

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

Approved by local Board of Education on:

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

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

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

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

Guilford County Schools Vision for local AIG program:

The vision of Guilford County Schools (GCS) is a professional learning community where instruction invites effort and supports academic rigor for all students and educators, and our mission is to foster excellence in a respectful and challenging academic environment that leads to a lifelong passion for learning and the realization of each individual's highest potential for success in life. The GCS local AIG plan is a key strategy for fulfilling the district's purpose of maximizing the achievement of all students.

To that end, all Guilford County Schools (GCS) will have equitable opportunities for students to engage in rigorous learning. Processes and procedures for Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) services will be commonly understood by the school community and the community at large. The academic, social and emotional needs of advanced learners will be valued and supported by school and district membership. All school staff will share the responsibility and will collaborate to provide the most rigorous learning experiences for each student.

The scope of the GCS AG program will encompass grades K-12 with a K-2 consultative and collaborative model, Nurture services in grades K-2, a well-defined 3-5 Enrichment model, 3-5 Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP) service, advanced and accelerated curricula for English/Language Arts and mathematics in middle school, and a wide array of honors, AP and IB

courses in high school.

AG students will demonstrate academic growth annually and will experience smooth transitions to middle school, high school and college.

A strong continuum of AG services beginning at the primary level will lead to increased career and college readiness, including an increased number of AG students participating in and performing well on Advanced Placement (AP) courses and exams, graduating with International Baccalaureate (IB) diplomas and participating in dual enrollment opportunities.

The whole school community will actively participate in supporting AIG students so that they thrive and reach their full academic and intellectual potential.

Sources of funding for local AIG program (as of 2019)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$6879973.00	\$2678373.00	\$.00	\$.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

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

District Response:

The Screening and Referral process for GCS students in grades K-12 is as follows:

Primary Grades K-2

This screening and referral process may lead to consultative service through collaboration between the AG teacher and the classroom teacher.

Students in primary grades (K-2) may be referred for consultative service by a parent/guardian or teacher. Additionally, elementary AG teachers regularly review assessment data (reading assessments such as DIBELS and TRC, math assessments) to identify students who are performing well above grade level. Students arriving from outside the district who have been identified in North Carolina as AG will receive consultative services. Students who meet early entrance to kindergarten requirements are identified for talent development services and re-screened in second grade.

Elementary Grade 3 – Initial Sweep Screen Process

This screening and referral process may lead to identification for direct AG enrichment in reading and/or math or for Talent Development service provided by the AG teacher at each school.

All third-grade students participate in a sweep screen using the Cognitive Abilities Test Form 8 in the fall.

- EC students with a current aptitude score are not required to test but may opt to participate. A score from an aptitude test administered by the EC department may be used for eligibility.
- EC students with a severe cognitive disability are not required to take the test.

Any one of seven data points may be used to determine if a student is eligible for additional screening:

- Composite (VQN)
- Verbal /Non-Verbal (VN) partial composite
- Quantitative/Non-Verbal (QN) partial composite
- Verbal/Quantitative (VQ) partial composite
- Verbal (V) subtest
- Quantitative (Q) subtest
- Non-Verbal (N) subtest

Students who score at the 70%ile or higher on one CogAT data point are eligible to participate in additional screening with the administration of the Iowa Achievement Tests in math and reading. Students with a composite of 92%ile or higher are screened for potential VS services with the administration of the Iowa Achievement Tests in science and social studies.

Additionally, after review of CogAT results, teachers, parents, and community members may submit a referral to request continued screening based upon other identifiers of potential. This referral form is available on the district AG webpage.

For English Learners (EL), the EL department provides data to identify students not captured by the CogAT who may warrant additional screening.

Students scoring at the 85%ile or higher on the Iowa Achievement Test(s) may be eligible for further screening, which may include:

- The Naglieri Non-verbal Ability Test (NNAT3)
- Aptitude or Achievement Performance Tasks
- The Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)

Elementary Grades 3-5 – Annual Screening Process

This screening and referral process may lead to identification for direct AG enrichment in reading and/or math or for Talent Development service provided by the AG teacher at each school.

