

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

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

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

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

For 2016-2019, Union County Public Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Union County Public Schools Vision for local AIG program: The vision of the Union County Public Schools' Academically/Intellectually Gifted Program is to nurture and excite the potential within students who show high ability and/or aptitude for learning. In order to meet these needs, the program must provide advanced instructional approaches and curriculum that go beyond the regular classroom. These experiences should include acceleration options, opportunities for individual interest development and high level problem solving skills in order to be prepared for the challenges and workplace options in the 21st century.

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

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$2172162.00	\$419500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A

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

District Response: Annual system-wide screening will occur in the spring for grades 3-7. Student nominations for screening will be sought from teachers based on classroom performance and/or behavioral characteristics. Students who have qualifying standardized test scores and grades will also be added to the pool. The process continues until the end of the school year when all test scores have arrived. At this time, parents and other individuals may also request screening. Placement is effective the following fall.

Screening and placement decisions continue throughout the summer. These efforts are coordinated by the Summer Testing Team. Placement is effective in the fall and coordinated through the schools.

On-going screening takes place throughout the year for students who transfer in from another school district. Students will be screened upon their enrollment to determine their best placement. Some students may need to be tested if data supports testing at that time. If the data does not support testing at that time, the student may be screened in the spring for possible placement in the fall.

Students currently enrolled in UCPS may be tested during the spring screening process or over the summer for fall placement. Families who elect to attain private testing must have testing completed by a registered psychologist. A complete report must be sent to the AIG office by the psychologist within the first ninety days of school. Any results received after this time may be considered for the spring screening process.

Screening Pool Components:

School Personnel (Teacher, counselor, administration, media specialist, special area teachers, previous year's teacher) - supported by a research-based rating scale

Student grades

Student, parent, or community member (with academic knowledge of the student) nominations

85th percentile on achievement and /or aptitude testing (national or local norms)

Student has been identified as gifted in another school system

Student has documented enrollment in advanced coursework such as: honors courses, international baccalaureate, advanced placement, etc.

Screening Steps:

Screening lists and associated records will be maintained by teachers throughout the year. These lists will reflect the name, race, referral dates and decisions along with all test data available for each student being considered for AIG placement. AIG teachers will collaborate with classroom teachers in forming the screening pool.

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Students in kindergarten, first, and second grades will be screened as requested for subject/grade acceleration according to above grade level evaluations in language arts and math.

Candidates for the acceleration process will be evaluated by the regular classroom teacher through the completion of the differentiation guidelines/academic profile.

The academic profile includes student samples for the acceleration portfolio.

Following portfolio completion and review/recommendation by the school level AIG Team, strategies for classroom differentiation will be offered by the AIG teacher.

Team meeting minutes will need to be taken during this meeting.

A differentiation plan will need to be created to record the recommended strategies.

The differentiation plan will need to be archived along with the AIG Team Minutes.

Upon completion of the portfolio and differentiation plan, the school level AIG Team will determine if further screening is needed. If further screening is needed, the Iowa Acceleration Scale process will begin.

The universal screening procedures for third and sixth graders begin mid-year when the InView test is administered. Students who score 85th percentile or higher on the Inview aptitude (local or national norms) test will be screened.

Screening for grades 4, 5, and 7 begins after the first semester.

Students who have an 'A' average in grades 3-7 will be screened.

Students in grades 3-5 who score 85th percentile or higher on the North Carolina EOG or approved nationally normed achievement test will be screened.

Students in grades 6-7 who score 89th percentile or higher on the North Carolina EOG or approved nationally normed achievement test will be screened.

Students will be screened upon school AIG Team recommendation.

Students will be screened upon parent or teacher request.

Through the use of multiple indicators, the AIG Team and AIG teachers will search proactively to ensure those culturally diverse students and students from other under-represented populations are not overlooked.

The following strategies may be used:

Meetings with teachers may be held at each school site to review the screening list of those students who score 85th percentile or higher on aptitude or achievement tests and did not qualify. Using the Alternative Assessment selection form, teachers are asked to determine if an alternative assessment is needed for any of the students listed. Teachers may also nominate other students not on the list for an alternative assessment.

A notice to all new parents in the school system in grades K-7 is given at the time of registration and is available at all times of the district website to notify parents that a gifted program is in place. These notifications are made available in both English and Spanish.

Criteria provide more than one pathway for identification using multiple indicators.

Multiple indicators include:

Research based rating scale - valid and reliable indicating gifted behaviors

A portfolio of student work samples such as outstanding projects, unique ways of doing assignments, outstanding academic achievement, etc.

Numerical grade averages

Scores from most recent achievement and aptitude tests

Documentation of any interests that the student has indicated (i.e., Has the student actually been researching a topic of interest?)

Any other documented evidence of gifted characteristics or possible potential

Articulation and dissemination efforts to search for culturally diverse students and students from other under-represented populations takes place at a variety of levels and through many access points.

The following are samples of activities:

District and school level administration: Annual informational meetings conducted by the AIG Director, Auxiliary Services updates distributed to all administrators monthly, presentations at leveled principal meetings, assistant principal, and counselor meetings.

School AIG Team (Elementary - Administrator, Counselor, K-2 Regular Education Teacher, 3-5 Regular Education Teacher and AIG Teacher) (Middle - Administrator, Counselor, AIG Math Teacher, Language Arts Teacher, AIG Language Arts Teacher): AIG Team informational sessions provided by the AIG Teacher at local schools to ensure all AIG Team members understand the program and their roles as team members.

Staff in-service training: Training is given to all regular education staff and others to explain how the AIG program functions and who the contacts are for further information.

Staff in-service training: Training is provided to all regular education staff regarding identifying potentially gifted learners.

Parent/Guardian: General information is provided through AIG website, school and teacher websites. Meetings held at the school for parents by the AIG teacher regarding various aspects of the screening, referral, and placement processes.

Student: Information made available at school through regular education teachers.

Community: General information through the AIG website, as well as through school and district staff.

IDENTIFICATION:

Once students are in the screening pool, the process of identification begins for students who have the data to support further testing. Parents of candidates for further testing will receive an AIG 2 (permission to test) form and a copy of the Handbook of Parents' Rights. Testing cannot begin without a signed AIG 2. Once testing is completed, parents receive the results and the placement matrix. If a student qualifies for services, parents are invited to a school level conference.

Practice B

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

District Response: Academically Gifted (AG) indicates a child's intellectual abilities and academic abilities are advanced compared to peers. This means that the student has a high aptitude scores on total score and/or subtest score, high achievement, and performance scores. These students qualify for services via pathway 2 (students must attain three out of four criteria listed below):

Aptitude Test Total Score Results: 93rd percentile or higher

Aptitude Test Subtest Score Results: 90th percentile or higher

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Achievement Test Total Score Results: 93rd percentile or higher (on grade level) or 85th percentile or higher (on above grade level).

Performance Results: "A" Average in same subject area or 90th percentile on all qualifying areas using the Gifted Rating Scale (GRS)

Academically Gifted students may qualify for only one area of service or both (reading and/or math).

Intellectually Gifted (IG) indicates a child's intellectual abilities and potential are so outstanding the child's educational performance may be adversely affected. This means that the student has a high aptitude total score on an approved aptitude test, but may not necessarily have the achievement scores necessary to qualify for services via pathway 2 (aptitude + achievement). These students will qualify via pathway 1:

Aptitude Test Total Score Results: 98th percentile or higher

Achievement and Performance Scores will be evaluated to help determine the best services for the student.

Intellectually Gifted students may need differentiated services in one area or both (reading and/or math).

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) indicates a child's intellectual and academic abilities are highly advanced compared to peers.

Aptitude Test Total Score Results: 98th percentile or higher

Aptitude Test Subtest Score Results: 98th percentile or higher

Achievement Test Total Score Results: 98th percentile or higher (on grade level) or 93rd percentile or higher (above grade level).

Performance Results: "A" average in same subject or 98th percentile on all qualifying areas using the Gifted Rating Scale (GRS)

EARLY KINDERGARTEN:

Students are identified for early kindergarten placement according to State Board policy using the following methodology:

Student aptitude: 98th percentile on a recognized student aptitude test

Student achievement: 98th percentile in reading and mathematics on a standardized test

Performance: Student work samples that show performance above that of their age peers

3 letters of recommendation

A social development checklist

Informal interview with the child and the school administrator or designee

Structured interview with the parent(s)

SUBJECT OR WHOLE GRADE ACCELERATION (Grades K-8):

Subject Acceleration

Based on recommended criteria, student receives instruction at a higher grade level with another group of students while remaining with their peer group for the remaining part of their instructional

day. A second option would be to implement curriculum compacting. These methods work best in subjects that have a clearly developed sequence of skills (ie: reading and math). These strategies are appropriate for any grade level. Once acceleration opportunities have begun, availability of continued opportunities remains essential. Subject acceleration must have an ongoing plan.

In order to participate in subject acceleration, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

An IOWA Acceleration Scale - Qualitative and Quantitative components (listed below):

School and Academic Factors, Developmental Factors, Interpersonal Skills, Attitude and Support Factors

A recognized on-grade level achievement test with score of 95th percentile or higher in the subject(s) to be accelerated

A recognized achievement test, two years above grade level, with a score of 75th percentile or higher in subject(s) to be accelerated

A Full Scale IQ test of 115 or higher

Follow IOWA Acceleration Scale guideline recommendations and a grand total score should be 60 points or higher

Teacher/School Level AIG Team recommendations

Principal recommendation and placement

Whole Grade Acceleration

This involves skipping levels in the normal progression of school. It is only appropriate for highly gifted students. In order to qualify, students must meet all of the following criteria:

An IOWA Acceleration Scale - Qualitative and Quantitative components (listed below)

School and Academic Factors, Developmental Factors, Interpersonal Skills, Attitude and Support Factors

A recognized on-grade level achievement test with a score of 95th percentile or higher in math, reading and language arts

A recognized achievement test, two years above grade level, with a score of 75th percentile or higher in math, reading, and language arts

A Full Scale IQ test of 130 or higher

Follow IOWA Acceleration Scale guideline recommendations and a grand total score should be 60 points or greater

Teacher/School Level AIG Team recommendations

Principal recommendation and placement

AIG IDENTIFICATION

UCPS uses a three-pathway model for entrance into its AIG program. Standardized, nationally normed tests and research-based instruments designed to assist in the identification of gifted students are used.

Academically Gifted (AG) Identification for grades 4-8:

Aptitude, achievement, and performance are criteria used in a variety of ways to identify gifted students. Such tests may include the Cognitive Achievement Test (CogAT), the Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test (OLSAT), the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale

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(SB), Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), Woodcock Johnson Cognitive Ability Test (WJCog), and Gifted Rating Scale (GRS). Nationally normed achievement tests such as the Iowa Tests of Basic and Skills (ITBS), Stanford Achievement Tests (STAN), Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement (WJ Ach), can be used in addition to North Carolina End of Grade (EOG) test scores. For students who have educational or situational circumstances for which traditional testing alone may not be sufficient to identify giftedness, the third pathway is designed to allow students to submit portfolio work along with aptitude or achievement results which indicate a need for differentiated services. Nontraditional measures include the use of the GRS and portfolio processes.

