 10 hours of continuing education units (CEUs), we sought to demonstrate a commitment to staying current in our study of individual needs of our students and how we could best support a move from standardized instruction to learner-centered classrooms. This focus included, but was not limited to, advanced learning opportunities and talent development efforts across our district.

“All aspects of learner-centered instruction begin with a teacher whose attention is not focused on himself or herself, or even on the content, but on the student.” (Tomlinson, p. 60). Because our students present to us in all areas of potential, it is important for us to use consistent formative assessment and evaluation, adjusting our content and instruction based on what they are showing us they need. We must accept and affirm students as they are, letting them know that we are eager to meet their needs and honor them as learners.

Our mindsets were shifting from:

What advanced activity or unit of study can I provide students?

To

What are the needs and nature of the individuals who make up my class and what advanced activity can I provide based on those needs?

Our next steps include sharing this study with our colleagues through PLCs in each school and at the district level. Differentiation is a proactive response to learner needs, requiring attention to high standards and individual development. Through sharing across our district, we work to change mindsets to offer individualized, advanced learning opportunities for all students.

Rigor is a concept often used but rarely understood. In the past 2 years, we have developed a presentation for classroom teachers titled, “Rejuvenating Rigor”. As a part of this presentation, we work to help teachers understand that rigor is for everyone. Students who struggle academically can benefit from rigor as much as students who have mastered content and need to go deeper. We are working to shift mindsets to open pathways where all students are exposed to rigorous instruction through talent development in the regular classroom.

Policies:

A large policy change due to mindsets shifting can be seen through content area curriculum choices. Tomlinson describes differentiation as a combination of the following (p. 218):

1. An environment that encourages and supports learning
2. Quality curriculum
3. Assessment that informs teaching/learning.
4. Instruction that responds to learner variance
5. Leading students and managing classroom routines

Buncombe County Schools has recently adopted and implemented Math and ELA Curriculum programs that not only provide activities, pacing, and materials to meet standards, but also provide enrichment and extension opportunities for students.

Our AIG department has taken that a step further through an advanced curriculum that is rooted in standards, but requires students to go deeper into content. AIG Curriculum is discussed in Standard 3; however, it is important to note that our policies surrounding requirements to differentiate core instruction are reflected in Tomlinson's work.

BCS is dedicated to encouraging and supporting learning, using quality curriculum materials that can be differentiated based on student needs, and supporting teachers in their pursuit of providing rigorous instruction. This can all be seen in the BCS Strategic Plan, where students are at the center of our district's mission: BCS will foster a culture of excellence and continuous improvement where every student will thrive and learn from exceptional educators.

Practices:

At the school level, practices include talent development efforts, evaluation processes, and formal identification of gifted students. Practices also include engaging students in meaningful ways, and investing and allocating resources intentionally across the district for students to achieve at high levels (Core Beliefs of BCS according to our Strategic Plan, 2024-2027).

Talent Development efforts begin in Kindergarten and continue through high school. Inherent in Kindergarten play-based centers are opportunities to showcase talent. K-6 Math curriculum includes “Are you Ready for More?” and AIG Specialists provide “I Want More” activities for all students. We have rigorous academic clubs, like Battle of the Books and Elevating Math, where all students are welcome who have a love of reading and numbers, creating space to develop talents. Specialists are working to create a digital “Thinking Thursday” where puzzles and problem solving challenges are provided across the district. Media Specialists provide opportunities to develop talent through maker activities and spaces. AIG Specialists in grades 4-8 continue to serve enrichment groups through optional extensions to core services, as they pull small groups to develop talent in students who are not formally identified as gifted.

These are all practices that show a commitment to student-centered learning and instruction. The student is at the core of what we do in gifted programming and across our district; strengthening talent development and frontloading critical thinking and problem solving skills, honoring the needs of each student we serve.

*** Practice J**

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

Buncombe County Schools recognizes that each unique school must provide an array of K-12 extracurricular programs both during and outside school hours to meet the needs of all students.

Each local learning environment from Kindergarten to graduation, provides extra-curricular options based on the size of the school, resources available, and needs of students. 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 abilities and needs of our gifted students.

As these opportunities are unique to each school, AIG Specialists notify parents of opportunities through newsletters, emails, and websites. AIG Specialists maintain a list of these opportunities in the AIG Evidences Notebook. AIG Specialists also share applicable events, clubs, and groups during transition meetings as students prepare to transition to the next school and opportunities differ. During initial placement meetings, AIG Specialists share all extracurricular

activities offered with parents/guardians and students and show them where to find further opportunities and information on each school’s website.

High school extracurricular activities and clubs are as varied as the populations of each school. These activities and clubs are available to all students based on need and interest. Listings and information on these opportunities are available on local school web pages under “Clubs and Activities” and faculty sponsors are responsible for recruiting and leadership.

Current opportunities differ across the district. They may include, but are not limited to:

MATHCOUNTS

Local Math teams (Elevating Math)

Battle of the Books

Science Olympiad

Chess Club

Geography Bee

Spelling Bee

Governor’s School

Interest Clubs (Art, Chinese, Spanish, Latin, etc)

Honor Society

Lego’s Club

Crochet Club

Future Teacher Club

Hiking

Dungeons and Dragons

River Rats
Jazz band

BETA Club

School News


* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard

- Continuing to develop the AIG Curriculum that aligns to the BCS Framework through curriculum maps.
- Increase collaboration with EL, EC, Counselors, and other Specialists through professional development opportunities and intentional communication.

Planned Sources of Evidence

- | | |
|--|--|
| * DEPs/IDEPs | |
| * Descriptions of "Extensions of Core Services" | |
| * AIG Specialists schedules for each school served | |
| * Digital Presentation of the 2025-2028 AIG Plan | |
| * List of Professional Development Opportunities by school | |

*	Service Delivery Notebooks	
*	Agendas from all transition meetings	
*	Agendas from AIG monthly staff meetings	
*	District, school, and AIG Specialists websites	
*	Parent and school newsletters	
*	Student Progress Reports	
*	Documentation of student participation in extra-curricular activities	

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	 <u>4100-R Early Entry to Kindergarten Adopted 3-7-13.pdf</u>

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

Buncombe County Schools (110) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

* Practice A

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

The NCSCOS is the standard curriculum required for all students in the NC public schools; however, this curriculum must be differentiated to meet the diverse academic needs of our gifted students. Buncombe County Schools believes that the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Framework provides invaluable support for academic growth and personal achievement for all students. Whole class differentiation is at the core of Tier 1 service and is the foundation upon which all other enrichment, extension, and acceleration occurs. For that purpose, the AIG Department recognizes the district-wide shared responsibility of training, supporting, and challenging teachers to provide engaging differentiated lessons based upon the NC Standard Courses of Study in every classroom where advanced learners participate.

Individual school needs vary as widely as classroom needs. For this reason, AIG Specialists receive and provide professional development training in strategies for differentiation that include, but are not limited to: anchor activities, curriculum compacting, Socratic seminars, problem-based learning, experiential learning, and tiered assignments. This is accomplished through the local AIG Credentials Course, DPI DALGE Booster Shots, targeted PLC discussions, and AIG Departmental professional development. Co-teaching opportunities are encouraged as an additional way to meet the instructional and developmental needs of students; direct co-teaching supports are optional services and are scheduled as AIG Specialist time allows. For example, our Middle School AIG Specialists push-in and co-teach in content classes to share and support extensions and acceleration of learning as needed. Extensions and acceleration

are also supported through grade-level PLCs throughout the year, K-8. In our high schools, enrichment, extension, and acceleration are embedded in the curriculum of advanced courses and options like Credit By Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) are also available.

Because the BCS service model is based upon the Renzulli's Schoolwide Enrichment Model, both enrichment pull-out services and classroom extensions in and out of the classroom are essential components of Buncombe County's plan to support the needs of advanced learners. A rigorous and engaging curriculum map of concept-based units governs enrichment group instruction for grades 3-8 in a pull-out model. This curriculum includes advanced content and resources that challenge gifted learners by integrating STEAM units, critical thinking, and technology skills with topics in Humanities/Literacy and Mathematical/Logical strands. This curriculum is paced to align with NCSCOS and includes designated standards as well as AIG Curriculum Strand alignment.

Resources for instruction must be research-based, current, timely, and appropriate for the needs of gifted learners. Our enrichment curriculum balances humanities-based units and STEAM opportunities to develop future readiness skills, encourage hands-on engagement, and allow students to create and produce products that meet real-world needs. Topics of study that develop the social emotional being of advanced learners comprehensively addresses holistic student needs.

*** Practice B**

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

Classroom teachers and AIG Specialists support students by offering differentiated instruction that allows for exploration, problem-solving, higher-order thinking, consideration of student strengths and weaknesses, and performance-based research products. Concept-based units with overarching essential questions and multiple engagement opportunities address student learning preferences and require students to examine personal opinions, prior experiences, newly gained information, and content research for deep and enduring understandings. Meeting the needs of all learners at all grade levels is the ultimate goal of every department in our entire district.