Math and reading End of Grade (EOG) scores for all third, fourth and fifth grade students are reviewed annually by the school's AG teacher and by the AG department staff to identify students scoring at the 85%ile or higher. These students may be eligible for additional screening which may include:

- The Naglieri Non-verbal Ability Test (NNAT3)
- Aptitude or Achievement Performance Tasks
- The Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)

All students in grades 3-5 new to Guilford County Schools are systematically reviewed to determine the need for additional AG screening. School Data Managers notify AG teachers of newly enrolled students. The AG teacher reviews student data, and students with scores at or above the 70%ile are added to the screening pool to be tested during the next testing window. New families may also submit the *AG Referral Form*, which is located on the district AG webpage.

Grades 6-7 – Annual Screening Process

This screening process may lead to AG identification and recommendation for advanced coursework in math and/or reading.

Math and reading End of Grade (EOG) scores and End of Course (EOC) scores for all sixth and seventh grade students are reviewed annually by AG department staff to identify students scoring at the 90%ile or higher. Aptitude is not used as a criterion for eligibility after grade 5.

Grades 8-12 - Annual Screening Process

This referral process may lead to AG identification and recommendation for advanced coursework in math and/or reading.

Students in grades 8-12 may be referred for AG identification based upon existing achievement data, including but not limited to End of Course (EOC) test scores, Pre-ACT or ACT test scores, PSAT or SAT test scores, and AP or IB test scores. High Schools use the College Board AP Potential report and a district-provided AP Discrepancy Report to actively recruit students, particularly those from

underrepresented populations, for enrollment in Advanced Placement courses. School partnering with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) also use EOS student profiles to identify students for these advanced opportunities. Advanced courses are available through student self-selection and are not dependent upon AIG eligibility.

Practice B

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

District Response:

The GCS criteria for AIG eligibility is based upon the state definition of giftedness provided in Article 9B (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.5) and thus specifically address both academically and intellectually gifted student profiles.

The state definition is as follows:

§ 115C-150.5. Academically or intellectually gifted students.

The General Assembly believes the public schools should challenge all students to aim for academic excellence and that academically or intellectually gifted students perform or show the potential to perform at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. Academically or intellectually gifted students exhibit high performance capability in intellectual areas, specific academic fields, or in both intellectual areas and specific academic fields. Academically or intellectually gifted students require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program. Outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. (1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 18.24(f).)

GCS Pathways for AIG Eligibility

Eligibility for Consultative Services (K-2)

Students in primary grades (K-2) are identified for consultative service when available data (reading assessments (DIBELS, TRC), math assessments) demonstrate a need for acceleration and/or enrichment of grade-level content.

Students are not formally identified for direct AIG pull-out enrichment service until grade 3.

Eligibility for Pull-Out Enrichment Service (3-5)

Students are identified as IG, AG, AM or AR in all elementary schools according to the following criteria:

Intellectually Gifted (IG)

*98th percentile aptitude composite

Exceptional Achievement (AM or AR)

*98th percentile achievement in reading and/or math

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AG, AM or AR)

*Aptitude 90th percentile or higher and achievement of 90th percentile or higher in reading and/or math

OR

*Achievement 90th percentile or higher and aptitude of 85-89th percentile + reasoning performance task

OR

*Aptitude 90th percentile or higher and achievement of 85-89th percentile + performance task in reading and/or math

Additionally, Student Performance Portfolios may be reviewed when determining eligibility for AG services. Student Performance Portfolios may include, but are not limited to:

- EL status and progress toward EL goals
- EC status and progress toward EC goals
- Underachievement Identification Instruments and Scales (Rimm & Whitmore)
- Performance Tasks and observations
- Historical interim assessment performance

Eligibility for AG Service (6-12)

Aptitude is not used as a criterion for eligibility after grade 5. In grades 6-12, the achievement score must be 90th percentile or higher. This aligns with district placement parameters for advanced coursework in middle grades. It should be noted that district placement criteria supersede AG identification for student placement decisions.

High schools practice an open enrollment policy that is not dependent upon AG identification and allows students to self-select advanced courses.