Intellectually Gifted (IG) Identification for grades 4-8:

Aptitude without achievement or performance scores high enough to qualify for Academically Gifted services are used as criteria in order to evaluate the student to provide individualized differentiated instruction in the regular education classroom. Nationally standardized test and research-based instruments designed to assist in the identification of gifted students are used. Such tests may include the Cognitive Achievement Test (CogAT), the Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test (OLSAT), the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (SB), Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), or the Woodcock Johnson Cognitive Ability Test (WJCog).

These students will receive an Individualized Education Plan (IDEP).

A transfer student can submit the results of other nationally normed testing which can be considered in lieu of additional testing if completed within the last 12 calendar months.

A summer testing site for students moving into the district and/or current UCPS students in need of additional testing is in place to assist with AIG placement for the upcoming school year.

Practice C

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

District Response: UCPS has an alternative assessment screening process and tool in place. It provides for the School Level AIG Team to meet and determine which students, based on their cultural/ethnic diversity, economic disadvantages, English language barriers and other learning disabilities to enter the AIG program using the third pathway. This pathway allows for the student to submit a portfolio in addition to grades and/or the teacher recommendation as described through the Gifted Rating Scale (GRS).

The use of this instrument includes training at each school site where there are many under-represented groups. AIG teachers will inform the staff about the use of the alternative assessment instrument and encourage its use as part of an effort to include children from these groups.

The nurturing and enrichment programs, as described in Standard 2, are utilized to address the need for early enrichment for gifted potential in under-represented populations. As a screening and enrichment program, the nurturing program may provide early enrichment experiences at targeted schools.

Practice D

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

District Response: AIG Teachers are provided with a variety of ways to ensure consistency in the implementation of screening, referral and identification processes. The following tools have been developed and are revised annually:

Procedure Manual - Every teacher is provided a AIG Procedures Manual. This Procedures Manual outlines all processes and provides a ready reference that includes flow charts, screenshots, etc. to help provide guidance to the teacher. It describes the appropriate paperwork to be completed, signed, and archived. This same manual provides all directions needed for processing and utilizing the electronic database for all records in the AIG program.

AIG teacher meetings may include the individual stages of each process throughout the year as they may occur. AIG teacher meetings provide an ongoing forum for teachers to ask procedural questions, seek clarification on processes, receive intermittent training opportunities at various points during the year, reflect on best practices, and develop curriculum. AIG teachers also meet in professional learning communities (PLC) at their school sites and as an AIG cluster (elementary school) or AIG grade level (middle school) at least three times a year for focused professional development on gifted education.

New teacher trainings - these occur periodically and are intended to be a timely opportunity for new teachers to meet together to receive specific information about the processes in small group settings. In addition to small group meetings, school site visits may be scheduled to assist new AIG teachers with all aspects of the screening, identification, and paperwork processes.

Year-end compliance paperwork review team - This team is employed early in the summer to check each teacher's screening notebook and archived paperwork to ensure consistency in placement across the district. All AIG teachers submit electronic screening documents to AIG Central Services for review by a team of Summer Paperwork Team to ensure inter-rater reliability and to ensure that the district-wide standards are maintained. This process involves having the records of every student who was screened be reviewed for compliance and consistency. In the event mistakes are found, they are returned to the school based AIG teacher with corrections indicated. If a student is found to be placed incorrectly, teachers and principals are contacted immediately by the Summer Paperwork Team to contact the parent(s) of the student(s) involved to resolve the issue. This team is integral to the quality control process.

At the beginning of each school year, AIG teachers submit rosters of the identified students in their AIG classrooms and verify that the paperwork exists in the students' files documenting their appropriate placement.

The AIG Director or designee reviews all paperwork electronically throughout the year.

The AIG Director or designee is always available to work one-on-one with teachers as they make placement decisions.

Practice E

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

District Response: The following written documentation exists to safeguard the rights of AIG students:

The Local Plan for Gifted Education - revised every three years through an extensive evaluation and review process involving input from all stakeholders and submitted to DPI for comment.

A Parent's Rights' Handbook has been developed to provide a step-by-step due process appeals in the event that the parent disagrees with the AIG placement decision. UCPS provides access to a Handbook on Parents' Rights when asking for permission for additional testing. This handbook delineates the rights of a parent to appeal/grievance process:

Appeal to the School Academically or Intellectually Gifted Identification Team/Principal

Appeal to the Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services

Appeal to the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services

Appeal to the Superintendent

Appeal to State Level Administrative Law Judge for a Contested Case Hearing

AIG Forms - Parents retain copies of AIG forms. All student originals are maintained at the school level and archived copies are maintained by the district electronically.

AIG 1 - Contains a student profile of all data including additional testing and/or reassessment and is used to determine placement. This form is reviewed and signed by the school level AIG Team and the district level representative. A copy is sent home to parents as part of the decision process.

AIG 2- Permission to Test form - explains the need for testing and requests parent permission. The Handbook for Parents' Rights is accessible to parents.

AIG 3A - Transfer to High School - informs the parent of their child's advancement into high school. Advanced courses are advised; however, course choices at the high school level are chosen by the student. Parents are to monitor student course selections to make sure students are taking appropriate courses.

AIG 3 - Invitation to Conference - informs the parent of their child's placement into the AIG program

AIG 3B - Informs the parent that their child does not qualify at this time for placement in the program

AIG 3C - Informs parents of newly qualified rising 6th graders that their child's 6th grade teacher will invite them to a conference at the start of the school year in order to explain and receive their signature of agreement for the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP).

AIG 3D - Informs the parents of newly qualified rising 7th graders that their child's 7th grade teacher will invite them to a conference at the start of the school year in order to explain and receive their

signature of agreement for the DEP

AIG 3E - Informs the parents of newly qualified rising 8th graders that their child's AIG ENG 1 8th grade teacher will invite them to a conference at the start of the school year in order to explain and receive their signature of agreement for the DEP.

AIG 3M - Informs the parents of newly qualified rising 8th graders that their child's AIG 8th grade teacher will invite them to a conference at the start of the school year in order to explain and receive their signature of agreement for the DEP for Math 1 placement.

AIG 4 - Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) forms completed as needed in K-3, once in grades 4-5, and again in grades 6-8. If additional subjects are added or students exit the program, a new form will be completed to document the changes. These forms contain information regarding the placement of the student into the AIG program, describe the service delivery, curriculum differentiation and enrichment experiences which may be included in the placement.

AIG 5R - Rosters completed at the end of each school year to ensure appropriate placement in the following year.

AIG 7 - Transfer form - to be completed whenever a student leaves the school as an internal or out of district transfer

AIG 10 - Transfer to High School - to be completed by 8th grade AIG teachers to accompany the transfer of folders to the High School

Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) for Intellectually Gifted students

Procedures Manual - this document outlines all policies and procedures that should be followed for AIG decision-making.

Additional letters and forms are created as needed for special circumstances such as summer testing referrals and scheduling, sweep screening results, etc.

UCPS has implemented a multi-stage program for informing parents of gifted education. Elements of this program include:

A dedicated portion of the UCPS website which outlines the services offered by UCPS

Meetings with every parent/guardian to sign papers agreeing to gifted services and to explain what those services include.

Annual open house meetings for parents of gifted students to meet with the AIG teacher and discuss the scope and sequence of the program. Service options are reviewed at this time. This meeting typically occurs during the regular school open house meeting.

All paperwork related to service options and identification processes is maintained in hard copy files at the school level and in electronic archive format at a district level.

Individual student conferences held throughout the year as needed to discuss student achievement and placement options.

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Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: IG identification: Develop plan for serving intellectually gifted learners.

AI identification: Refine plan for serving highly gifted learners

Refine portfolio guidelines (Acceleration, Nurturing & Pathway 3)

Sources of Evidence: Meeting notices, agendas, sign-in sheets, newspaper articles and other print media (including internet publication) explaining process, stakeholder surveys, personnel recommendations at K-7 grade levels, full profile school screening lists (for qualified and not qualified), AIG paperwork documentation, pathway identification, NC AIG headcount, summer testing records, Alternative Assessment screening tool training records, portfolio, class rosters, summer compliance team sign-in sheets, corrective emails and action sheets, procedures manual, Parents' Rights Handbook, AIG form 2 with parent signature, local AIG plan, AIG forms accessed through electronic database system or originals in student files, signed AIG 4 form (Differentiated Education Plan), notification of school open houses, parent conference notes and related communication

Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

Practice A

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

District Response: There are many documents produced for district use that clearly define expectations for instructional goals and include AIG specific recommendations.

For use in the AIG program, specific materials have been selected corresponding to the current version of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS). This process includes studying the current research on high ability learners and rigor. Current materials under review are further researched and when possible, site visits to other schools using the materials are made. Once selected, the curriculum is then aligned to the NCSCOS and pacing guides are used to assist teachers in utilizing the materials fully.

AIG teachers are expected to employ the best practices of differentiation and extension of the NCSCOS to the degree that their students may need. This can include development of teacher designed units of instruction not found within pre-selected materials. This could also include resources to support the social and emotional needs of the gifted learner. AIG teachers are expected to utilize all available assessment information in making instructional decision and designing differentiated lessons.

Whole grade and subject acceleration process and procedures for K-8 (See Standard 1, Practice B) Nurture/Enrichment programs at the Elementary level (See Standard 4, Practices A & H for more information)

Nurture students in middle school AIG Classrooms that meet local criteria but are not formally identified.

Online courses/NC virtual public school for students in grades 6-12

Credit by demonstrated mastery opportunity for middle and high school students

Advanced courses for students in middle and high school (ENG I, Math I & II, AP & IB)

Special NC schools/programs for students in grades 9-12.

Early graduation for students in grades 11-12

Practice B

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

District Response: AIG teachers will be provided opportunities to create differentiated lesson plans

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as part of professional development provided at the district level. In this design, the use of assessment data will help determine which instructional practices should be used within their classrooms. These strategies will include best practices in gifted education pedagogy as well as district level initiatives which can be modified for the gifted learner, AIG teachers will provide consultative services to regular classroom teachers to support differentiation for high achieving students.

In addition, the continued use of gifted instructional practices such as seminars, problem-based learning opportunities, and individual projects will be encouraged.

Practice C

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

District Response: READING/LANGUAGE ARTS:

The following research-based/supplemental resources are used within the AIG curriculum:

William and Mary Language Arts Units

Jacob's Ladder Materials

Great Books Foundation/Junior Great Books

Michael Clay Thompson's Grammar Materials

Michael Clay Thompson's Vocabulary Materials

Shelagh Gallagher's "A Final Appeal" Problem Based Learning Materials

Singapore Math Materials

The William and Mary Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) was selected for the application of high level language arts instruction in grades 4-6 as the core instructional component and in grades 7-8 as a supporting resource. The William and Mary Language Arts units have significantly shifted the level of instruction and rigor in those classes using the units.

The development of grammar skills is introduced early through the elementary AIG program and is continued throughout the middle school years. The curriculum resources selected for this study include those authored by Michael Clay Thompson, a recognized curriculum developer for gifted education. In addition, extensive use of vocabulary development through a rich study of Greek and Latin stems accompanies this instruction.