Gifted students are placed in cluster groups to facilitate the peer interaction necessary for their cognitive growth; flexible grouping options are also utilized to meet the unique needs of the gifted student. Cluster group teachers are trained specifically to understand the needs of gifted learners through participation in the BCS AIG Local Credentials Course; cluster teachers document the ways that they differentiate the curriculum for their gifted students on an

annual record of classroom differentiation activities. The annual Cluster Classroom Differentiation Documentation form (attached) is filed in an individual student's AIG folder and provided to parents as evidence of research-based instructional practices provided in classrooms. While not always possible, efforts are made to assign AIG Specialists to buildings within the same district so a continuity of instructional services can be established.

AIG Specialists engage in professional development that emphasizes rigor, complexity, sophistication, and abstractness in order to share these strategies more effectively with teachers. Our AIG Department also shares instruction in these practices during school based and whole district professional development days. AIG Specialists attend grade-level PLCs and meet with classroom teachers to discuss and advise on instructional practices in the regular classroom as needed. Instructional practices include the use of essential questions, hands-on activities where appropriate, real-world applications of skills, the use of digital learning tools as support (i.e. SeeSaw, Google Classroom, Kahoot, Byrdseed, etc.), Paideia seminars, and other best practices in gifted instruction.

In addition to direct classroom support and instruction, AIG Specialists guide advanced learners toward enrichment and extension activities that fit their needs and interests. All Specialists host clubs, school-based projects, and/or competition teams that engage student interests and provide multiple outlets for leadership and creativity. While clubs are based on needs and availability at each school, some examples include Battle of the Books, Chess Club, Math Competition Teams, Science Olympiad.

*** Practice C**

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

The National Association for Gifted Children advocates that: "Good teaching for gifted learners happens at a higher 'degree of difficulty' than for many students their age. In the Olympics, the most accomplished divers perform dives that have a higher 'degree of difficulty' than those performed by divers whose talents are not as advanced. A greater degree of difficulty calls on more skills -more refined skills- applied at a higher plane of sophistication. A high 'degree of difficulty' for gifted learners in their talent areas implies that their content, processes and products should be more complex, more abstract, more open-ended, more multifaceted than would be appropriate for many peers. They should work with fuzzier problems, will often need less teacher-imposed structure, and (in comparison to the norm) should have to make greater leaps of insight and transfer than would be appropriate for many their age. Gifted learners may also (but not always) be able to function with a greater degree of independence than their peers."

For this reason, our AIG Department continues to gather materials that promote advanced and sophisticated thinking. Monthly PLC and collaboration work sessions help assure continuity, growth, and innovation within gifted programming and across the district. Embedding research-based rigor and complexity is an ongoing and dynamic process. AIG Specialists advance classroom differentiation work via collaboration with content teachers and school-based instructional coaches to support instruction, provide research-based strategies for extension, and support individual student needs.

The AIG department purchases and distributes instructional resources that support the work of differentiation such as the Differentiating Instruction with Menus by Laurie Westphal and Differentiation for Gifted Learners: Going Beyond the Basics by Diane Heacox and Richard Cash. Resource libraries are maintained in individual schools to support teacher needs, and AIG Specialists may request needed materials from the district AIG department. These resource libraries include print and digital resources.

Materials and instructional resources are also available to AIG Specialists and classroom teachers for use to support advanced learners. These materials provide hands-on opportunities for students to make real-world meaning from content standards. These resources are available for AIG Specialists in their buildings or through district sharing.

Resources include, but are not limited to:

- Jacob's Ladder
- Hands-on Equations
- Greek and Latin root words and stems programs
- Marcy Cook math materials
- Creative Beginnings materials
- Socratic seminars resources
- Tom Snyder computer simulations
- Financial Literacy Units

- Stock Market Game
- Problem/project-based learning units
- Breakout Boxes from Breakout.EDU
- Hummingbird Duo robots from BirdBrain Technologies
- Sphero BOLT sets from Orbotics
- Sphero Sprk+ robot set from Orbotics
- Makey Makeys classroom invention sets from JoyLabz
- Rubik's Cubes
- ThinkLaw materials
- PETs (Primary Education Thinking Skills)
- Zaccaro Math

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.

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.

* Practice D

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

Gifted students and advanced learners 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 to become successful contributors to our global society. According to Carol Ann Tomlinson's research article *What It Means to Teach Gifted Learners Well*, "Good teaching for gifted learners requires an understanding of 'supported risk.' Highly able learners often make very good grades with relative ease for a long time in school. They see themselves (and often rightly so) as expected to make 'As,' get right answers, and lead the way. In other words, they succeed without 'normal' encounters with failure. Then, when a teacher presents a high-challenge task, the student feels threatened. Not only has he or she likely not learned to study hard, take risks and strive, but the student's image is threatened as well. A good teacher of gifted students understands that dynamic, and thus invites, cajoles and insists on risk but in a way that supports success." Our units challenge students with the iterations of ideas and products designed to address real-world issues and difficulties.

The Buncombe County Schools AIG curriculum goals provide a structured framework for the development of future ready skills. Units focus on high-level content, standards-based skills, critical thinking, and creative problem solving. Performance-based assessment is an integral part of the units; students have multiple options to demonstrate mastery of skills and knowledge. Because curiosity leads to motivation and engagement, units of study are built with essential questions designed to spark curiosity and are developmentally of interest.

AIG Direct Instruction Expectations

Grades 1-2: Problem Solver Program Goals

Students participating in Problem Solvers will:

- Make appropriate use of activities which extend manipulation, experimentation, and application
- Develop reasoning skills through logic and mathematical problem-solving activities

- 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: Talent Development and AIG Enrichment Classroom Goals

AIG Specialists in grades 3–8 continue to augment and extend NCSCOS goals and objectives during enrichment class instruction. Talent Development and AIG students are expected to:

- 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.

Instruction by Grade Level

During direct gifted instruction in Enrichment pull-out time, AIG specialists plan and implement lessons from each of the **four AIG Curricular Strands**:

1. Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners

2. Humanities/ Literacy

3. Mathematical/ Logical

4. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics)

Critical and creative thinking skills will be embedded within each strand. Specific grade-level objectives, expected activities, and possible performance tasks are based on needs within each school and connected to the NCSCOS.

Curriculum development is ongoing; AIG seeks to align AIG curriculum to the pacing and content of BCS core instruction to provide depth and rigor.

Grades 9-12

Students maintain the opportunity to self-select Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), College/Career Promise Dual Enrollment, NCVPS, or other online courses. Counselors and school-based mentors assist students in selecting courses from their areas of strength, interests, and desire for future education, career, or other service goals.

Curriculum is determined by the requirements of the courses and the needs of the students enrolled in those courses. BCS is committed to fidelity of course requirements with consideration and planning for the social and emotional needs of the gifted learners within those courses. For this reason, the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist works in conjunction with other Curriculum leaders to ensure that the Honors implementation is provided, monitored, and supported with fidelity. Also, the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist is the AP Contact for the district and works closely with the NC AP Partnership and AP teachers in the district. Lastly, Middle School AIG Specialists and the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist provide evaluation and direction for 9th and 10th graders who seek enrollment in CCP courses.

*** Practice E**

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

Buncombe County Schools uses varied and ongoing curriculum and assessments to meet the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners and to provide equity and excellence in the overall educational program. The consistent use of data to inform instruction demonstrates a responsiveness to student needs and an

overall procedural expectation for meeting students where they are while actively challenging them toward exceptional growth.

Using locally-developed common assessments, BCS teachers determine students' current academic performance and ensure their educational needs are met. Assessments used to monitor these needs include, but are not limited to: state EOG and EOC testing, NC Check-ins, MAP tests, mClass, and informal observations.

AIG Specialists collaborate with administrators, classroom teachers, counselors, curriculum coaches, and other specialists to analyze assessments of gifted students and support their growth. Through the BCS PLC cycle, teachers and AIG Specialists collaborate to determine the needs of individual students and group them accordingly. Flexible groups are dependent upon student concept mastery, pre-assessment data, formative data, and summative tasks.

Within the enrichment class, the AIG Specialists duplicate these processes of utilizing data as they regularly rely on rubrics to evaluate students' progress through the AIG curriculum in order to support a wide range of student needs and abilities. AIG Specialists continue utilizing the NC AIG website, Canvas, Google Classroom, SeeSaw, and other available resources to support teacher ability to evaluate and use student data effectively.

AIG Specialists are included in all assessment training (EVAAS, PowerSchool, NC Check-in, etc.) and meet with county-wide Data Coaches to disaggregate data applicable to AIG students. AIG Specialists attend “data digs” at individual schools and work alongside classroom teachers to determine student needs for academic growth and support. Specialists are able to access individual growth projections for students to identify students who need remediation and/or small group support. Elementary AIG Specialists use CogAT testing to assure equitable screening opportunities for all students as well as a nationally normed achievement test.