Eligibility for Very Strong (VS) Service at the Academy at Lincoln (4-8)

The criteria to participate in VS service at the Academy at Lincoln is:

- *Aptitude 97%ile
- *Reading 97%ile
- *Math 97%ile
- *Science and Social Studies 95%ile average
- *"A" average in each of the four core subjects

A performance task option is available for students who meet Very Strong criteria in all areas except one, and that one area is still within 5 points of the minimum VS score required. The student product in the deficient subject must earn a passing rubric score. A district-developed rubric is used to evaluate eligibility for VS services for students from underrepresented populations in accordance with district strategic goals. This rubric takes into account other factors, such as poverty, parent education level and language spoken at home, that may prevent high-achieving students from underrepresented populations from qualifying for the program. The rubric also includes aptitude and

achievement components that ensure that students identified through this differentiated process will experience success in the VS program.

Private Testing

GCS will accept scores from tests administered at the family's expense by licensed psychologists outside of GCS to be considered for identification purposes for students currently enrolled in GCS according to the following conditions:

- Only one private test score may be used for AG identification (aptitude, math, reading, science or social studies)
- Prior notification of the intent to pursue private testing is required so that the AG department may counsel families appropriately
- Student must have scored 70th percentile or higher on the corresponding GCS-administered assessment

Students not currently enrolled in a GCS school should contact the AG department to discuss testing options. Only one private test score will be accepted for AG identification.

New to GCS

Students in grades 3-12 arriving in GCS from other North Carolina districts who were receiving AIG services in their previous district will maintain AIG eligibility and services will be determined based upon most recent data. Eligibility will be verified through PowerSchool for districts with AIG Plans filed with the state and/or official AIG documentation.

Students who were identified for AG eligibility prior to grade 2 will be reassessed according to GCS eligibility criteria.

Students in grades K-12 arriving in GCS from districts outside of North Carolina who provide documentation of AIG eligibility in their previous district will be assessed for AIG services according to GCS eligibility criteria.

Identification for Talent Development Opportunities

Students who do not meet the criteria for AG identification may be served in a Talent Development program. These students are captured on the AG department database but are not listed in PowerSchool as AG. Talent Development service opportunities in grades 3-5 include:

Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP)

- All schools must adhere to identification and delivery guidelines to ensure fidelity of implementation.
- MAP eligibility is reviewed annually in grades 3-5 by each school's TAG team.
- Students must qualify for MAP service each year with
 - aptitude and achievement score of > 70th%ile **OR**
 - achievement score > 80%ile **OR**
 - aptitude score at 95%ile to 97%ile **AND** TAG recommendation
- To better address AIG identification gaps, students from underrepresented groups (as documented by district data) are prioritized when filling available MAP seats.

- Title I and Community Eligible Program (CEP) schools and/or schools with fewer than 5 MAP-eligible students will use school-level data to identify students who are performing in the top 10% of their grade level.
- MAP sections are limited to 20 students per grade level.

Advanced Learners

- All schools must adhere to identification and delivery guidelines to ensure fidelity of implementation.
- Advanced Learner eligibility is reviewed annually in grades 3-5.
- Advanced Learners are identified when only 1 to 5 students are identified for AG service in a given grade and content area. For each grade and content area, Advanced Learner enrollment is limited to 5 students unless otherwise approved by the AG Department
- Students must qualify for Advanced Learner service each year with:
 - an achievement score that is > 80th%ile in the area of service **OR**
 - an aptitude score at 95%ile to 97%ile AND TAG recommendation
- To better address AIG identification gaps, students from underrepresented groups (as documented by district data) are prioritized in Advanced Learner placement.

Because of the flexibility provided to address the needs in the local (school) setting, eligibility for MAP and Advanced Learner services is limited to the school for which the student was deemed eligible. Students who move within district are allowed to continue MAP or Advanced Learner services if space is available in the receiving school.

Practice C

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

District Response:

The AG department works closely with the Division of Accountability and Research to monitor and analyze demographic data to continually evaluate screening and identification processes, particularly in terms of equity and access for underrepresented student populations.