The Great Books Foundation/Junior Great Books provides the platform for high level discussion in a seminar style with students finding evidence within the text to support their comments.

The middle school English Language Arts curriculum may include accelerating, compacting, and telescoping for grades 6-8 in order to accelerate student through the middle school NCSCOS and better prepare students for AIG English I in the 8th grade.

The AIG English I curriculum is a hybrid of The William and Mary Integrated Curriculum Model in combination with the requirements for high school credit. Resource guides and pacing documents

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have been developed to aid teachers in facilitating the curriculum as based on student feedback and assessment data. This curriculum is meant to prepare students for Honors English II upon entering the high school.

At the high school level, Honors courses, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and International Baccalaureate (IB) provide advanced curriculum which students may self-select in accordance with their interests and skills. UCPS also offers online courses through the NC virtual school, independent study, NC special schools/programs, and the opportunity early graduation for high school students. The AIG department offers professional development and follow-up support for guidance counselors and additional staff that deal directly with our high school gifted students.

The AIG department offers a resource for parents and students to use to find summer camps and enrichment opportunities outside of UCPS.

MATHEMATICS:

The following research-based/supplemental resources are available:
Singapore Math

Mathematical talent is developed through the use of a variety of materials designed for students who are acquiring in-depth knowledge of mathematical ideas and concepts. The adoption of Singapore Mathematics Program in grades 4-5 was instrumental in providing a platform and approach to problem solving that was deep and focused. This approach has been successful with our AIG students to such a degree that many other districts and teachers from other states come to see it in action. The development of mathematical thinking follows a curriculum model that begins with the concrete, followed by pictorial, and ends with the abstract. This concrete-pictorial-abstract pedagogy provides ample ways for students to approach a mathematical problem and demonstrates to them there are many ways to solve these problems. The underlying expectation is based on mastery learning, and students are expected to maintain skills previously taught by application and continual use of the skills.

Singapore Mathematics Program will be used as a supplemental resource in grade 6. The middle school math curriculum may include accelerating, compacting, and telescoping of grades 6-8 curricula in order to accelerate students through the middle school NCSCOS and better prepare students for Math I and Math II at the middle school level.

At the high school level, Honors courses, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and International Baccalaureate (IB) provide advanced curriculum which students may self-select in accordance with their interests and skills. UCPS also offers online courses through the NC virtual school, the Union County Virtual and Career and College Promise, independent study, NC special schools/programs, and the opportunity early graduation for high school students. The AIG department offers professional development and follow-up support for guidance counselors and additional staff that deal directly with our high school gifted students.

The AIG department offers a resource for parents and students to use to find summer camps and enrichment opportunities outside of UCPS.

INTEGRATED UNITS:

We are exploring options of integration of the Young Scholars Program to offer a variety of units to

student for nurturing and enrichment. Jacob's Ladder and Junior Great Books offer a variety of reading resources to nurture and enrich curriculum for high-ability students, as well as individualized student choice boards to offer additional suggestions for differentiated assessment. These research-based differentiated materials are available for checkout from the AIG department.

Practice D

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

District Response: UCPS trained all staff concerning the DuFour model of Professional Learning Communities (PLC). AIG teachers also meet with school-site peer PLCs to discuss 21st century skills for all students. The AIG department has continued this training by providing an opportunity for AIG teachers to meet at least three times a year to specifically address the needs of gifted students. During the AIG PLCs, teachers meet to discuss 21st century skill development through the use of differentiation strategies in the classrooms. This professional development is also woven into the AIG Department's monthly meetings with AIG teachers.

In addition to the extensive focus on the development of these skills through various district initiatives, the AIG program will emphasize and provide high level classroom experiences designed to reinforce and apply these skills. As the efforts to expand access to classroom technology continues throughout the district, AIG teachers will continue to share best instructional practices with one another as they relate to the AIG learner.

The AIG program will support the UCPS globalization effort by providing culturally diverse studies of literature, art, and global issues through the curriculum activities, projects, and research presentations developed by the students. Critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and use of creativity and innovation of foundational to gifted education pedagogy and should be evident in all lessons. Students will be provided opportunities and resources to work in groups to collaborate and communicate with one another to produce presentations that demonstrate real-world learning. These experiences can be in the form of extended field trips, service-learning initiatives, and/or global communication/collaboration activities with students in other areas of the world (i.e. e-pals, sister schools, Skype, or other technology-based communication as available). Students will be encouraged to share these experiences with others by posting video segments, tweets, snapchats, links, etc. to school-based communication sites such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, and/or school websites.

Practice E

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

District Response: Primary placement of AIG students in language arts and mathematics is based on their identification. Student placement in other courses is determined by school administration.

AIG teachers share their ongoing assessment strategies during regular professional development meetings. These strategies, along with others that are recommended, will comprise a set of tools that

the AIG teacher can rely on to properly identify individual student's strengths and areas of need. Local assessments (i.e. benchmark testing, reading records, etc.) are used to help assess the AIG students' skills in both reading and math. Pre-assessments, when appropriate, can be used to help teachers determine which content can be compacted for some and provided through direct instruction for others. In many cases, the AIG department in collaboration with AIG teachers create AIG district benchmark assessments since the sequence of instruction in an AIG classroom does not always follow the regular classroom. Data from on-going assessment, both formative and summative is used to aid in flexible grouping practices.

AIG teachers work with resource guides to help inform instructional practices when differentiating the curriculum for gifted learners. The use of big ideas and essential questions, stated within the resource guides, help provide a framework to aid in differentiating curriculum for high-ability students. The AIG PLCs provide opportunities for AIG teachers to discuss and collaborate regarding resource guides, big ideas, essential questions, and best practices for differentiation.

Practice F

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

District Response: Guidance services designed specifically for AIG students begin in the elementary years where class sessions are scheduled each semester to directly address issues affecting gifted students. The specific topics are generated from student and teacher input. In general, the topics frequently address underachievement, self-esteem, perfectionism, peer interaction, and giftedness in poverty and diverse cultures. These classes are conducted by the guidance counselor at each grade level during grades 4-5 and are evaluated by the classroom teacher or guidance counselor for effectiveness. These reports are sent to the AIG office for review and monitoring.

Career counseling plays an equally important role for gifted students as they grow in age and developmental maturity. Career development is a lifelong process by which individuals develop and refine their self-identity as it relates to life and employment decisions. Middle grades students have reached a critical age where they can explore career decision making and develop future educational plans. Career development experiences for middle grades students are designed to be exploratory in nature and do not develop specific skills.

Guidance services also reach out to the parent community to meet the needs of the gifted. Parents will frequently seek out support and resources from the school guidance counselor when addressing and planning for their child's future. The AIG plan will provide support to the Guidance Services by providing professional development and other resources which directly address the social and emotional needs of the gifted.

In the AIG classroom, teachers have been given resources and training in the use of bibliotherapy to help students address specific topics of interest. Through bibliotherapy students can find other examples of gifted students dealing with similar issues in their lives and look for potential ways to manage and handle those same circumstances in their own lives.

Guidance counselors will play an integral part in the decision-making associated with subject or grade

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acceleration as well as placement into the AIG program. As a part of the AIG Team at each school, the guidance counselors ensure the emotional needs of the students are considered in all placement decisions.

At the high school level, guidance services are increasingly important in supporting the students and their families through processes which could affect their future career choices and opportunities. Guidance services give individual guidance for students as they select their high school courses, apply to Governor's School, research colleges, apply to schools, and they provide information about dual enrollment. Guidance counselors are essential to the program and meeting the social and emotional needs to gifted learners.

The following resources are used for addressing the affective needs of gifted students:

Habits of Mind (Art Costa)

Executive Function Skills

Simulation Experiences

Thinking Hats (Edward DeBono)

Bibliotherapy

Practice G

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

District Response: Each school's AIG Team will be responsible for developing a plan to address and meet the needs of the under-represented population for grades K-3. The plan must be approved by the AIG director on an annual basis. Schools may include the Young Scholars program, utilize the AIG teacher as an enrichment provider and/or collaborator with the regular classroom teacher, or use other research-based models for possible future identification of under-represented populations. Schools may opt to include a pull out nurture flexible group() for potentially gifted K-3 learner. Another option is the AIG teacher may push into the classroom to deliver enrichment services.

Each school is responsible for developing a flexible group(s) of potentially gifted learners.

FLEXIBLE GROUPING NURTURE MODEL:

K-3:

Identify top 2-4% students in grade level

Identify additional students using the Gifted Characteristics Observation Form

Begin developing a portfolio of student work for identified students for the purpose of Alternative Assessment and Pathway 3. Student portfolios should be kept by the AIG teacher through elementary school.

3rd Grade:

Formal screening for identification in AIG program, using portfolio as Alternative Assessment as needed, is conducted.

WHOLE GROUP ENRICHMENT MODEL:

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To extend the curriculum for all students, classroom teachers should use data from classroom assessments to determine need(s) for extension.

Provide differentiated instruction/enrichment activity for students.

Practice H

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

District Response: Collaboration will be made possible in the following ways:

AIG School Team: Representation from regular education teachers in Grades K-3 and 4-5, guidance counselor, AIG teacher, and administrator serve as the designated AIG team at each school. Representation from the AIG teachers (English Language Arts and Math) in addition to the guidance counselor, regular education teacher, and an administrator/designee serve as the designated AIG team at each middle school for grades 6-8. This team has the responsibility to sign off on all placement and removal decisions for the program. The AIG department will explore options for developing required professional development for the specific members of the AIG School Team.

Grade level planning time with regular education teachers (schedule permitting).

K-3 time designated in the AIG teacher's schedule to accommodate school designed plan (required).

EC collaboration when students are twice exceptional or have special learning needs.

AIG teachers may serve as teachers in enrichment block configurations (not use for remediation). In this capacity, the students are pre-assessed for mastery and then grouped for enrichment throughout the year. These groups are flexible in nature and will frequently not be AIG identified students. Sometimes referred to as Academic Exploratory (AE) or Advanced Content Time (ACT), these are school-based enrichment groups.

AIG teachers may provide professional development to regular education teachers in order to expand the use of available enrichment resources across many grade levels (Great Books training may be offered to K-3 teachers in order to allow them to utilize the program with their students as a type of acceleration, differentiated curriculum).

Collaboration with guidance counselors is needed to plan classroom guidance sessions or to discuss students who have been accelerated or are under consideration for acceleration.

AIG teachers meet with their school-site peer PLCs to discuss common issues associated with students by grade level. Discussion topics could include on-going assessment data, instructional materials, differentiation strategies, etc.

AIG teachers meet at least three times a year within an AIG PLC to discuss common issues associated with gifted students. Discussion topics could include 21st century skills, on-going assessment, gifted instructional materials, best practices for gifted differentiation strategies, etc.

AIG monthly meetings provide additional professional development discussion regarding the specific needs of gifted students (cognitive, affective, creative, etc.).

AIG teachers are encouraged to meet with local guidance counselors to help address the specific social-emotional needs of gifted students.