*** Practice F**

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

Collaboration among AIG personnel, classroom teachers, counselors, administrators, and other relevant staff related to the success of our gifted and advanced learners is essential as we implement a differentiated curriculum. AIG Specialists possess specialized knowledge about instructional strategies and curriculum modifications appropriate for gifted students. Therefore, AIG Specialists must facilitate collaboration with regular education teachers, parents/guardians, and other relevant instructional personnel to plan and utilize appropriate materials and strategies.

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

To accomplish this comprehensive task, AIG Specialists participate in monthly departmental PLC and professional development work. Goals for these meetings include:

- planning advanced content lessons
- reviewing research-based strategies
- participating in professional development
- coordinating alignment of curricular activities

Instructional and curricular resources are shared via platforms such as Google Drive, Canvas, SeeSaw and Google Classroom.

At the school level, AIG Specialists collaborate with classroom teachers, other school personnel, and district instructional coaches to plan for the academic needs of gifted students. We also work with teachers to reflect on differentiation practices. Our AIG Department collaborates regularly with leaders from across the district to connect gifted programming to student needs. Student Services, EL, EC and other leaders work with us to recognize talents and tailor instruction for all students. These collaborations move us closer to the goal that each gifted student's needs are met all day, every day.

Specifically:

- Classroom teachers + AIG Specialists: weekly/monthly PLC, daily/weekly classroom interactions, email, data digs and staff meetings (also at car duty and over coffee)
- Instructional Coaches + AIG Specialists: Data digs, email, professional development at the school level
- ML teachers, EC, Counselors, Specialists + AIG Specialists: Email, conferencing
- Administrators + AIG Specialists: Data Digs, email, professional development, AGIT teams, AIG classroom visits

- Other departments + AIG Department: Monthly AIG meetings, AIG Advanced Learning Lead Specialist committees served (Math Leadership, Literacy Team, etc)

* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard

- Provide *schoolwide* enrichment opportunities as schedule allows (i.e. during school news, school newsletters, morning arrival, lunch, etc).
- Kindergarten enrichment as needed; focus on developing talents in all K students

Planned Sources of Evidence

* AIG Student Folders

* Student products

* AIG Lesson Plans


* Professional Development opportunities by schools

* List of instructional resources/materials by grade level

* Agendas from monthly AIG staff meetings and PLCs

- * Agendas from transition meetings
- * List of students served in Problem Solvers
- * List of students served in Talent Development
- * Surveys and Results (yearly to students, staff, administrators, parents)

Documents

Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	 <u>Cluster Classroom Differentiation Documentation.docx</u>

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

Buncombe County Schools (110) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

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

* Practice A

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

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 ensure appropriate implementation of the NC Gifted Program Standards and Article 9B. The Buncombe County AIG Program employs an AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist to coordinate and administer the

local program. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist serves under the direction of the Buncombe County Schools Curriculum Department and in coordination with the Elementary/Intermediate, Middle, and High School Curriculum Directors.

AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist licensure requirements:

- Must have a clear, non-provisional NC Professional Educator License/Academically Gifted Licensure
- Master's degree in Education or related field; and/or extensive experience in the field of gifted education in NC

AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist's primary responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Leads monthly AIG Specialist Professional Learning Community (PLC) and AIG staff meetings
- Facilitates Buncombe County AIG Local Credential workshops and other professional development workshops as needed
- Maintains and monitors records of AIG Local Credentials for BCS educators
- Prepares and maintains the Buncombe County Schools Gifted Services Plan; maintenance and then revisions during Plan revision years
- Manages and audits the AIG budget (Title II & State funds)
- Follows up on decisions and informational items from meetings with AIG Specialists
- Coordinates yearly curriculum development activities for AIG Staff based upon district needs
- Facilitates equitable and comprehensive testing options used for AIG identification
- Is responsible for keeping inventory, ordering, and distributing testing materials needed for the AIG Program
- Oversees CogAT test ordering, training, and administration across the district
- Monitors District-Based Team (DBT) identification data and administrative placement decisions
- Collaborates with BCS leadership to clarify AIG best practices, Plan details and expectations, AIG Specialist placements, and other AIG-related issues
- Facilitates collaboration with state leadership to synergize efforts on behalf of gifted students
- Collaborates with district leaders and departments (i.e. Title I, North Carolina Virtual Public School, Digital Learning, Instructional Coaches, ELL, Student Services, Secondary Math/ELA, etc.)
- Collaborates with Lead Psychologist to access and evaluate student data for all AIG Specialists

- Leads AIG Parent and Administrative Advisory Groups
- Serves as the Governor's School District Coordinator
- Serves as the AP District Contact
- Monitors AIG subgroup achievement and growth, survey data, and advisory group feedback to assess program effectiveness and efficacy
- Shares data work with stakeholders and public
- Maintains student files for district-wide schools (Nesbitt Discovery Academy, Buncombe County Early College, Buncombe County Schools Virtual Academy)
- Completes Fall and Spring Headcounts for district-wide schools (Nesbitt Discovery Academy, Buncombe County Early College, Buncombe County Schools Virtual Academy)
- Creates and monitors AIG District website, AIG Credentials Course, and AIG Specialist digital "Filing cabinet"
- Presents at local community meetings as needed
- Leads Professional Development opportunities in schools as needed
- Is available for parents to call/email/meet regarding questions, concerns, and opportunities for students
- Is available for teachers, administrators, and district leaders to call/email/meet regarding questions, concerns, and opportunities for students
- Supports AIG Specialists across the district through weekly newsletters, digital staff filing cabinet, school visits, and intentional availability

*** Practice B**

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

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. Since 2020, yearly surveys indicate that 100% of administrators reported that their AIG licensed specialist frequently or always spends his/her time engaged in tasks which explicitly address the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of AIG students. In 2024, survey results showed that 96.6% of administrators felt strongly that AIG Specialists were infusing critical thinking and problem solving into the AIG curriculum and 83% for creativity and innovation. Also in 2024 surveys, 100% of administrators and 88% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that BCS uses challenging, rigorous and relevant instruction to accommodate a range of intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners.

AIG services are essential to the total instructional program of the school. AIG Specialists are engaged in work that supports the MTSS philosophy of a strongly differentiated core service for all students. Since working with AIG Specialists on a weekly basis is part of gifted services, AIG Specialists are the most appropriate personnel to provide individual and small group interventions for gifted students. AIG Specialists regularly review data (as provided by our district school psychologist) to analyze needs and respond accordingly.

Collaborations with classroom teachers and staff development opportunities at individual school levels provide teachers with necessary supports to bring rigor and high task engagement to all classrooms. Additionally, AIG Specialists participate in collaboration and focused staff development during monthly AIG PLC meetings that explicitly addresses the academic, intellectual, and social/emotional needs of gifted learners. AIG Specialists share this appropriate and relevant research with classroom teachers in a variety of ways including, but not limited to: PLC meetings, team settings, newsletters, individual student conferences, professional development, and digital communications.

Because AIG Specialists are tasked with explicitly addressing the unique academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners, AIG Specialists are provided with learning spaces that address equity across the district. Each space used for AIG work has enough learning spaces for each student, a SmartBoard for cooperative learning and collaboration, and a locked filing cabinet for student records and testing supplies.

Current AIG Specialists have a clear, non-provisional license in gifted education. However, 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 is expected to complete non-provisional AIG state licensure within two years.

AIG Specialist Job Description (grade levels are based on schools served):

- Assists in evaluation and implementation of the BCS Gifted Services Plan
- Provides explicit and direct instruction in enrichment groups for identified AIG students in 4th through 8th grades
- Provides consultative support to high school students as they transition to the high school setting and throughout 9-12 grades.
- Collaborates with classroom teachers to support classroom differentiation
- Co-teaches in cluster group classes, as time allows
- Supports and/or provides professional development for cluster teachers
- Provides explicit and direct instruction to Problem Solvers groups for students in 1st and 2nd grades
- Provides explicit and direct instruction to 3rd grade Talent Development groups
- Participates in curriculum development activities within the AIG department and at the assigned base school
- Communicates with parents and the community regarding AIG services
- Receives and processes nominations for gifted services
- Administers and scores necessary aptitude and achievement tests
- Administers a screening test to 3rd grade classrooms in their respective schools and interprets the data
- Serves as chairperson of the AIG Identification team at each school
- Serves on Administrative Placement Team (APT) at the district level as needed

- Prepares, revises and communicates the Differentiated Education Plans for each identified student
- Maintains local and state headcounts
- Conducts and documents annual reviews of student progress
- Maintains confidential AIG student file documentation
- Participates in monthly AIG PLC/Staff meetings
- Maintains an AIG Evidence Notebook
- Mentors new AIG Specialists as needed
- Serves on special committees as needed (i.e. AIG Advisories, Plan Writing, Kindergarten Enrichment Team, SIT, Math and literacy teams, etc.)
- Attends special events at assigned base school (i.e. Curriculum Night, Open House, Multicultural Night)
- Conducts transition meetings between schools for students and parents/guardians
- Hosts parent conferences at initial AIG placement and throughout the school year

*** Practice C**

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

Gifted learners require classroom teachers and other personnel involved in their education to have necessary knowledge, skills, and understandings to provide an appropriate and challenging instructional program. For this reason, BCS strives for all educators to have access to professional development that targets gifted and advanced learners. Each year, our

Gifted Services Department provides free staff development to meet this requirement via the AIG Local Credentials Course**. Other professional development is provided on an as-needed basis and as requested by teachers and administrators (i.e. Rigor, Depth & Complexity, PROBEs, etc.) and is listed in Practice G.