GCS is a majority minority district with the following general demographic breakdown:

- 41% African American
- 33% White
- 16% Hispanic
- 6% Asian
- 4% Multi-racial

Approximately 14% of GCS students are identified for EC services and 9% are identified for EL services.

20% of the overall district student population is identified as AG. The demographic breakdown of this AG subgroup is:

- 20% African American
- 57% White
- 10% Hispanic
- 8% Asian
- 5% Multi-racial

Approximately 2% of AG-identified students are also identified for EC services and less than one percent are also identified for EL services.

GCS is committed to increasing the cultural and racial diversity of students receiving AIG services. Identification tools and procedures support these efforts in the following ways:

Third grade initial screening:

Research indicates that conducting a district wide screen, rather than relying solely upon referrals, is one of the most positive factors in providing equity and access to gifted services. Additionally, the AG Department collaborates with the Exceptional Children (EC) Department and the English Learner (EL) Department to identify students in these special populations that need additional screening for AG services because their exceptionality may have affected their CogAT participation/score. For EC students, information from psychological reports is used to alert staff to potential twice-exceptional status. For English Learners (EL), the EL department provides data to identify students not captured by the CogAT who, based on progress through the EL program and language proficiency assessments, may warrant additional screening. To facilitate this collaboration at the school level, EC and EL teachers are members of the TAG team and can share evaluation results when appropriate.

Data provided by the sweep screen as well as information provided by the EC and EL departments is analyzed in a way that addresses factors that may impact student performance. These include:

- Using local (district) norms for the CogAT to increase the screening opportunities of students from under-represented populations
- Providing multiple pathways to identification so that all students are accurately evaluated using instruments that are sensitive to differences or disabilities
- Including non-verbal (pictorial) assessment components to capture student ability (use of single non-verbal subtest score for eligibility, availability of additional non-verbal assessment for all students as needed)
- Providing additional opportunities for referral (parent, teacher, student, community member) beyond sweep screen test scores

Annual screening and identification (grades 3-12)

At the school level, End-of-Grade (EOG) test data is reviewed to identify students needing additional screening for AG services.

Once all district EOG data is available, the AG Department collaborates with the district's Division of Accountability and Research to review district EOG data to ensure that students from underrepresented populations are not being overlooked for AIG screenings, services, and

identification.

Talent Development:

Talent development opportunities are available in elementary schools to capitalize on and develop early potential, particularly among underrepresented student populations, to increase identification for AG services. The following Talent Development opportunities are available:

- K-1 Nurture program in highly impacted schools or schools with declining AG identification
- Grade 2 Nurture program in all schools
- Grade 3-5 Maximizing Academic Potential Service
- Grade 3-5 Advanced Learners pull-out enrichment

Very Strong (VS) Services:

Highly gifted students may qualify to participate in the Very Strong (VS) services provided at the Academy at Lincoln. VS service is available in grades 4-8 and provides advanced and accelerated learning in all four core content subjects and is delivered in a self-contained classroom with a teacher with AIG licensure.

All students in the VS Program meet the district's requirements for AIG identification. To ensure the stability of the program and alignment with the district's overall population, the AG Department will utilize a rubric when considering the placement of students from underrepresented groups to evaluate for VS services. The use of the rubric serves to address the various circumstances that impact the performance and achievement of students from underrepresented populations, including, but not limited to:

- Institutional Racism
- Low Socioeconomic Status
- Cultural Gaps
- Educational Barriers (such as Title I, low teacher expectations)

AP Enrollment:

At the high school level, the district pays for the administration of the PSAT/NMSQT for all 10th and 11th grade students, which provides access to the College Board's AP Potential report.

- Annually, the AG Department provides a presentation to School Administrators and School Counselors on the use of the AP Potential data.
- Students whose potential is at 50% are encouraged to enroll in AP courses.
- In collaboration with the district's Division of Accountability and Research, an analysis of AP enrollment data in comparison with AP Potential data is conducted. This data is disaggregated to reveal trends in AP enrollment for students from underrepresented populations.
- GCS partners with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) to shift the cultural mindset in high schools and to identify students with potential who are missing from AP courses.