The AIG department will continue efforts to increase collaboration between different departments and stakeholders to improve the AIG program to best meet the needs of our gifted learners.

Practice I

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

District Response: Parents sign a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) once a student qualifies for at least one area of service. This document is resigned once a student qualifies for another area of service and/or enters the middle school. Each school holds a curriculum night in which the AIG teachers discuss the specifics of differentiated services offered to students on an annual basis. A team of AIG and regular education staff work together to vertically align the continuum of services for students as they transition out of nurture/enrichment cohorts into gifted services, and/or from elementary to middle and high school.

An Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) will be used for students identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG). This document is signed every year to evaluate the differentiation strategies used to aid in student success. The IG students will also be screened annually for potential placement into academically gifted classes.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Improving K-3 Services

Collaboration with AIG personnel and other professional staff

Working with stakeholders

Improving high school services

21st Century content and skills at advanced levels

Sources of Evidence: Singapore Math pacing documents

William & Mary alignment with pacing documents

Elementary & Middle School AIG curriculum framework documents

Elementary & Middle School AIG websites (including AIG ENG 1)

High School Honors and AP/IB documents

Individual AIG teacher lesson plans

Professional development documentation and CEU's

Curriculum and resources used and developed for a range of abilities and specifically designed for gifted students.

Student assessment data (formative and summative)

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Classroom observation opportunities (informal and formal)

Guidance lesson reports

K-3 school designed plan documentation

Grade level and IEP meeting notes, AIG paperwork and other similar documentation as appropriate.

Results from spring screening

Young Scholars Program

Survey data

Standard 3: Personnel and Professional Development

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

Practice A

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

District Response: UCPS will employ at least two licensed AIG Program Facilitators to work under the supervision of the AIG Director (also AIG licensed) at the Central Services level to provide coordination and direction of district wide to the AIG program. In addition, there will be a minimum of one AIG licensed teacher at each elementary and middle school. AIG licensed teachers in Union County Public Schools are responsible for providing gifted education classes for identified AIG students in both math and reading at grades 4 and 5, and in grades 6-8 language arts. These teachers are also responsible for the monitoring of the program, adhering to compliance requirements including documentation of all phases of the program, maintenance of hard copy files and cooperation with electronic archiving of such paperwork. Additional licensed personnel are added as enrollment demands increase and budget allows.

Practice B

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

District Response: The primary responsibilities of AIG teachers in Union County Public Schools are to provide direct services to gifted learners. This includes all teachers paid from either state or local AIG funds. As funds are available, schools have the discretion to provide tuition reimbursement support for teachers seeking AIG licensure while employed in an AIG position within the district. Middle school AIG math teachers are encouraged to obtain a license. AIG teachers are expected to attend regular meetings and local training concerning the AIG program, characteristics of gifted students, and any training offered for their speciality (i.e. AIG math differentiation, AP training, IB training, and renewal credits).

AIG teachers are to have classroom instructional time, planning time, and collaboration time in their daily schedule without additional duties and responsibilities which do not serve the gifted learner.

Each fall, all AIG teachers are to submit a copy of their schedule to the AIG Director for review and approval. The following components must be reflected in the schedule:

ELEMENTARY: Full 7.5 hour day

Adequate time should be included in this daily schedule to provide full time reading and math

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instruction at the elementary level be no less than 60 minutes in length for each class. If the school schedule allows, additional time is always beneficial.

Reading: 60 minutes minimum

Math: 60 minutes minimum

Planning/Collaboration: 30 minutes minimum

K-3 Services: 30 minutes minimum (if provided by AIG teacher)

Lunch: school discretion

Enrichment: school discretion

Additional duties: school discretion with consideration of time needed for AIG services such as paperwork, communication with parents, electronic archiving, student data collection for screening, testing for student identification, and district compliance requests. Monitor formally identified whole grade and/or acceleration students by following up with the teacher providing services.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ELA/ENGLISH I AND MATH TEACHERS: Full 7.5 hour day

This schedule will indicate the number of AIG identified students placed into each section.

In Language Arts/English I sections, all AIG identified students must be placed in a classroom staff by an AIG licensed teacher before non-identified students can be added to the classes on a space-available, annual placement. Non-AIG students placed into AIG sections of language arts/English I will have paperwork documenting the placement annually. That paperwork will reside with the AIG teacher and be electronically archived. Placement in an AIG language arts/English I section does not serve as AIG identification. Student will be screened annually for formal identification. It is hoped that these non-identified students will be nurtured through these experiences and potentially qualify for services directly.

All AIG math identified students will be scheduled into AIG math classes/Math I/Math II, and principals may schedule additional non-identified students based on local guidelines. Non-AIG students placed into AIG sections of math/Math I/Math II will have paperwork documenting the placement annually. That paperwork will reside with the AIG teacher and be electronically archived. Placement in an AIG math section/Math I/Math II does not serve as AIG identification. Student will be screened annually for formal identification. It is hoped that these non-identified students will be nurtured through these experiences and potentially qualify for services directly.

Practice C

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

District Response: AIG teachers will assume an enhanced role in the delivery of AIG professional development to their school-based staff and parent groups through various avenues such as curriculum nights, professional learning communities (PLC), open houses, parent nights, staff meetings, etc. The development of presentations that can be used by the teachers have been developed centrally and disseminated to everyone in an effort to make the message reliable and consistent. Training has been provided to AIG teachers on how to deliver the information and how to address questions specific to AIG. Administrator training and other presentations indicated as "Central" will be provided by the AIG Director or designee.

The AIG Department is exploring options for localized training for all UCPS staff to increase AIG awareness.

Practice D

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

District Response: The AIG department is exploring options for more localized professional development for all UCPS staff to increase awareness of AIG and the special needs of gifted learners. This may include the development of a local endorsement, webinars, self-paced courses, and building a resource center for stakeholders to use.

Practice E

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

District Response: All planned professional development will directly align to all AIG and local district initiatives. AIG teachers participate in at least three AIG-specific professional learning community (PLC) meetings a year. During these meetings AIG teachers discuss research-based best practices in gifted education, as well as align their instruction to meet the goals of the the local AIG plan and other district initiatives. Topics for discussion during the AIG PLC meetings are generated based on teacher suggestion, student need as reflected in assessment data, and/or district initiatives, PLC meetings do include professional development targeted towards differentiating the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) for high ability learners and emphasize the unique characteristics of gifted learners such as the social and emotional needs of varied AIG populations throughout the district.

AIG teachers are included in professional development opportunities beyond the scope of this plan that are provided both at the district and school level. This can include school-site professional learning communities (PLC) and/or school-site professional development opportunities specific to school student populations. This allows AIG teachers to be fully aware of local initiatives so they may reflect these initiatives in their lessons.

Practice F

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

District Response: Teacher-centered professional development for AIG teachers is provided continuously and regularly throughout the year in a variety of structures such as:

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to support the planning, implementation, and refinement of applications from AIG based and school-site based professional development.

Meeting opportunities at least each grading period to attend special topic breakout sessions to address identified needs.

AIG teachers serve as AIG specialists in their schools to help provide enrichment and/or nurturing support for general education teachers.

Pairing veteran and novice AIG teachers to continued support throughout the year on an individualized basis, as needed.

Specialized trainers within the AIG teacher community prepared to assist on an "as needed" basis in the implementation of specific curricula and on-site school-based planning with peers.

Opportunities to extend an individual's interest in certain curricula are made available as needed.

Appropriate attendance and participation in state and national conferences.

Book studies regarding topics of interest concerning gifted students and/or district initiatives.

Reflective practice concerning lesson planning, pedagogical choices, and assessment strategies.

The development of teacher-leaders in the area of curriculum is a high priority for building capacity within our cadre of teachers. AIG teachers are encouraged and supported to participate as presenters in both state and national conferences on gifted education in order to share their best practices and demonstrate leadership within the field. Once completed, these same teachers come back and share their experiences and new insights, repeat the presentations they gave, and then continue to provide local support for other teachers who choose to implement one of their new resources. The addition of professional learning communities will allow for the implementation of strategies learned at professional development.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Explore "AIG Awareness" training for non-AIG licensed UCPS staff

AIG Professional development opportunities for stakeholders

Sources of Evidence: Central Services position allocation and job description

AIG Teacher allocation at each school

Teacher certification

Compliance paperwork and electronic documentation

Teacher lesson plans

Teacher maintained student and program data

Teacher schedules (including assigned duties, extra-curricular activities, etc.)

AIG class rosters (including verified AIG identified and non-identified student paperwork)

Professional development sign-in sheets, agendas, and evaluations

University transcripts

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Classroom observations

Student achievement

CEU credits for teacher certification for licensure renewal

Classroom visit reflections by AIG teachers when observing other teachers

Teacher feedback

Conference materials for state and national conferences

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Standard 4: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

Practice A

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

District Response: K-12 PROGRAM SERVICE OPTIONS

Program service options will include a range of services in grades K-12. Determined by the level of need, these services will include individual consultative services, full-time instruction in reading and/or math, acceleration options such as grade subject acceleration and the selection of advanced and college level courses as needed. These options are described in detail along with the qualifying criteria.

Service options include:

- Early Admission to Kindergarten
- Single Subject Acceleration - Grades K-8
- Whole Grade Acceleration - Grades K-8
- School Approved Academic Enrichment Program
- Advanced Subject Grouping/Resource Services in Reading and/or Math - Grades 4-8
- Extracurricular/Enrichment Experiences - Grades 4-12
- 8th Grade English I
- Honors Courses - Grades 9-12
- Career and College Promise (50 courses) - Two Years
- Early Graduation - Grades 11 and 12
- Online Courses/NC Virtual Public School - Grades 6-12
- Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)
- Independent Study - Grades 9-12
- Special NC Schools/Programs - Grades 9-12
- AP/IB Courses - Grades 9-12

KINDERGARTEN - GRADE THREE SERVICES ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT AND NURTURING PROGRAM

Prior to formal identification in the spring of grade three, all students receive differentiated services and appropriate enrichment to create opportunities for higher-level thinking, problem-solving, and advanced skill development. Individual interest and abilities can be addressed through activities which involve competitions, creative experiences, and accelerated learning opportunities. AIG teachers and school level administration will design the types of services to be provided at each school based on its needs and resources. AIG teachers will have time built into their schedules to

accommodate the school-level plan. These designs may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Targeted enrichment instruction with small groups of students selected by the regular education teacher based on student mastery of current topic
- Professional development provided to K-3 teachers in differentiation and use of alternative curricula (i.e., Junior Great Books, Jacob's Ladder's, Singapore Math, etc.)
- Specialized interest clubs (i.e., chess, drama, Odyssey of the Mind, etc.)
- Targeted whole group instruction in Building Thinking Skills curricula
- Young Scholars K-3 Program (previously Global Kids)
- Enrichment K-5

AIG PLACEMENT - FOURTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE SERVICES

These students will have met the identification and placement criteria required for gifted services. A Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) will be developed to provide the following services.