The following are established professional licensure and professional development requirements for all personnel involved with AIG programs and services:

Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Specialist:

- A clear, non-provisional license in gifted education OR approval for employment by the AIG/Advanced Learning
- Lead Specialist. 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 AIG Plan

Classroom Cluster Teacher (Grades 4 – 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 or Advanced Placement Course (Grades 9 – 12):

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

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

- Understanding of the Buncombe County Schools AIG Plan

Other licensed instructional and support personnel (Instructional Coaches, Math Coaches, Literacy Coaches, Counselors, Art, Music, STEM instructors):

- Understanding of the Buncombe County Schools AIG Plan
 - Buncombe County AIG Local Credentials** preferred
-

****To achieve BCS AIG Local Credentials (1 CEU) through our online platform, educators will:**

- Understand the current Buncombe County Schools AIG Plan and the shared levels of responsibility in meeting the needs of gifted learners within our county.
- Recognize gifted learners and understand their unique educational and social-emotional needs.
- Learn research-based methodologies to differentiate the NCSCOS in daily instruction.
- Collaborate with AIG specialists to adapt units of study for advanced learners.
- Teach and reflect upon a differentiated lesson in collaboration with an AIG Specialist.
- Qualifications for positions serving AIG Students

- Lead AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist:
- Clear, non-provisional license in gifted education
- Master's degree in education or related field; and/or extensive experience in the field of gifted education

Provisional AIG Credentials

Due to an increasing number of Beginning Teachers in our district, of which a percentage are pursuing alternative licensure, it can be difficult for these educators to take our BCS AIG Local Credentials (10 hours) when they have an AIG cluster class. These teachers are tasked with many professional development requirements during their first 2 years. Due to this challenge, we offer Provisional Credentials.

- Available to BT1 and BT2 teachers who have clusters of AIG students in their classes
- 2 Hour PD to be completed one-on-one or in a small group setting with the AIG Specialist in the 1st 6 weeks following the start date of the teacher with a cluster class.
- PD includes but is not limited to:
 - AIG Plan Summary
 - BCS AIG Website walkthrough
 - Differentiation Documentation review
 - DEP review
 - Characteristics of gifted students (High Achiever vs Gifted)
 - Differentiation resources
- Provisional AIG Credentials should be converted to BCS AIG Local Credentials during or before year 3 to continue teaching AIG clusters of gifted students.

- Provisional AIG Credentials to be completed after school or on an early dismissal date, at the discretion of the AIG Specialist and teacher.
- AIG Specialist will create and distribute a 2 hour Provisional Credentials certificate for teachers to submit for CEU credit.

*** 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.

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. Once these educators have received local credentials, efforts continue to monitor and support general education services.

BCS Local Credentials

In grades 4-8, classroom teachers must complete the Buncombe County Schools AIG Local Credentials course, which is offered in an online platform (Canvas) to be completed from September to April each year. Educators who hold a 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 requires a purposeful collaboration between the teacher and AIG Specialist to develop, teach, and reflect on a rigorous, differentiated lesson. Learning targets and goals for this local AIG Credentials course, as well as a provisional option, are outlined in Standard 4, Practice C.

In grades 9-12, BCS AIG Specialists work closely with counselors as student transition and/or need evaluations for AIG placement. AIG Specialists are also available to teachers on a consultative basis for all subject areas in grades 9-12.

Continued Monitoring and Support

Our support does not end with the completion of the local credentials course or targeted PD.

BCS AIG Specialists continue to monitor and support general education services through our Differentiation Documentation, PLC participation, and other professional development. Additionally, we offer NCDPI DALGE Booster Shots for teachers who need a “refresher”.

Differentiation Documentation is required by all AIG cluster teachers. This document monitors the comprehensive differentiation strategies taking place in any given classroom throughout the school year. By categories of content, process and product, teachers have a checklist of strategies that are matched with the DEPs of our AIG students. This documentation is kept throughout the school year, shared with parents/guardians, and placed in AIG student files at the end of each year. Support is also provided in the BCS PLC Cycle. Within that cycle, there is a section titled, “What is our plan to ensure success for all students?” with a bullet that reads, “Differentiate core lesson plans in terms of content, process, product and environment”. Not only is this a reminder to address differentiation in the PLC and planning processes, it is also a requirement of our PLCs. Should teachers have a need for support in this area, AIG Specialists are available to offer differentiation strategies for any given unit of study.

*** Practice E**

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

Buncombe County Schools is committed to hiring and retaining the most qualified professionals in all areas of our schools. Our AIG department also seeks to fill positions with qualified candidates who are experienced teachers with a clear and deep understanding of the needs of gifted and advanced learners.

Strategies for Recruitment

- Local colleges have AIG licensure opportunities that are manageable for current classroom teachers to pursue (WCU, Mars Hill, Online options)
- Library of resources is located in the district AIG office for check out for those taking the NC PRAXIS to add on AIG licensure
- Recognition and engagement of established classroom teachers who have a clear understanding of the needs of gifted learners and a passion for meeting their needs
- Spark interest in gifted services and AIG overall through our local credentials course
- Dedicate part of our yearly AIG presentation to staff to the process for obtaining AIG Licensure.
- Collaborate with Human Resources department to recognize candidates from diverse backgrounds who apply for positions within the Buncombe County Schools system
- Post AIG Specialist positions beyond the required length of time to provide ample opportunity for candidates to apply

Strategies for Retention

- Veteran mentors provided for 1-2 years for new AIG Specialists
- Provide support to AIG Specialists from diverse backgrounds who show a need for differentiated professional development and/or mentorship
- Provide consistent and relevant Professional Development within the AIG department that focuses on current trends in gifted education as well as current needs of students and staff in our district
- Create and maintain a culture of lifelong adult learners in our AIG department where we regularly share and learn from each other
- Create and maintain a culture of support, teamwork, and purpose

- Highlight our AIG Credentials Course and AIG Licensure options in our yearly AIG presentation to staff in our schools
- Focus on supporting teachers from other countries who are employed in BCS Dual Language programs through targeted professional development in partnership with the BCS Global Education/World Languages Specialist.
- Selection of an AIG Specialist of the Year in the spring; who then becomes the district nominee for NCAGT Educator of the Year for the following year
- Recognition of the AIG Specialist of the Year through BCS Communications outlets as well as within the department

* **Practice F**

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

Buncombe County Schools is committed to providing ongoing, intentional support for every staff member in order to equip them to meet the needs of each and every student they serve, as stated in Goal 4 of our Strategic Plan, 2024-2027. Through this commitment, differentiated options are highlighted as each teacher and school in our district has different needs. While mindsets, policies, and practices have changed as a result of professional learning, targeted professional development as supported by our Buncombe County Schools Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 will continue to move us forward.

AIG Specialists work in every school in our district. Our goal of shifting policies and practices is strengthened by our Buncombe County Schools Strategic Plan for 2024-2027: “When we invest and allocate resources equitably and intentionally, we create the conditions for excellence necessary for every student to achieve at high levels.”

Through PLCs, AIG Identification Team meetings, staff meetings, and AIG presence at school professional development meetings, our entire district is focused on implementing practices that reflect our core beliefs around engaging all students, collaborating and connecting, building partnerships, and supporting educators.

In the next 3 years, it will be important to continue our work; realizing that expanding excellence in education is never finished. Taking our history of dedication to changing mindsets, policies, and practices further into classrooms remains a goal for our gifted programming.

*See Standard 2i for more information regarding the work we do to expand excellence.

* **Practice G**

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

Buncombe County Schools has a commitment to ensure that the academic, intellectual, social/emotional needs of our AIG students are met. The integration of the Buncombe County Schools Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 created a seamless merging of a focus on differentiated professional development opportunities.

District level:

Our AIG Program, in collaboration with initiatives in the Curriculum Department, Title I Services, and the Technology Department, aligns ongoing professional development opportunities to build AIG cluster teacher differentiation strategies and to enhance AIG staff expertise. AIG staff members participate in school-based and curriculum-based staff development activities to be knowledgeable of curriculum initiatives throughout our schools. As funding is available, AIG personnel attend national and state gifted conferences and specific subject area workshops and conferences. AIG personnel work collaboratively with instructional support staff (Title I, ML, curriculum coaches, etc.) via our departmental meetings to integrate best practices for gifted learners into professional development offerings throughout the district.

Additionally, the BCS AIG Local Credentials Course is offered via Canvas to be completed from September to April each year. In order to obtain AIG Local Credentials, teachers must complete the BCS Local Credentials Course or complete AIG licensure from an accredited IHE or via the Praxis examination. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist 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 and a library of resources is housed in the district office and available for check out.

School level:

AIG Specialists provide an overview of the Buncombe County Schools Gifted Services Plan annually to all personnel 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.

Professional development that aligns with AIG Program goals also occurs at the school level. AIG Specialists and the AIG/Advanced learning Lead Specialist are available for formal and informal learning opportunities.

Learning opportunities at the school level vary by need, but may include the following:

- Depth and Complexity in the regular classroom
- Differentiation Strategies
- Rejuvenating Rigor
- Identifying Gifted Learners (characteristics and process)
- DPI Booster Shots

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Offering an AIG Credentials Refresher course...Booster Shots
- Guest Speaker at AIG Staff meetings: someone from the DPI Office of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education
- Neighboring district collaboration with those who have active AIG Programming that aligns with BCS

Planned Sources of Evidence

* AIG Specialist Credentials	
* AIG Staff meeting and PLC agendas	
* AIG Specialist Schedules	
* List of Newly Credentialed Personnel (Local/Regional AIG Credentials)	
* School-based Professional Development	
* Master list of personnel with local AIG Credentials and AIG Licensure	
* List of teachers with AIG Clusters (and cluster numbers) at each school	
* Letters of non-compliance from administrators	
* Professional Development for AIG Specialists	
* Current AIG Plan	

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link

Standard 5: Partnerships

Buncombe County Schools (110) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 5: Partnerships

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

* Practice A

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

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional.

Buncombe County Schools encourages a high level of parent/guardian involvement. By partnering with families, AIG Specialists are able to effectively solicit support for programming components. Sharing identification procedures and protocol, the Local AIG Plan, and all policies relating to gifted education provide an avenue for input and feedback to provide awareness and ensure improvement. Families provide an array of financial, academic, and programming support or assistance.

AIG Specialists use survey data and beginning of the year parent contact forms to make connections with parent and family groups who may be interested in becoming partners to support programming options and develop services for gifted learners.

The BCS AIG department supports family involvement through participation in community events and enrichment activities during and outside school hours to increase partnerships with families and engage AIG students. Our AIG Parent/Guardian Advisory is made up of parents, guardians and community leaders who are from every district in our LEA, providing an array of talents and support for our gifted learners. Not only does our Parent Advisory allow for input

from stakeholders, it also provides a platform to inform and share research regarding the needs of gifted learners. The AIG Parent Advisory meetings provide two-way communication where AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist, classroom teachers, and AIG Specialists can share information with parents while also receiving immediate feedback, input on decisions, and overall concerns from parents and the community at large.

To ensure clear communication with all partners regarding academic and social/emotional needs of students, all AIG identification and placement forms are available in multiple languages. AIG Specialists utilize BCS Translation Services on a regular basis to translate all other forms, letters, surveys and other communication as needed. To ensure verbal communication is also clear and two-way, interpreters are available to translate at meetings where parents and/or community members are present.

AIG Specialists collaborate with parents and guardians to make sure that AIG student academic and social/emotional needs are met. To ensure these two-way partnerships that are collaborative, AIG Specialists host initial AIG placement conferences, Open House nights and parent night events, disseminate curriculum resources, arbitrate student concerns, and facilitate transition meetings from elementary school to intermediate/middle school and from intermediate/middle school to high school. Specialists send student progress reports to parents on a quarterly basis to keep parents informed as well as to provide varied resources for extensions of activities at home. This partnership where communication is expected and consistent each quarter provides a vehicle to share student successes, struggles, and varied social and emotional needs with parents as they develop throughout the year.

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. BCS AIG Department also collaborates with other district departments to target special populations. ML, EC, and Student Services departments provide resources for reaching parents and community partners through

collaboration among staff at our monthly AIG meetings. In addition to that staff collaboration, those departments provide access for AIG to be present at parent and community meetings where AIG students and parents are present (i.e. Multicultural Night, Curriculum Night, Global Awareness Night, Countdown to Kindergarten, etc.).

Documentation of AIG partnerships and involvement is in the form of sign-in sheets, digital communications, and/or conference logs.

Parent Communication By Grade Level

All parents have access to AIG Specialists' websites as well as our district Gifted Programming Page. These sites are one-way communication; however, links are provided for parents to interact with AIG Specialists, the AIG Lead Specialist, and district leaders.

K-3rd grades:

Kindergarten Services are consultative. Parent/guardian communication on as needed basis. AIG Specialists are available for K parent/guardian meetings and other events.

In 1st and 2nd grades, parents/guardians are sent an initial letter to inform them of participation in Problem Solvers. Because these groups are fluid and flexible, communication occurs on an as-needed basis.

In 3rd grade, parents/guardians are sent an initial letter to inform them of participation in Talent Development groups. Once a student is served through Talent Development, communication includes, but is not limited to, newsletters, parent phone calls and conferences as needed.

4th - 8th grades:

Minimum communication requirements:

- Student Annual Reviews (at the end of each year)
- AIG Placement Conferences (at initial placement)
- Parent Contact and/or Volunteer form (with parent phone, email)
- Open House or Meet The Teacher availability
- AIG Specialist website updated and active
- Newsletter and Student Progress Report (quarterly)
- Differentiation Documentation
- Required annual transition meetings as specified in Standard 2, Practice E

9th - 12th grades:

Communication with high school parents/guardians occurs through the high school counseling department. All communication regarding AIG programming and advanced opportunities (i.e. Governor's School, AP opportunities) is communicated to the high school counselors and they communicate this information to parents. Parents are always asked to email or call the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist with questions, feedback and input. BCS makes sure to include high school parents/guardians on our Advisory board. Middle school AIG Specialists are also contacts for high school students and their parents/guardians in BCS. This relationship is strengthened through our Advanced Learning Nights during the transition from middle school to high school.

*** Practice B**

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

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. Partnerships provide a framework for decision-making and continuous program improvement and help maintain the integrity of the AIG 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. Partnerships are ongoing and developing to support AIG programs and services.

Institutes of Higher Education

Buncombe County Schools continues a strong partnership between our schools and Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College. Early College, one of our three Cooperative Innovative High Schools, is housed on their campus, and student groups tour the campus during their 8th grade year. Through Career and College Promise courses, AIG students and other advanced learners are offered opportunities to take college courses at the community college, either online or on the college campus. This partnership provides advanced courses but also ensures access to college experiences for all advanced learners.

Educational/Faith Community Partnerships

We are fortunate to have many educational partners available to our students in Buncombe County. These partners are dedicated to the growth of all students, but pair with AIG Specialists to support AIG students, programs, and services. These partnerships meet a variety of needs across the curriculum, financially and academically. This has been especially true in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Community partners are dedicated to the current and future years of recovery for our students.

Listed below are examples of current educational and faith partnerships that support and touch the lives of our advanced learners:

NOAA

NC STEM Academy

Enka Public Library

Pole Creek Baptist Church, Leicester Baptist Church, Newfound Baptist Church, Bell Methodist Church, Biltmore Church, Brookstone Church, Beverly Hills Baptist (food pantry)

United Way Community Schools

BCS Foundation

Music Works

Leicester Fire Dept.

Billy Jean King Foundation

Banzi, through HomeTrust Bank

Donors Choose

Battalion Chief, A-Group Weaverville Fire Department

Research Associate North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences-Emammal

Math Team Competitions with Chick-Fil-A sponsors

MANNA Foodbank

Bounty & Soul

Eblen Charities

MAHEC: Mountain Area Health Education Center

Family Preservation Services

Families to Families (churches that support schools)

Covenant Community Church

Youth Villages

Friends of Fairview Public Library

Asheville Community Theater

Buncombe Family Resource Center

Buncombe Sheriff's Office

Business and Industry Partnerships

Business and industry partners seek to support our gifted students through sponsorship of academic activities, financial support, hosting field trips, guest speakers, or club support. Listed below are examples of current business and

industry partnerships:

DigiPals (pen pals with other states and countries)

Mountain Xpress (spring issue)

French Broad Electric Co Education Grant

Division of Air Quality- Asheville Regional Office

Young Bus Tours

Math Team Competitions with Chick-Fil-A sponsors

Creekside Taphouse

Roberts and Stevens, attorneys

Sierra Nevada (IT help with coding club)

Crawford-Ray Funeral Home (new clothing for students)

KD's One Stop of Fairview

Mission Hospital (Junior Volunteer Program; High School)

Emory Electric Interns with Juniors and Seniors NBHS

Brian Center Interns for LPN for Seniors at NBAIGA Asheville (American Institute of Graphic Arts)

School to School Partnerships:

Schools in our district enjoy many different partnerships with each other to promote community, provide support, and connect schools within each smaller district. Listed below are some of these partnerships:

Inquiry Conferences

Geography Bee, History Bee, etc.