- English Language Arts and/or Math
- Advanced Subject Grouping/Subject Acceleration/Resource Services

Students are grouped for specific subjects based on identification and placement criteria. AIG students identified in a specific subject should be grouped together in a classroom(s) for a specified period of time with an AIG teacher. Elementary and middle school school language arts AIG teachers must have AIG licensure. Middle school AIG math teachers are strongly encouraged to obtain AIG licensure. Activities may include use of curriculum materials designed for high ability learners, extension of the regular curriculum, and focus on specific skills such as critical and creative thinking, research skills, and investigations.

Differentiation is expected even within the AIG classroom. These strategies will include:

Content Modification

- Mastery learning units
- Differentiated units
- Learning centers
- Thematic units
- Technology-based instruction
- Extended reading/writing activities
- Tiered assignments
- Curriculum compacting
- Socratic/Inquiry-based seminar
- Paideia seminar
- Coached projects
- Project/Problem-based learning
- Virtual school offerings
- Specific Interest Development & Enrichment (these may vary with school)
- Academic competitions

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Field trips
Special presentations
Special interest clubs
Odyssey of the Mind
Math Olympiad
Future Problem Solving
Seminars with school system
Fine arts activities
Summer enrichment programs

AIG PLACEMENT - NINTH THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE SERVICES

The AIG support team will work with the guidance counselors at each high school to:
Consult with guidance counselors and gifted learners regarding class schedules
Provide support regarding academic development, career development and personal/social development of gifted learners
Collaborate with high school administration and staff regarding parent information events to include addressing the needs of gifted students
An AIG high school liaison is in place at each high school to monitor and support parent and student awareness of all options available through the high school program.

Honors Courses (some of these are available in eighth grade)

Honors courses are advanced courses that cover traditional content, but also focus on issues, problems, and these related to topics. They are designed to help students develop knowledge at an advanced level. Although these courses are not usually limited to gifted students, they need clearly defined prerequisites and entry criteria to be effective. Teachers should have training in gifted education and a differentiated syllabus of study.

Recommended criteria:

Level IV end-of-grade scores (grade 8)
B or above average in previous course(s)
Teacher recommendation

Credit Demonstrated by Mastery (CDM)

CDM is the process by which LEAs shall, based upon a body of evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

"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. CDM is available for all NC students in grades 6-12.

Students shall demonstrate mastery through a multi-phase assessment, consisting of (1) a standard examination which shall be the EOC/EOG where applicable, or a final exam developed locally, and (2) an artifact which requires the student to apply knowledge and skills relevant to the content standards. LEAs may require additional requirements, such as performance tasks. This multi-phase

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assessment process builds a body of evidence that allows a committee to determine the North Carolina Standard Course of Study thereby earning credit for the course without experiencing it in the school setting.

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses

The AP and IB programs consist of college-level courses and examinations for high school students. AP/IB course descriptions are carefully followed and are usually taught by teachers who have received special training. Teachers should have AP/IB training.

AP recommended criteria:

B or above average in honors level prerequisite(s)

Teacher recommendation

Parent recommendation waiver process

Use of AP potential data generated by College Board Concurrent Enrollment

Students are enrolled in two levels of schooling at the same time. This is appropriate for secondary students who might be enrolled in courses at a post-secondary institution. Through dual enrollment, students may receive college credit for courses taken while still in high school. Courses are not in the Union County High School Program of Studies. (See school guidance counselor and program of study for additional information.)

IB criteria:

4-part application process which can be found on the UCPS website.

Early Graduation

Any student who wished to be considered as a candidate for early graduation must consult the principal and guidance counselor. See current guidelines in the Union County High School Program of Studies.

Online Courses/NC Virtual Public School

Online courses are available to middle and high school students through local, various state and national websites.

Independent Study

Independent study courses may be arranged through a university or other approved agency. Student needs to be self-monitored and able to work independently. A faculty member need to serve as an advisor or mentor in case the student needs assistance.

Special NC Schools

Governor's School

NC School of the Arts

NC School of Science and Mathematics online courses

Practice B

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

District Response: The AIG program directly aligns its identification processes with delivered services. Resources of the LEA are utilized to their fullest extent in providing highly quality specialized instruction to meet the needs of gifted students.

At the K-3 level, The Young Scholars model is designed to nurture gifted potential and provide options for under-represented populations.

A flexible enrichment model is in place for all K-5 students, either subject or full grade, for advanced students working well beyond their peer group

In K-8 either subject or full grade acceleration may be needed for advanced students working well beyond their peer group.

Formal identification in the specific areas of reading and/or math begins in 4th grade and continues through middle school. Students identified for math and/or reading services receive full-time AIG instruction from an AIG licensed teacher. Materials and resources used for instruction are selected from research-based materials used with gifted students.

Practice C

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

District Response: PERSONNEL

AIG positions in UCPS are staffed at the school level. Principals hire their AIG teachers and those teachers are then included in all school and district initiatives as appropriate. AIG teachers are included in all professional development opportunities and are expected to be contributing members in the total school community. In this capacity, many of them serve on various school and district-level committees, in leadership positions, and in other roles that are not directly defined by their AIG position. The AIG program in UCPS is linked with many other school system initiatives. Listed below is a summary of how other programs in our school system coordinate with our gifted program.

School System Plans - District Accreditation

All schools have School Improvement Plans which are reviewed annually based on the Ready School Framework and the AdvancED criteria. Within the Ready Schools framework, schools will focus on ensuring that all public school students first master the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. The same curriculum areas will be emphasized in our gifted education plan.

Professional Development

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Results from the most recent evaluation of the gifted plan indicate a need to provide professional development in gifted education strategies for administrators and all regular education teachers across all grade levels. The gifted program will implement staff development which will be correlated between the needs of regular and gifted education. Staff development funds may be used to instruct educators in techniques and learning strategies that will be necessary in the implementation of the gifted plan. Much of our county's on-going staff development has been beneficial for gifted students. The professional development needs for our school system will be assessed yearly to plan for the best of regular education and gifted education. Specialized training in curriculum programs implemented solely for the AIG students will be provided. College coursework leading to full AIG licensure will be supported to the degree that funding permits.

Curriculum and Instruction Issues

Ongoing curriculum committees will assist in making decisions related to the selection and modification of AIG curriculum as needed to insure rigor and vertical alignment. District-level efforts in vertical teaming and alignment will be supported through the AIG plan. Many curricular issues focus on meeting the needs of high-achieving students such as curriculum alignment and increased instructional time given to reading, language arts, and math. Group problem-solving, Socratic and inquiry-based questioning, curriculum compacting, technology-assisted instruction, and instruction based on learning and reading styles have placed an emphasis on higher order thinking skills. Programs such as Building Thinking Skills, Habits of Mind, and Singapore Math are being implemented under this plan specifically to address the needs of gifted students. Readers' Workshop can provide another innovative approach to individualize instruction with a focus on specific skill development.

Recruitment and Training

The Human Resource Department actively recruits graduates in the field of education from colleges throughout our state and other states. One factor that has a great impact on student performance are qualified and caring teachers. Our system actively recruits such persons and educators. A recruitment package that showcases the school system, its programs, and the community at large, is provided to interested students at colleges and universities on their career day. Recruiting trips are made by the members of the Human Resources Department and school-based staff to ensure diverse and high-quality applicants. As a resource to regular classroom teachers, each elementary and middle school has access to a licensed AIG teacher.

Technology

Technology is promoted for students at all levels and is integrated throughout the curriculum. Computer-assisted instruction affords students the opportunity to work at an individual level and pace. Use of instructional software individualizes instruction and accelerates learning. AIG teachers participate in district-level technology initiatives such as 1:1 laptops for students. The AIG department maintains an AIG webpage on the UCPS system website as part of ongoing efforts to increase community awareness of the AIG program and provides communication and support to parents and students seeking resources. The AIG department also maintains private AIG teacher-only websites specific to the needs of gifted students.

Scheduling

Elementary schools exert great effort to provide for schedules which allow for AIG services to be provided in the most efficient and effective manner. This cooperation leads to many opportunities for innovative instructional activities such as enrichment blocks, and provides for accelerated options as well. Flexible scheduling at many middle school and high schools enhances the possibility for extension, enrichment, and integration of the curriculum for AIG students. Examples are: block scheduling, modified block, advisory period, and extended class periods.

Student Assessment

Assessments are conducted in grades K-12, including varied state and district assessments in grades K-2, and the North Carolina testing program (grades 3-12) which includes End of Grade, End of Course, Common Exams, open-ended assessments, and nationally normed standardized tests. These assessments are used to help identify gifted students, and specific measurable objectives are used to evaluate student progress and growth.

Practice D

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

District Response: Training will be provided and information will be disseminated about the AIG program and plan throughout the district in the following ways.

Presentations

Throughout the year, various presentations will be made to the following groups on an annual basis by both the AIG Director and the AIG Program Coordinators, or by each school's lead AIG teacher.

- Central Services Administrators at a cabinet meeting
- School principals at leveled principals meeting
- Assistant principals at AP Academy meeting
- Guidance counselors at a regularly scheduled meeting
- School staffs at a staff meeting early in the school year

Website

Updated regularly, the AIG website provides general program information and important announcements regarding the AIG program.

AIG Google Websites

Maintained by the AIG program coordinators, and available for all AIG teachers to share instructional strategies and other important information regarding the AIG program.

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Practice E

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

District Response: In order to achieve greater continuity among key transition points, the following actions are recommended:

Teacher classroom observations and meetings:

5th grade AIG teachers observe 6th grade AIG classes and meet to debrief.

6th grade AIG teachers observe 7th grade AIG classes and meet to debrief.

7th grade AIG teachers observe 8th grade AIG classes and meet to debrief.

8th grade AIG teachers observe subsequent high school classes and meet to debrief.

Teachers will provide the AIG office with a summary of the visit and any recommendations or needs from that visit.

AIG meetings for middle school AIG teachers and subsequent high school honors teachers. These meeting will bring together the key teachers at the elementary-middle-high school transition points. The meetings will address the specific curriculum areas of each and provide a vehicle for enhanced communication with the AIG program.

AIG program facilitators will work with teachers to facilitate the process of ongoing development of curriculum which will address the expectations and resources to be used at each level of AIG services.

AIG meetings with school-site counselors are being explored. These meetings with the counselors at each level will be able to address specific questions they may have about the AIG program, and to discuss the academic, social and emotional needs of all identified AIG students, including intellectually gifted students.

Written information about the AIG program at each level will be available at each school for general dissemination. The AIG program facilitators will facilitate these materials at every level.

Practice F

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

District Response: Opportunities for enhanced collaboration will be provided through the following efforts:

Increased staff development at the school level which will include all instructional areas.

Planning time available for AIG teachers and other instructional staff to further collaborate.

Collaboration of the AIG teacher and the regular education teachers in identifying best practices for AIG students.

Parents' meetings with AIG teachers to discuss their child's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP).

AIG team meetings to discuss student placement as needed.

Exploring AIG local endorsement online coursework for all teachers and administrators within UCPS.

Exploring webinar meetings with expert presenters from the field of gifted education.

Exploring webinar meetings to support parents of gifted students.