Beta Club visits to elementary schools for reading partners

Battle of the Books “mock” battles

AIG Specialists visiting/observing other AIG Specialists

Elevating Math Competition partnerships

* **Practice C**

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

Article 9B requires that each LEA develop a plan to involve stakeholders in implementing, monitoring, and integrating a local gifted program. Buncombe County Schools serves over 21,000 students; as a result, we have two advisory committees to ensure access to meeting times and locations. These committees include representatives from parents, teachers, administrators, central office representatives, and the AIG department.

The AIG Parent/Guardian Advisory Committee represents each of the six districts in Buncombe County Schools and meets a minimum of twice each school year. Parent/guardian representatives volunteer for this committee by responding to requests from AIG Specialists. AIG Specialists then submit names of interested parents to the district office where parents are selected carefully to ensure district and grade level representation. Parents on this committees are surveyed at the beginning of each year to determine best meeting dates and times. Meeting information is sent to absent parent members to ensure they are kept up to date.

The AIG Administrative Advisory Committee includes representation from school administrators, AIG Specialists and teachers from across the LEA; administrators from elementary, intermediate, and middle schools participate. This committee also meets a minimum of twice yearly. Our AIG Advisory Committees provide guidance and feedback on our local AIG program. Both advisory committees have been instrumental in developing, implementing, and monitoring our local AIG program.

Developing our AIG Plan

During a plan writing year, Advisories meet quarterly. A google presentation is used to anchor the meeting. During this presentation there are 4 blocks: welcome, education/information, feedback, and discussion. The welcome ensures that all stakeholders are familiar with each other to facilitate discussions during the discussion time. The education is a general exploration of a topic in the AIG programming or plan. The feedback is for the advisory members to give feedback on the educational topics of the meeting. Discussion is an open opportunity for all members to ask clarifying questions, talk about the topics, or give input on plan content.

Implementing the AIG Plan & Program

The implementation of the AIG Plan and program require the support of all stakeholders. Our Advisories meet to discuss implementation throughout the district; members are encouraged to glean information from other stakeholders (including students) as they are at the grassroots of our implementation. Advisory meetings addressing implementation follow the 4 block presentation above; however, more time is given to feedback and discussion. Many of these meetings include group work of members in small groups to facilitate discussions. We use padlet.com and google docs to record member input and feedback. An “action item” list is created, based on feedback, to be addressed by AIG staff prior to upcoming meetings. An example of an “action item” might be: The Advisory would like to add a comment section on progress reports for parents to comment on progress.

Monitoring the AIG Plan & Program

Advisory board members are surveyed yearly throughout the implementation of our AIG plan to monitor progress of programs and initiatives. Not only are members surveyed regularly, all students, parents/guardians, administrators, teachers/support personnel, and AIG specialists are surveyed yearly throughout plan implementation. Surveys are an effective tool to monitor our AIG plan and program as the information gathered monitors the effectiveness of our AIG Plan and the fidelity and consistency by which it is implemented.

* Practice D

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

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

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

The communication of AIG services, policies, and procedures is necessary and crucial to ensure the integrity and success of the program. Buncombe County Schools shares communication with stakeholders to assist in the collaboration and implementation of the local AIG Plan. Communication of policies, procedures, and services is essential for ensuring success. The BCS AIG 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 as well as a link to the AIG Plan. Information regarding the local AIG Plan is shared at staff meetings in each school yearly.

The BCS AIG Plan is shared with families as students are identified and placed into the program during an initial parent placement meeting. Should English not be the first language spoken in the home, a translator is present at these initial meetings. AIG Specialists also communicate policies with parents about the AIG program and special events through newsletters, quarterly reports, emails, and automated phone calls. These are also translated by our translation department for parents/guardians who need this service. AIG Specialists maintain a current database of parent emails and/or addresses in order to facilitate communication; these databases are part of the AIG Evidence Notebook.

Specialists also share with parents and teachers on-going information about AIG curriculum, ongoing projects, and work expectations through email updates, formal and informal conferences, and phone calls as needed.

Advisory groups and AIG Departmental PLC work ensures that stakeholders share in the responsibility of crafting, implementing, and evaluating the BCS AIG Plan. AIG Lead Facilitators attend district principals and assistant principals' meetings to communicate plan expectations and solicit support for plan development and implementation.

In addition to previously mentioned parent communications, AIG Specialists share with parents, yearly, the Annual Review and Differentiation Documentation forms which communicate evidence of student academic progress and differentiation in the regular classroom.

AIG Specialists collaborate with the Buncombe County Schools Communication Department to "share the good news" with community and parent stakeholders about programs, events, and initiatives within their schools and districts. This good news is shared via various social media platforms and newsletters to the public and to school employees through inter-departmental newsletters and digital media. Each AIG Specialist's employee website is updated with good news within their respective schools and classrooms.

Buncombe County Schools AIG believes extracurricular, community-based, and summer opportunities are important for all students. The support of ML personnel and availability of information and resources in the home language of our families is necessary. BCS encourages extra-curricular programs and events that enhance and further develop the needs and interests of all AIG students. The BCS AIG department will continue to offer a wide variety of academic opportunities while seeking out new program offerings.

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 include, but are not limited to: Battle of the Books, Odyssey of the Mind, Destination Imagination, Math Counts, Elevating Elementary Math Competition, a variety of academic and creative camps, Governor's School, Geography Bee, and Science Olympiad. A database of community-based extracurricular and summer opportunities is shared with parents and regularly updated.

High school transitions offer additional opportunities for the AIG Department to share information with advanced learners. Our department shares the Transition to 9-12 Gifted Services flyer (Appendix D) with all AIG families as a way to encourage continual selection of challenging academic environments.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Work with our local universities, (UNC-Asheville, Mars Hill, WCU) to strengthen and extend our current partnership (AIG Specialists)

- Grow our partnership with community centers and preschools around the BCS area to reach preschool students to provide talent development education to parents
- Work within our school communities to establish relationships with businesses and community organizations
- Send home a beginning of year survey/request to parents asking about creating partnerships
- Collaboration/programs among schools in district (elementary/intermediate/middle/high)

Planned Sources of Evidence

- | | |
|---|--|
| * BCS AIG Plan | |
| * Agendas from all AIG Stakeholder meetings | |
| * Documentation of partnerships (school and district level) | |
| * School email databases (kept by AIG Specialist) | |
| * Sign-in sheets and/or attendance from parent meetings and/or partnership meetings | |
| * Newsletters and/or school-specific communication with stakeholders | |
| * Student Annual Reviews (in student folders) | |

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

Standard 6: Program Accountability

Buncombe County Schools (110) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Standard 6: Program Accountability

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

* Practice A

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

A successful gifted program requires the development of a comprehensive AIG Plan that is developed collaboratively, implemented system-wide to ensure excellence, continuously monitored, and evaluated for effectiveness with input from all stakeholders. Not only is this required by DPI/SBE, it is best practice for AIG programming. BCS AIG has developed a comprehensive plan that meets all criteria while soliciting feedback along the development process to ensure stakeholder involvement in making decisions that positively impact our students.

Buncombe County Schools' AIG Plan is developed with input from regular education teachers, AIG Specialists, administrators, parents/guardians, advisory groups, and district administrators.

Our AIG Parent/Guardian Advisory group meets a minimum of twice annually to evaluate and reflect on our current plan practices and offer suggestions for improvement. Our AIG Administrative Advisory committee, which consists of principals, central office administrators, AIG Specialists, and regular education teachers also meets throughout the year to evaluate our current AIG plan and provide valuable input into the development of our new plan. Our AIG plan includes a process for yearly documentation, evaluation, and continual monitoring for effectiveness. An annual survey of students, parents, classroom teachers, administrators and our own departmental self-assessment and goal setting are used to help evaluate the effectiveness of gifted programming. Our rationale for AIG practices is based on this program feedback and self-assessment.

*** 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.

A successful AIG Plan provides a framework for decision-making and continuous program improvement to maintain the integrity and fidelity. Stakeholders are updated in the progress of implementation via Advisory Board meetings, district principals' meetings, and district leadership meetings. The Buncombe County Schools AIG Department continues to consistently implement and monitor our local AIG Plan.

Buncombe County Schools' AIG Plan provides a number of strategies to ensure continuous monitoring at the school and system-wide levels. At the school level in grades K-8, records are kept in locked AIG filing cabinets. In 9-12, records are kept in high school records rooms. AIG Evidence Notebooks are kept at every school and updated annually. Evidence Notebooks ensure compliance and consistency across the district. Each year, AIG Specialists are given an Evidence Checklist, where they confirm that all evidence, documentation of AIG Plan implementation, has been kept in a clear and organized manner. Evidence specific to each AIG Standard and responding practices is documented and maintained in these AIG Evidence Notebooks. Notebooks and student records are audited on a rotational basis across the LEA. Audits are performed peer-to-peer as well as by the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist, as needed.

At the district level, the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist aids 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.

*** 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.

The General Assembly funds all LEAs and charter schools for AIG programming. All LEAs receive these funds regardless of the number of identified AIG students. State allocated budget funds must be used for AIG programming

purposes according to state policy, and it is the goal of the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist, Curriculum Directors, and other district leadership that Buncombe County Schools consistently uses state funds appropriately.

Buncombe County Schools Finance Department prepares an annual AIG program budget that ensures proper allocation of funds. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist makes recommendations and requests to support the work of AIG Specialists across the district. Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education oversee those requests. Monies are allocated for personnel, materials, and professional development to support the advancement of AIG students. Additionally, the AIG Department makes every effort to financially support students who are accepted to NC Governor's School via partial or complete tuition support.

*** Practice D**

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

Buncombe County Schools recognizes the importance of monitoring and analyzing growth for all students. Throughout our district, we hold “Data Digs” where student performance, growth and goals for instruction are addressed. As mentioned throughout our AIG Plan, AIG Specialists and the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist attend these school-level and district-level meetings, taking a comprehensive look at patterns, trends and practices. Not only do we attend and participate in these data meetings at the school level, our AIG Departmental PLCs also maintain and analyze this data through the lens of gifted programming. AIG staff works closely with our Lead School Psychologist as she gathers and shares data using national, state and local norms for a variety of assessments. Data include, but are not limited to: BOG/EOG, CogAT Screener, MAP testing, EOC, EVAAS, and mClass.

In addition to maintaining and analyzing data from student assessments, programming and service data are also maintained. We track Problem Solvers and Talent Development participants who eventually meet criteria and are formally identified as gifted through Specialists records at each school. All AIG Specialists keep a Nomination Database of student information that is passed ahead to the next-level school as those students are on our watch lists. Names of gifted students who transfer out of our district are kept on a comprehensive transfer student list that is shared with every AIG Specialist, should the student re-enter Buncombe County Schools. Secondary Specialists maintain data on AIG Students who dropout of high school; every effort is made at prevention and discussion before this happens. At

the end of each school year, all data is printed and kept in our AIG Evidence Notebooks to account for the data in individual buildings.

Tracking data relating to AIG student growth and achievement is a critical component of providing exceptional service to advanced learners. The comprehensive data that is collected on our AIG students is used to steer programming and instructional decisions and practices. In collaboration with district leaders, this disaggregation of this data extends past AIG Specialists to geographic districts, individual schools, and other departments. Data is shared with teachers, administrators, school psychologists, and instructional coaches at each school.

Parents/guardians receive data relevant to their children via our Annual Review documents.

*** Practice E**

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

Data indicates that some gifted students are often overlooked for a variety of reasons in gifted programming; therefore, purposeful and consistent monitoring is required to ensure that the potential of those students is recognized, developed, and served. Buncombe County Schools has identification measures in place to target these special populations (see Standard 1, Practice C); efforts are also made to monitor their representation, performance, and retention.

AIG Specialists keep an AIG Nomination Database at each school to track and monitor the nominations received from teachers, parents, and students. This Nomination Database helps to identify trends in both nominations and identifications. As students are identified and entered into PowerSchool, our district maintains an additional county-wide tracking that ensures a checks and balances system can occur. At each headcount submission, AIG Specialists review school data related to race, gender, and ethnicity and provide that data to AIG Lead Specialist.

Not only are records of special populations representation monitored by AIG Specialists, our SBT (school-level) and DBT (district level) keep data as well. As our SBT and DBT teams carry the responsibility of aiding in the identification

of special population students, they also monitor the evidence provided on each student as well as any possible challenges to placement. (i.e. transient attendance, frequent absences, home languages, teacher perceptions, etc.)

The AIG Department carefully monitors student identification and AIG Specialist placement trends to ensure that excellence is expanded to all populations. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist completes an annual summary of student identification numbers across the entire district, in each community of schools, and in each building and grade level. This data is used to determine AIG Specialist placements and service days allotted to individual schools. Consistent efforts are made to ensure that communities with special populations have a low student to AIG Specialist ratio. This effort provides more time for AIG Specialists assigned to high poverty schools to consider "the skills, attitudes, and values considered important within the individual's cultural group, as well as those measured by standardized tests" as recommended by Castellano and Frazier in *Special Populations in Gifted Education: Understanding Our Most Able Students from Diverse Backgrounds*.

* **Practice F**

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

Gifted learners need 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 comprehensive database of the credentials of personnel serving AIG students including AIG Specialists, cluster teachers, and AIG licensed personnel. At the school level, AIG Specialists

maintain documentation of educators who have obtained the BCS Local Credentials or have Gifted Education K-12 licensure. This data is shared annually with administrators and housed onsite in each school's Evidence Notebook. District-wide data is maintained by the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist.

AIG Specialists

Buncombe County Schools requires AIG Specialists to be licensed in Gifted Education K-12 or enrolled in current Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) coursework with completion of the program expected within two years of being hired. AIG Specialists can also successfully complete the PRAXIS exam (required for teacher certification and licensure) to obtain AIG add-on licensure within two years of being hired. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist

tracks progress of any AIG Specialist who is pursuing licensure to ensure requirements are met by the two year deadline.

Classroom teachers, K-8

AIG cluster group classroom teachers in grades 4-8 are required to have Buncombe County Local AIG Credentials, be in the process of obtaining these credentials, or be licensed in NC Gifted Education K-12. Grade 3 teachers are strongly encouraged to obtain local credentials as well. The local AIG Credentials Course is offered in an online format for classroom teachers to develop the skills and knowledge to make effective instructional decisions on behalf of advanced learners. This professional development is free of charge and available to all BCS educators. Again, this database is kept by the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist and can be accessed by all AIG Specialists in the district. Principals are emailed the lists of teachers with local credentials and asked to encourage all teachers to obtain these credentials.

Classroom teachers, 9-12

The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist maintains data for teachers serving gifted students through AP courses in our high schools. A database of teachers who teach Advanced Placement courses, including attendees of AP Summer Institute (APSI) is also maintained. High school teachers and counselors are encouraged to take our local AIG Credentials Course. A database of teachers obtaining these local credentials is kept by the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist.

*** Practice G**

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

In order to provide a differentiated education where gifted learners thrive, it is important to gather specific and useful feedback about current services and the needs of groups who support or interact with advanced learners. Buncombe County Schools uses district-wide surveys for comprehensive feedback each year, but also provides many opportunities throughout the year for timely communication and feedback from stakeholders. All levels of feedback are essential to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the AIG program.

Surveys

Survey data from classroom instructors, students, parents, and administrators provides the AIG Department with timely feedback that is used for constant improvement. 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 School Messenger calls, classroom newsletters, and AIG emails. All communication and surveys are available in multiple languages.

Students

Students are given opportunities for feedback throughout the year through the use of exit tickets, surveys, and digital platforms. AIG Specialists encourage conversations where students are able to provide feedback on instruction, units of study, and student needs.

Parents/Guardians/Families

Our Parent/Guardian Advisory group is encouraged to provide feedback on implementation and effectiveness of our AIG programming. Various digital platforms are used (padlet, jamboard, google forms, etc) to provide parents/guardians with multiple ways to provide feedback during and after advisory meetings. Specific feedback regarding instruction and our AIG Plan service delivery is accepted and welcomed at Open House meetings, through parent/AIG Specialist email communication, and on Progress Reports (comments section).

Teachers/School Personnel

At the school level, the AIG Specialist monitors enrichment and extension opportunities available to advanced learners through the Differentiation Documentation feedback. AIG Specialists welcome feedback on implementation and effectiveness of AIG programming from teachers and instructional coaches through PLCs and staff meetings.

Administrators/District Personnel

At the district level, our Administrative Advisory group provides feedback on implementation and effectiveness of AIG programming through advisory meetings. Each meeting has discussion/feedback/Q&A sections to create opportunities for this dialogue. AIG PLC groups and AIG Specialists monitor and strengthen services as they provide communication and collaboration about AIG service delivery. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist encourages and receives feedback from district personnel through attendance and participation in district-level curriculum meetings.

*** Practice H**

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

Recognizing that educating our advanced learners is a shared responsibility with all stakeholders, Buncombe County Schools assures that its current AIG Plan is available to all stakeholders. The AIG Plan is downloadable on the BCS district website, housed as hard copies in the AIG district office, and available for download on every AIG Specialist's website.