School counselors are available at all schools to meet with parents to provide individualized and group services to AIG students as needed, and to serve on the AIG team. The AIG teachers address the social and emotional needs of their students on a daily basis. Much of this interaction depends on the input and collaboration from the regular education teacher and parent, in that the child spends the majority of their day outside the AIG classroom. AIG teachers have resources for students and can integrate social/emotional needs of these students in support of one another. These combined efforts will help determine what additional resources are needed.

Practice G

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

District Response: STANDARDS FOR EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN

The 1997 General Assembly passed legislation allowing a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16 to enter kindergarten if he or she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity and is presented within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school year. In determining eligibility, the principal shall convene a committee of educational professionals who will assist him/her in making decisions about each individual child. Criteria that shall be considered include the following:

- Aptitude
- Achievement
- Performance
- Observable student behavior
- Motivation to learn
- Student interest

Aptitude Indicator: 98th Percentile

A child eligible to enter school early shall be precocious in academic and social development and score at the 98th percentile on a standard individual test of intelligence such as the Stanford-Binet Fifth Edition, the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence Fourth Edition, the Kaufman Anderson, or any other comparable test administered by an outside licensed psychologist. The completed battery of test results should be sent directly to the AIG office by the psychologist.

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Achievement Indicator: 98th Percentile

Children entering kindergarten early shall be functioning two to three years beyond their peers. Children eligible for early admission to kindergarten shall score at the 98th percentile on both reading and mathematics on a standard test of achievement such as the Metropolitan Readiness Test, the Stanford Early School Achievement Test, the Mini-Battery of Achievement, or the Woodcock-Johnson, administered by a licensed psychologist or a member of his/her professional staff who is trained in the use of the instrument as long as he/she has no potential conflict of interest in the outcome of the assessment.

Performance Indicator: Student Samples of Work

The child shall be able to perform tasks well above his age peers. Some indicators the principal may observe are the child's ability in independent reading, problem-solving skills, advanced vocabulary, and writing fluency. The parents shall submit a sample of student work showing outstanding examples of ability in any of the following areas: art, math, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, social interactions, etc. For further indication of performance, the principal may instruct a teacher to complete an informal reading assessment.

Observable Student Behavior/Student Interest Indicators: Two letters of Recommendation and Social Development Checklist

The child shall demonstrate social and developmental maturity sufficient to be in a structured school setting for a full school day. The child should be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a group. The school system shall require two recommendation letters with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, child care workers, pediatricians, or other adults with direct knowledge of the child. Documentation checklist that might be useful are the California Preschool Competency Scale, the Harrison Scale, or any other comparable scale of early social development.

Motivation/Student Interest Indicator

Informal interview with the child

Structured parent interview

Principal, or his/her designee, shall determine this information in an informal interview with the child and in a more structured interview with the parent to determine if the child displays a thirst for knowledge and seeks new and challenging learning situations.

Timelines

Within the first 30 calendar days of the school's instructional year, parent shall submit all required documentation to the principal.

Within three weeks of receiving the information, the principal shall make a determination.

Within the first 90 days of enrollment, principal has the right to rescind placement with 10 day notice to parent. There will be a written notification to parent if placement has been rescinded.

A parent wishing to submit his/her child for consideration for early admission to kindergarten shall present to the principal of his/her local school the required information within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school year. All testing must be administered after the April 16th that follows the

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child's fourth birthday. If the child is admitted to kindergarten, before the end of the first ninety(90) calendar days of the child's being enrolled, the principals may rescind his/her approval based on substantial evidence documenting that the child is not adjusting satisfactorily to the school setting. If the decision is made to remove the child from school, parents must be given at least ten (10) days notice to arrange childcare if needed.

Note: Early admission to kindergarten does not guarantee placement in the Academically/Intellectually (AIG) Program

K-8 SERVICES ACCELERATION OPTIONS

Subject Acceleration

Based on recommended criteria, students receive instruction at a higher grade level with another group of

Students while remaining with their peer group for the remaining part of their instructional day. A second option would be to implement curriculum compacting. These methods work best in subjects have a clearly developed sequence of skills (i.e., reading, mathematics, etc.). These strategies are appropriate at any grade level. Once acceleration opportunities have begun, the availability of continued opportunities remains essential. Subject acceleration must have an ongoing plan. In order to participate in subject acceleration, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

An Iowa Acceleration Scale - Qualitative and Quantitative components (listed below)

School and Academic Factors, Developmental Factors, Interpersonal Skills, Attitude and Support Factors

A recognized on-grade level achievement test with score of 95th percentile or higher in the subject(s) to be accelerated

A recognized achievement test, two years above grade level, with a score of 75th percentile or high in subject(s) to be accelerated

A Full Scale IQ test of 115 or higher

Follow Iowa Acceleration Scale guideline recommendations and grand total score should be 60 points or greater

Teacher/School Level AIG Team recommendations

Principal recommendation and placement

Whole Grade Acceleration

This involves skipping levels in the normal progression of school. It is only appropriate for highly gifted students. In order to qualify, students must meet all of the following criteria:

An Iowa Acceleration Scale - Qualitative and Quantitative components (listed below)

School and Academic Factors, Developmental Factors, Interpersonal Skills, Attitude and Support Factors

A recognized on-grade level achievement test with score of 95th percentile or higher in math, reading and language arts.

A recognized achievement test, two years above grade level, with a score of 75th percentile or higher in math, reading and language arts.

A Full Scale IQ test of 130 or higher

Follow Iowa Acceleration Scale guideline recommendations and grand total score should be 60 points

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or greater

Teacher/School Level AIG Team recommendations

Principal recommendation and placement

Compacted Curriculum (Grades K-12):

Curriculum compacting is used as a technique for differentiating instruction that 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.

Researchers recommend that teachers first determine the expected goals of the unit or lesson in terms of the content, skills, or standards students must learn before assessing students to determine which ones have already mastered most or all of the specified learning outcomes.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (Grades 6-12):

Students in grades 6-12 can accelerate their learning by applying for credit by demonstrated mastery.

Credit by demonstrated mastery (CDM) provides an opportunity to earn high school course credit by demonstrating mastery in the course curriculum without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for 135 hours of seat time. Through this process students will complete two phases of assessment in order to demonstrate mastery.

Earning high school credits via CDM may provide more opportunities for students to complete courses through Advanced Placement or Career and College Promise faster/earlier in high school. Middle school students may only attempt CDM for English I, Math I, II, III, or a 4th level math, World History, Civics and Economics, American History I, American History II, Biology, a Physical Science course, Earth Science, and only Level I and II World Language courses.

Phase 1 includes an examination to establish student mastery of the foundational skills and content this course/subject requires.

The student must earn a Level V "superior" scale score on the appropriate state assessment, EOC or a 94% correct on the appropriate local exam.

The student only has one attempt to pass the exam.

Prior to the exam, the student may review the content standards for the course or subject area that they are seeking to demonstrate mastery at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/>.

If the student earns the appropriate score, they will move onto Phase 2.

If the student does not earn a Level V, 94% correct for non-EOC courses, or a 93 % for post-CTE assessments, they will not have the opportunity to earn CDM for this course

In Phase 2, the student creates an artifact that reflects deep understanding of the content standards, including the ability to apply the skills and knowledge expected at the end of the course.

As part of this artifact, the student may be required to give a presentation, create a project, or take part in an interview as evidence of their abilities.

The CDM Review Panel will make a recommendation if the student can earn CDM. If the student is successful, they will earn a "CDM" on their transcript toward graduation credits. A grade or quality points will not be included in their GPA.

The student will meet with a CDM Panel member (s) to discuss the process and long-term implications.

The student and their parents are allowed to file for grievance if they do not agree with the decision of the team.

Students who would like to apply for the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, the application can be found on your school's website (under announcements tab) in November/December. See the school counselor for an application. Completed applications must be received by the school guidance counselor in early January. Students will be given a time and location for testing in late January/early February.

Practice H

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

District Response: The district is committed to identifying under-represented subgroups while supporting the efforts of the AIG staff at focused Title I schools. Currently we are exploring the Young Scholars Program in Fairfax, VA as an alternative to Global Kids. Becoming more intentional with our selection of a cohort, providing enrichment activities, and creating a portfolio of work prior to the third grade screening will be a focus at the Title I schools.

FLEXIBLE GROUPING NURTURE MODEL:

K-3:

Identify top 2-4% students in grade level

Identify additional students using the Gifted Characteristics Observation Form

Begin developing a portfolio of student work for identified students for the purpose of Alternative Assessment and Pathway 3. Student portfolios should be kept by the AIG teacher through elementary school.

3rd Grade:

Formal screening for identification in AIG program, using portfolio as Alternative Assessment as needed, is conducted.

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL NURTURING:

At the elementary level, grades K-5, AIG teachers will consult with and provide the regular classroom teachers with enrichment activities, including differentiation techniques, for individual, small group, or whole class instruction, some of which may take place within the classroom or in a different setting. Regular classroom teachers meet as a grade level, and with administration, to determine student cohorts based on several factors, in an attempt to meet the varying needs of the students.

At the middle school level, nurture students can be enrolled into AIG courses without being formally identified as long as they meet the local middle school criteria, there is room in the AIG course, and at the principal's discretion. Nurture students will not replace nor be substitutes for formally identified students. These students are only enrolled in the AIG course(s) for one year and placement for the subsequent school year is not guaranteed. Parents of nurture students will need to sign the nurture letter to acknowledging that placement in the AIG classroom is only for one year. These students will be screened annually for possible identification.

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HIGH-POTENTIAL/INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED:

Services for High-Potential/Intellectually Gifted (IG) students are being developed during the 2016-17 school year. UCPS is exploring the use of an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) customized to each individual student based on classroom observation, use of differentiation strategies, and on-going assessment. The IDEP would be reviewed on an annual basis to determine if continuation of strategies and/or addition/subtraction of strategies is needed in order to nurture student achievement and growth with possible social/emotional issues. Each school AIG team would meet to collaborate with the IG student's regular education teacher(s) regarding the specific needs of IG students. A classroom observation would be conducted to measure how the student's cognitive, affective, and social domains affect their overall achievement in the general education classroom. The general education teacher would also complete an observation performance report to add information concerning the IG student. Once the observations are complete, the AIG team would meet in order to determine which differentiation strategies best benefit the student as well as recommending additional affective and social support services provided at the school level. A meeting would be held with the parent/guardian of the IG student in order to discuss the service strategy. The parent, regular education teacher(s), and the AIG team would sign the student's IDEP. Strategies will be evaluated at least every semester for effectiveness.

HIGH-ABILITY/ACADEMICALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED:

Services for High-Ability/Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) are being refined during the 2016-17 school year. UCPS is exploring the use of an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) customized to each individual student based on their individual need such as advanced academics, social/emotional support, etc.

TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS:

Collaboration between the AIG department, school, and the Exceptional Children's department will determine the best services for the twice-exceptional student. The exceptional children's teacher and the AIG teacher will collaborate in a variety of ways such as planning, differentiation strategies, co-teaching, coaching and modeling to meet the needs of the student.

Practice I

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

District Response: Current extra-curricular activities include teams, clubs, and competitions such as Duke Tip, Odyssey of the Mind, Future Problem Solving, chess, Battle of the Books, Beta Club, Math Clubs, etc.