The NC Department of Public Instruction Comments for Local AIG Plans feedback is submitted to the Superintendent, BCS Board of Education, and our AIG Specialists. The NCDPI feedback for improvement is also available for review by other stakeholders upon request. The AIG Department uses this feedback to structure professional development studies, focus initiatives, and improve service delivery methods in Buncombe County.

Our AIG Department collects and shares a variety of data about student growth and achievement with school and district personnel to continually monitor and improve the AIG Plan and district services. While no individual student data may be shared with general stakeholders, sharing trends and common patterns in AIG data is essential to transparency and assessment of efficacy of AIG programming. This data is collected and summarized by AIG Specialists and the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist. BCS AIG collects data from administrators, parents, students, and teachers through yearly surveys. This data is shared with AIG specialists, Parent/Guardian and Administrative Advisories, school administrators and district leaders. Feedback from these surveys is used to recognize trends and determine goals for yearly programming and for our future AIG Plan.

*** Practice I**

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

All educators are guided by the NC Teacher Code of Ethics and Buncombe County School Board policies regarding the conduct of teachers, and specific written policies are in place to safeguard the rights of AIG students and their parents/families. Copies of these policies are in the BCS AIG Plan.

These policies include, but are not limited to: *identification, placement, reassessment, transfer procedures, and grievance* procedures.

It is imperative that AIG Staff maintain confidential communication about individually identified learners, appropriate individual services, and information related to the families of advanced learners.

Parents must have the ability to dispute identification decisions and gifted service delivery implementation in a manner that is equitable and consistent across Buncombe County. Procedures must be clearly articulated and communicated.

If assistance in any AIG matter is required, parents are encouraged to follow this communication pathway in order to receive appropriate support and clarification:

1. Classroom teacher
2. School AIG Specialist
3. Principal
4. AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist
5. Directors of Elementary/Intermediate, Middle Grades, or High School Curriculum

☐ ☐ Click here to remove the table and use only the narrative field.

Process	Procedure

Informed consent for identification	<p>* When a student is nominated for gifted services in Buncombe County Schools, parents are notified. A Parent Permission form is sent explaining the assessment process and parents are asked to sign for their consent. Also included are the identification areas in BCS AIG Programming with an explanation for each.</p>
Informed consent for placement	<p>* Should a student receive AIG identification, parents attend a Parent Placement Conference with the AIG Specialist. The AIG Specialist informs parents/guardians of programming, pertinent information, and student assessment scores. The parent/guardian must sign as consent for the student to receive a Differentiated Education Plan. This DEP is then generated and agreed upon by the parent/guardian and AIG Specialist and revisited yearly, as needed and at school transitions.</p>
Transfer procedures	<p>* Gifted students who are currently identified in any North Carolina public Local Education Agency maintain their previous AIG identification when transferring into Buncombe County Schools. However, current student performance and assessment data must be reviewed to determine the most appropriate services. A Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) will be created and will govern the services to meet the needs of the student within our BCS AIG Plan programming. The DEP will match the student's demonstrated needs and BCS service delivery options.</p> <p>Transfer students identified as gifted in other US states or from private and charter schools with no approved NC AIG Plan must complete the Procedure for AIG Evaluation and meet Buncombe County Schools AIG identification criteria.</p>
Reassessment procedures	<p>* Each year, part of the our screening process includes revisiting the records of students who have been evaluated previously and did not receive AIG identification; this is called screening our "watch list".</p> <p>Students who are placed on the watch list can be reassessed each school year based on classroom performance, school and state level test scores, and nomination.</p>
	<p>* The following procedure should be used by a student's parent/guardian if:</p>

Procedures to
resolve
disagreement

(1) 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 - School Based Identification Team (SBT) Conference

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

A. The SBT, 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 the teacher(s) and/or the parent/guardian as needed.

B. The SBT grants the conference within five (5) school days of receipt of the request. The SBT 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 SBT parent/guardian conference, then proceed to Step 2.

STEP 2 - Appeal to the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist

A. The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the school SBT in writing to the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist 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 SBT decision.

B. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist (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 administrative members at the discretion of the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist.

C. The AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist (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 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 of the AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist's Panel Review notification. 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.

* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard

- Active participation in grade level data digs in order to appropriately provide differentiated services to promote academic growth amongst the highest performing students.

Planned Sources of Evidence

- | | |
|--|--|
| * BCS AIG Plan | |
| * School-based Evidence Notebooks | |
| * EOG/EOC Data | |
| * Other Student Assessment Data (mClass, MAP, AP scores, etc.) | |
| * CoGAT rosters of National Percentiles and Standard Age Scores | |
| * Ongoing Budget records maintained by AIG/Advanced Learning Lead Specialist | |
| * AIG Headcount and Headcount Summary Reports | |
| * Records of Parent Placement Conferences by school | |
| * AIG Specialist schedules for each school | |

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







Buncombe County Schools (110) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0


* Approved by local Board of Education on:



AIG Related Documents

Buncombe County Schools (110) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Required Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
Local Board of Education Approval Signatures [Upload at least 1 document(s)]	 Local Board of Education Approval Template	
Optional Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	 BCS Multiple Measures of Aptitude, Achievement and Potential  Identification Areas for Advanced Learners 2025-2028  CCP Freshman and Sophomore Referral Process  Career and College Promise Freshman Sophomore Permission Form
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	 4100-R Early Entry to Kindergarten Adopted 3-7-13.pdf
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	

		 <u>Cluster Classroom Differentiation Documentation.docx</u>
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	

Glossary

Buncombe County Schools (110) Regular Local School District - FY 2025 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2025-2028 - Rev 0

Phrase	Definition
Achievement	Academic achievement is the progress and mastery of knowledge, skills and understanding of a particular content area.
AP	Advanced Placement courses give students the chance to tackle college-level work while they're still in high school and earn college credit and placement. Courses are rigorous and teachers are trained in AP curriculum.
DBT (District-based Team)	District-based AIG Team - A district-level committee of AIG Specialists convene monthly to review identification and placements across the district that need additional support.
Aptitude	Aptitude tests are typically used to measure a student's ability to think, reason, and problem solve in the school setting.
BCSVA	Buncombe County Schools Virtual Academy - a virtual school option for students and families in Buncombe County Schools
CCP	Career & College Promise (CCP) is North Carolina's dual enrollment program for high school students. This program allows eligible NC high school students to enroll in college classes at North Carolina community colleges and universities through their high school.

CDM	Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) provides the opportunity for students in Buncombe County to personalize and accelerate their learning by earning course credit through a demonstration of course material mastery without the requirement of specific seat time.
OALGE	Office of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education - This division of the NCDPI that supports the work of each individual district in creating, implementing, and analyzing AIG Plans.
Differentiation	Differentiation refers to a wide variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations that educators use to instruct a diverse group of students, with diverse learning needs, in the same course, classroom, or learning environment.
DEP	Differentiated Education Plan - This plan governs the AIG services that an individual student will receive based on identification area and student needs.
Enrichment	Enrichment includes a variety of learning opportunities that enhance a student's interests and talents through creative and academic exploration. It is: meaningful, substantial, interdisciplinary, connected, and valuable.
Extension	Extension opportunities include instruction designed to broaden the understanding of a particular standard by adding depth and complexity.
Growth	Student growth is the amount of academic progress that students make over the course of a grade or class. Students enter grades and course at different places; some have struggled while some have excelled. Regardless of how they enter a grade or course, students can show growth over the course of the school year.
I-DEP	Individual Differentiated Education Plan - an individualized gifted education plan that reflects unique needs and/or services that are not reflected on the standardized DEP service options.

Local Credentials	The Buncombe County Schools Local Credentials course is a free professional development offered to all BCS teachers. Within this training, teachers gain: (1) knowledge of Buncombe County's AIG Plan and levels of responsibility in meeting the needs of gifted learners within BCS, (2) overall knowledge of the unique characteristics of gifted learners, (3) knowledge of the social/emotional needs of gifted students and strategies to meet those needs, and (4) differentiation strategies.
MTSS	Multi-Tiered Systems of Support is a multi-tiered framework which promotes school improvement through engaging, research-based academic and behavioral practices. NC MTSS employs a systems approach using data-driven problem-solving to maximize growth for all.
NCDPI Booster Shots	Booster Shots are meaningful digital PD sessions that offer direct support for teachers who instruct AIG and advanced learners. School-based AIG Specialists can facilitate these sessions in individual schools.
SBT (School-based Team)	Because we recognize that each school has unique strengths and challenges in meeting the needs of advanced learners, a School-Based AIG Team will help support the opportunities available to advanced learners on each campus. Each SBT Team will be chaired by the AIG Specialist assigned to that school.
Talent Development	Talent development efforts focus on cultivating problem solving and critical thinking skills, with intentional efforts to develop the talents of students who may or may not be identified as gifted. "Talent Development" in BCS is a program that serves 3rd graders with enrichment and extension opportunities based on needs beyond classroom differentiation.