The AIG website provides recommendations for summer enrichment activities to engage gifted learners that may include career exploration and special interests.

Practice J

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

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District Response: UCPS uses intentional, flexible grouping practices in a variety of ways such as: AIG students are homogeneously grouped based on identification (reading and/or math) and are flexibly grouped based on data from on-going classroom assessment, interest, and need.

AIG students are grouped with peers in regular education classes and regrouped based on content, need, and interest.

Differentiation strategies can be used to facilitate flexible grouping.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Provide more PD for administrators and regular education teachers

K-3 Nurture - Young Scholars PD

K-5 Enrichment PD

AIG staff partner with counselors at middle and high schools

Sources of Evidence: PLANNED SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

AIG Google websites

AIG identification records

AIG meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, minutes

Classroom guidance reports

Communication regarding availability of activities to AIG students

Curriculum maps and documents

Description of course offerings per school

District accreditation plan

District achievement and benchmark data

Enrollment data (i.e., AIG headcount, AP/IB enrollment, high school records reflecting early graduation, concurrent enrollment, etc.)

Lesson plans

Observation schedules and meeting notes

Parents meeting notes and agendas

Portfolio examples

School Improvement Plans

School plan to meet the needs of under-represented populations

School-wide master schedules

Screening data

Student DEP/IDEP

Student rosters for Young Scholars and enrichment cohorts

Summer opportunities listed on AIG website

Teacher class rosters

Teacher evaluation artifacts

Teacher schedules

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Standard 5: Partnerships

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

Practice A

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

- ☐ academic and intellectual
- ☐ social and emotional.

District Response: UCPS encourages a high level of parental and community involvement. Most written communication is available in both English and Spanish, including website sections such as Parent Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's), informational brochures, and all official forms used in AIG placement and services. If a different language is requested, efforts will be made to accommodate the request. The UCPS website does provide a universal translator to assist anyone who needs it.

The following communication strategies are on-going:

AIG Parent Organization

A local AIG parent organization is being proposed to provide support for parents of gifted students. Included in the programming for this group will be social-emotional resources, as well as those addressing the academic needs of gifted students in and out of school. Emphasis will be placed on the positive role of parents in providing for gifted students.

Curriculum Nights

Special parent nights will be held to introduce and familiarize parents with the differentiated curriculum and models used in the AIG program.

School-Based AIG Parent Communication Plan

Each school will prepare a communication plan for keeping AIG parents and interested community members informed. It is expected that every school will support the efforts of the AIG teacher in showcasing the achievements of the AIG students and sharing them with the parent community. Special meetings such as DEP/IDEP meetings will be documented through normal recordkeeping procedures. It is recommended that multiple methods of involving parents be a high priority.

Parent Involvement in AIG Advisory Committee

Parents are part of the AIG Advisory Committee at the district level. These roles include ongoing implementation, providing feedback, and monitoring of the three-year plan.

International Baccalaureate (IB) information sessions are available to interested families as a possible pathway for AIG students.

Annual AIG Stakeholder Surveys (available in Spanish)

These surveys are designed and targeted to each of these groups in order to ensure annual evaluation, satisfaction levels, and provide opportunity for comments/suggestions.

Community Organizations

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) and Wingate University are community organizations which offer a range of opportunities for the AIG teacher community. Both UNCC and Wingate offer AIG licensure programs to local teachers. In addition, UCPS has partnered with Wingate University as at least one staff member participates on the UCPS AIG Advisory Committee, and presents best practices to AIG staff.

Practice B

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

District Response: Information about the AIG program is shared with parents and other stakeholders through the following efforts:

AIG Website/School Websites

A portion of the UCPS Website is dedicated to information and vital links for parents and others in the community. This site links parents and others in the community with out-of-school opportunities, services, current issues in gifted education, and articles of interest. In addition, special AIG happenings around the district are showcased. FAQs for parents are available in both English and Spanish.

School Websites also need a clear link to the AIG website.

Presentation of the Local Plan for Gifted Education at Parent Meeting

This meeting may be held in conjunction with other school events such as open house, curriculum night, DEP/IDEP meeting, etc.

AIG Bulletin Board

There is a bulletin board dedicated to all UCPS AIG services in the hallway outside the AIG offices. This bulletin board contains information on all aspects of the AIG program, including contact information.

Elementary, Middle, and High School Curriculum Guidebooks

This handbook is accessed through the UCPS website only. This online booklet includes a description of the AIG program and the related curricular differentiation provided through the classes.

Practice C

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

District Response: Components described more fully in other Standards/Practices include:

An AIG Advisory Committee (comprised of community members, AIG parents, administrators, teachers, curriculum administrators, ESL and Title I personnel, educational psychologist, and counselors) formed for the primary purpose of providing representation of the stakeholders who meet regularly to assist in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the AIG program.

In addition to these already-described opportunities for involvement, it is also possible for schools to determine other ways of connecting and sharing information such as having parent representation on the site-based committee to gather concerns, share information, etc., as a conduit of communication directly between the school and Central Services. Another possibility is the formation of a PTO subcommittee, if so desired at the school level.

Practice D

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

District Response: In addition to efforts described in Standard 5, Practice A and B, additional AIG information will be made available in other languages, as needed. Brochures describing the AIG Program, along with general information about the school system will be available at the district intake center. This center is the first stop for parents of students whose first language is not English. Translation services are also available through this center and the Federal Programs department. Whenever possible, parents who speak other languages will also be invited to assist in disseminating information to their native language community. All AIG surveys, forms, and paperwork requiring a parent signature are available in Spanish.

UCPS is exploring the option of developing an AIG brochure and different media formats.

Practice E

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

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District Response: UCPS will partner with Wingate University, East Carolina University, UNC Wilmington, and the Duke TIP Program to present at parent workshops on specific needs of the gifted learner. These schools offer AIG add-on licensure which offers opportunity to increase our AIG licensed staff.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Increase communication
Build partnerships

Sources of Evidence: AIG advisory committee
AIG advisory committee membership list and roles
AIG brochures
AIG curriculum guides - elementary and middle
AIG meeting agendas, sign-ins, and documentation
AIG parent group meeting documentations
AIG survey results
AIG website
Data on number of teachers enrolled in AIG add-on licensure coursework
Documented partnerships and events (agendas, sign-in sheets, program brochures)
Materials available at Intake Center
Meeting agendas, announcements, and sign-in sheets
Professional development and licensure class records
School communication plans
School websites
Translated materials

Standard 6: Program Accountability

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

Practice A

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

District Response: Every three years, the Academically/Intellectually Gifted Program Director leads the evaluation and revision process of the AIG local Plan. Developed with the input from all stakeholders, including central administration staff, school level administrators and teachers, parents, community members and students, this plan is reviewed, updated and submitted to DPI for additional review.

Practice B

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

District Response: Monitoring of the local plan is the primary responsibility of the AIG Director, but is facilitated by school level administration, the AIG Team at each school and the AIG teacher.

The AIG Team is composed of a school administrator, guidance counselor, regular education teachers and the AIG teacher(s). This team is charged with reviewing AIG placement decisions and supporting the implementation of the AIG program.

The AIG teacher is the primary link between Central Services and the school. Attendance at AIG regular meetings is required as well as timely electronic communication through email or phone contact as needed to ensure smooth program operation. The AIG teacher also maintains primary responsibility for the submission of all monitoring documentation as requested throughout the year. These requests include, but are not limited to, the following:

- AIG Teacher schedule
- Class rosters verifying AIG paperwork exits reflecting correct placement
- AIG Team listing
- Electronic screening notebook
- Electronic archiving of all signed and processed student paperwork
- Data entry into electronic database of all students under evaluation for AIG placement
- Ensuring PowerSchool accuracy for headcount purposes
- Class rosters for end of year transitions
- Summer testing lists

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Textbook and AIG resources inventories

Analysis of identification criteria

Maintenance of hard copy student files

Transfer of hard copy student files at transition points to middle school, high school, and internal transfers

Guidance lesson evaluation forms

Lesson plans on request

Practice C

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

District Response: The AIG Director has direct responsibility for and access to both state and local funding budgets designated as 034 accounts. Budgets are submitted in the fall and then reviewed by the AIG Director under the supervision of the Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services and the Chief Financial Officer periodically throughout the year. The Finance Department provides access to real-time accounting systems which show expenditures and remaining funds. Payroll works closely with the Director to ensure accuracy of personnel costs such as salary and benefits. Licensure works closely to verify that only AIG licensed personnel are paid from AIG funds. Funding is also provided to teachers for instructional materials, professional development and other AIG related needs. This collaborative environment will ensure state policy is followed.

Practice D

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

District Response: Working collaboratively with the Director of Testing and Student Services, the AIG Director will collect annually the results from state testing and provide analyses and reports about AIG student growth and drop-out rate, as available. In addition, working with the Director of Secondary Education, data reflecting AIG students' achievement in Honors, AP and IB courses in high school will also be reviewed. These results will be shared with administrators, teachers and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Practice E

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

District Response: The AIG Director will collect information from a variety of sources, including DPI headcount data, AIG teacher screening data and electronic data as archived and recorded in AIG documentation paperwork, to create reports showing the numbers of both representation and retention for these populations. Efforts will be made to use existing technology to identify these

students and track their progress through the AIG program at all levels.

When students exit the program, the Director will be immediately alerted via email, and paperwork documentation will be entered into the electronic database immediately. Changes such as these will require the AIG teacher to communicate with the data manager at the school to be sure the AIG headcount is accurate.

Practice F

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

District Response: Prior to hiring an applicant for an AIG position, the principal will involve the AIG Director in order to ensure the applicant has the proper credentials for the position, or is willing to attain them. If selected, the principal at the school sends a Personnel Verification Form (PVF) to the AIG Director for signature. The PVF begins the process of verifying credentials. Licensure then checks the teaching license of the applicant and communicates with the AIG Director if there are any deficiencies in the credentials.

If the applicant requires AIG certification, the AIG Director and HR will communicate the provisional license requirements and procedures and the required coursework for the add-on license. In addition, the AIG Director requests teachers with a provisional AIG license to complete a profile sheet that includes information regarding a certification plan. This plan is cross-checked with HR annually to monitor progress of add-on license requirements. This information assists with determining funding sources for salaries and has other budget implications regarding professional development needs and possible tuition reimbursement needs.

Licensure and payroll work collaboratively with the AIG Director to ensure proper monitoring.

Practice G

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

District Response: Stakeholder surveys designed to capture the effectiveness, satisfaction and suggestions for further revisions to the UCPS AIG Local Plan, the AIG program and services, as aligned to NC AIG Standards. Administered in the spring of the year prior to revision, this information will serve to further inform the revision process taking place the following year. A stakeholder survey will also be available annually for input and feedback regarding programming and services for gifted learners.

Parent group meetings, Open House, and other informal settings provide opportunities for stakeholders to come together to learn more about the AIG program and meeting the needs of the gifted learner.

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Practice H

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

District Response: Program evaluation is conducted at regular intervals by both internal and external evaluators with expertise in gifted education as well as parents and students. Those professionals include university professors in gifted education, educators with gifted licensure and student assessment services. The Exceptional Children's staff member program is utilized when special populations and twice-exceptional students are participating. The evaluation process includes monitoring of student identification and placement, student services and options and student achievement resulting from these services. In addition, effectiveness and efficiency of AIG departmental and administrative functions are also evaluated throughout this process.

The following evaluation components are in use:

Every three years (summative)

Comprehensive needs assessment surveys developed for community members, parents, students, principals, AIG teachers and regular education teachers to complete

Analysis of demographic data over time (trend data) reviewed to determine enrollment changes over time in diversity, gender, and district wide access to the program

Interviews and focus groups with various stakeholders

Disaggregated AIG Student achievement trend data to evaluate program effectiveness

Comprehensive AIG data from other district models to determine curriculum differentiation impact and service delivery model effectiveness

School Board presentation of evaluation results and suggestions for revision

Review comments from DPI on current AIG plan

Every year (formative)

Student identification, placement and retention processes monitored centrally for compliance with the plan and accuracy in headcount reporting

AIG enrollment data reviewed

Disaggregated AIG student achievement results and AMO growth data reviewed

Satisfaction/attitudinal surveys to principals, teachers, students and parents

Professional development needs assessment conducted to provide the basis for long-range planning as evidenced by teacher reporting and student achievement data.

Review and revision of curriculum documents to insure alignment with the NCSCOS and to insure rigor

Public information office publishes report to the community which includes gifted services and program information

Every semester (formative)

Bi-annual guidance report sessions evaluating the effectiveness of classroom guidance sessions delivered directly to the AIG students

Every month (formative)

Classroom visits by the Director, Program Coordinator, or designee to oversee delivery services, curriculum implementation and provide support and monitoring

Regular meetings of AIG personnel with the Director to discuss programmatic effectiveness and quality improvements
Monthly principal meetings providing opportunities for program discussions and recommendations for improvements or adjustments as needed
Parent communication reports/newsletters/website postings to evaluate communication efforts. This process will also disseminate and report AIG academic performance and programmatic activities throughout the community.

Ongoing (formative)

Teacher assessment of student achievement as measured by district-wide tests
Parent meetings to provide awareness of differentiated curricula and support services for social-emotional development of gifted students
Maintenance of records that reflect the volume and type of inquiries made to the AIG department from community members and other stakeholders. These records will be used to determine areas needing improvement.
Planning meetings held to continually improve and evaluate curriculum differentiation strategies
Professional development evaluations completed to inform the process of delivering high quality professional development.

Practice I

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

District Response: Evaluation data, such as survey data, student achievement and enrollment data will be made available annually through a variety of vehicles such as the AIG website, school websites and newsletters. This communication effort will provide a better understanding to the general public about the AIG program and its results.

Practice J

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

District Response: Students' rights are protected in a variety of ways in the AIG program: The Parent Handbook (below) is provided to parents when they are indicating their permission to have their child tested. This handbook describes the steps in the appeals/grievance process. Student records are maintained in teachers' classrooms in locked filing cabinets
Electronic information is protected by FERPA measures and any documents transmitted via electronic means are password protected to prevent inadvertent interception of confidential information.

Updated January 10, 2017

I. General Information Regarding Parent and Student Rights

II. Appeals Process

Step 1 Appeal to the School Academically or Intellectually Gifted Identification Team/Principal

Step 2 Appeal to the Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services

Step 3 Appeal to the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services

Step 4 Appeal to the Superintendent

Step 5 Appeal to State Level Administrative Law Judge for a Contested Case Hearing

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING PARENT AND STUDENT RIGHTS

Parents/Guardians can request screening of student data; however, the student data must support further testing.

The parent/guardian of a student being screened for AIG services may request a screening of student data upon enrollment and once a year for grades 3-8. For grades 9-12, an individual request may be made for students not previously identified for gifted services.

During the screening process, student data is used to make further recommendations regarding the best placement for the student. Students whose data is current and meets the qualifying criteria for placement will be recommended for placement into AIG services. Further testing may be recommended for candidacy for placement into AIG services if needed. If further testing is recommended, the parent/guardian will receive an AIG 2 (permission to test form).

Parents/guardians have the choice of denying testing or consenting to testing. The parent/guardian will need to sign and return the AIG 2 (permission to test form) to the school. No further assessments will be administered without parent/guardian consent for testing.

Parents/Guardians will be notified of the results of further testing in writing as soon as the screening process has concluded. Further recommendations will be sent with the testing results notifying parents of the overall decision regarding student placement. Students who do not qualify for services will continue to be annually screened for gifted services recommendation in grades 3-8. Students in grades 9-12 will be screened on a referral basis.

Students who qualify for services do not receive services until the parent/guardian signs an AIG 4 which is a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) consenting to services. Parents/Guardians are invited to the school to conference regarding AIG services and address additional concerns regarding the student. The invitation is sent in writing (AIG

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3) with the testing results. The parent/guardian conference concludes with the signing of the DEP or IDEP either agreeing to or denying services.

For students who are transferring into UCPS from a district within the state of North Carolina, previous identification information will be used to determine the best placement based on our local criteria and service models.

For students who are transferring into UCPS from a district outside the state of North Carolina, previous identification information will be used as a data point in the screening process. Current standardized, nationally-normed testing data that has occurred within the past year can be used during the screening process to determine further recommendations.

The annual screening process begins after the end of the first semester. Student grades are collected for all students in grades 3-8. Students with an "A" average in reading and/or mathematics are captured and re-evaluated for recommendations once the required state standardized testing is completed and the results have been received by the schools.

Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of further recommendations from the annual screening process only if the student qualified for services or is recommended for further testing. Students who need further testing will be recommended for summer testing.

All parent/guardian conferences for newly identified students from the annual screening and/or summer testing will commence in the fall of the school year. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of the location and time of the conference.

In some cases, students may need a reassessment due to extenuating circumstances. Each case is reviewed on an individual basis. Student data is considered during this process before further recommendation is made.

Parents/Guardians have the right to choose private testing at their own expense. Families who elect to attain private testing must have testing completed by a licensed psychologist. A complete report of testing results must be sent to the AIG office by the psychologist within the first ninety days of school. Any results received after this time may be considered for the annual screening process.

The steps outlined in the rest of this handbook are the appeals process. The appeals process is meant to determine whether or not UCPS improperly failed to identify the student as eligible for gifted services or whether UCPS implemented and provided those services as specified with the DEP or IDEP.

Families that disagree with the decision of the AIG team have the right to appeal the process. A rescreening of student data is conducted in order to determine further recommendations. Parents/Guardians can request screening of student data; however, the student data must support further testing.

Appeals Process

STEP 1: Appeal to the School Academically or Intellectually Gifted Identification Team/Principal

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1. The parent/guardian may request a conference with the academically or intellectually gifted (AIG) Team at the child's school. This request must be made in writing and should include reasons for appeal. If this request concerns test results, then this request must be received by the AIG Team within thirty business days of notification of test results or within thirty business days of the beginning of the school year. The AIG Team should be given ample opportunity (10 business days) to convene all members together for conference.
2. At this conference, the individual student profile will be examined and discussed. Information used to determine eligibility for service delivery options shall be reviewed with the parent/guardian. If needed, the child's teacher may be asked to provide further documentation concerning student characteristics and achievement by the AIG Team.
3. At this conference, all information will be shared with parent/guardian, minutes will be recorded, and signatures obtained from those present.
4. Following the conference, the principal will respond to the concerns in writing within 10 business days of the conference.
5. If the disagreement is not resolved at this level, proceed to Step II.

STEP 2: Appeal to the Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services

1. The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the School level AIG Team to the Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services. The parent must in writing explain concerns and specific points of disagreement with the decision of the AIG Team and submit this written appeal within 10 business days of the decision from the school level.

Please submit this appeal to: Lisa Gibson

Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services
Union County Public Schools
400 North Church Street
Monroe, NC 28112

The conference shall be scheduled within 10 business days of receipt of this request.

2. The Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services will review the concern and additional information may be requested from the child's teacher, the AIG Team, the parent/guardian, and/or the principal prior to the conference. Minutes will be recorded and signatures will be obtained from those present at conference.
3. The Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services shall respond to the concern in writing within 10 business days of the conference.

STEP 3: Appeal to the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services

1. The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services to the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services in writing within 10 business days of the decision. The written request must include concerns and specific points of disagreement.

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Please submit appeal to: Sam Basden
Interim Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services
Union County Public Schools
400 North Church Street
Monroe, NC 28112

1.The Interim Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services will review the written appeal. He/she may request further information from the child's teacher, the AIG Team, the parents, the principal, and/or the Director of Academically or Intellectually Gifted Services.

2.The Interim Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services shall respond in writing within 10 business days of receiving the appeal.

3.If the disagreement is not resolved at this level, proceed to Step IV.

STEP 4: Appeal to the Superintendent

1.The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services to the Superintendent in writing within 10 business days of the decision. The written request must include concerns and specific points of disagreement.

Please submit appeal to: Andrew G. Houlihan, Ed.D.Superintendent
Union County Public Schools
400 North Church Street
Monroe, NC 28112

2.The Superintendent will review the written appeal. He/she may request further information from the child's teacher, the AIG Team, the parents, the principal, and/or the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services.

3.The Superintendent shall respond in writing within 10 business days of receiving the appeal.

If the disagreement is not resolved at this level, proceed to Step V.

STEP 5: State Level Grievance Procedure

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision of the Superintendent, they may file a petition for a contested case hearing in accordance with Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the Administrative Procedures Act, of North Carolina.

The issues for review shall be limited to:

1. Whether the local system improperly failed to identify the student as eligible for services within its gifted education program.
2. Whether the local system implemented and provided those services specified within the differentiated gifted education plan.

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Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall serve the final decision. The administrative law judge shall give a copy of written findings and the decision to the parties and to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Attorney's fees are not available to parents in the event they prevail in a due process hearing.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Implement testing procedures to include an online scoring and reporting system.

Improve accuracy of testing data for identification purposes.

Evaluate data to improve program services to better meet the needs of gifted learners.

Sources of Evidence: Evaluation data (including survey data, self-assessment data and anecdotal data), revision committee meeting notes, agendas, sign-in sheets, completed plan presented to School Board for approval, AIG plan submitted by established deadline to DPI, regular meeting sign-in sheets, electronic archives, notebooks maintained at AIG office of requested documentation, classroom observation and monitoring notes, PowerSchool EOG/EOC reports, EVAAS reports, AP/IB reports, drop-out reports disaggregated for AIG students, local benchmark data, disaggregated headcount reports, retention data, alternative assessment forms, screening notebooks, enrollment data in upper level courses, Personnel Selection Forms, AIG Teacher Profile sheets, AIG salary and budget report, parent meeting minutes, review comments from DPI on current AIG plan, public website postings, professional development evaluations, school websites, newsletters, plan on state website, achievement data on state website, signed AIG 2 forms indicating receipt of Parent Handbook, screening notebooks, electronic database and record access restricted to AIG teacher of record and Central Services personnel, and documentation of complaints, minutes of appeals and subsequent responses.

Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

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