Professional Development:

Strategic professional development is offered for classroom teachers regarding the identification of gifted characteristics, both traditional and those that may be less teacher-pleasing and thus overlooked. Teachers are trained to recognize and nurture gifted characteristics in children from diverse backgrounds. In collaboration with district partners, the AG Department will offer the following professional learning:

- Social Justice Teaching 101 (Teaching Tolerance)

- Black Boy Hustle: Recognizing Giftedness in African American Males
- Money Talks: Recognizing Giftedness in Students of Poverty
- I Too Am AG: Understanding the Needs of 2E Students
- Recognizing Giftedness in EL Learners
- Girls Do Code: Recognizing STEM gifts and talents in girls

The Use of Student Data & Enrichment Opportunities:

The AG Department understands that effective analysis of data is required to highlight district trends as it relates to the identification of students from underrepresented populations. Such analysis serves to evaluate the effectiveness of Talent Development programming designed to increase identification of these populations. The use of the data can also prove beneficial when selecting students from underrepresented populations for participation in district sponsored enrichment opportunities.

Highlighted efforts include:

- Collaboration with Counseling Services to ensure that rubrics used to determine participation in enrichment opportunities reflect other factors such as a school's Title 1 status, student's exceptionality, or access to community resources that impact student performance when compared to students without similar risk factors. This collaboration positively impacts enrichment opportunities such as the district's Academic All-Star Camp and widely known enrichment programs such as Governor's School and Duke TIP.
- Provision of a disaggregated report of the district's AIG population and analysis of changes in AIG identification from year to year, as it relates to the district's identified subgroups.
- Provision of a comparison of the district's AIG population to the district's overall population to identify subgroups that are underrepresented in the district.
- Collaboration with the district's Technology Department to update the AG Database to allow for the tracking of students in our K – 1 Nurture and Talent Development program. Such tracking will enable us to monitor the identification of these students during formal screening processes.

Practice D

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

District Response:

The reliability of the screening, referral, and identification process is ensured through:

- A flipchart summarizing AG screening and identification criteria and procedures is distributed to each elementary, middle and high school to be housed in the front office for reference by staff and families
- Sharing of AG identification information through official weekly principal newsletters
- Bi-annual Fidelity Checks conducted with principals to review Plan implementation, including AG identification practices
- Close monitoring of the district AIG database which compiles cumulative information on all students who have received further screening beyond the initial administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test sweep screen, which includes 100% of non-exempt third grade students
- Bi-annual individual compliance reviews of student AIG folders, rosters and screening/identification process implementation conducted by the AIG Coordinators

- The required use of procedures, forms and letters for AG teachers and Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) chairs which are available on a central AIG shared site Mandatory AIG teacher meetings to discuss screening, referral and identification procedures in the elementary school
- Systematic review by TAG chairs of all students new to GCS to determine prior AG service and/or the need for additional AG screening
- Mandatory TAG Chair meetings to discuss screening and identification procedures in the middle school
- The review of each student's eligibility profile by the school-based TAG Team with final approval of Student Eligibility Records (SER) by the district oversight committee (DOC)
- The delivery of the AP Discrepancy Report to high schools to ensure that students with potential are enrolled in appropriate coursework
- District-wide discrepancy reports to ensure appropriate student placement at transition years (6th and 9th grades)

Practice E

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

District Response:

Parents, school staff, and community members may access Academically Intellectually Gifted (AIG) screening, referral and identification procedures through the Academically Gifted page of the Guilford County Schools website. The full Board-approved AIG Plan is posted on the website as well as specific pages that summarize the identification process.

Each elementary, middle and high school receives a GCS AIG Identification and Service Flipbook that resides in the front office as a resource for staff and families.

Screening and Identification timelines and procedures are communicated to principals through the official district weekly principal newsletter.

The AG Department also sponsors Guilford Parent Academy sessions to disseminate information to parents and the community, including a session on the screening and identification process prior to the district testing of all second-grade students. These sessions are offered in Title I schools and community centers. Participants receive written documentation of the identification process, and the presentation and resources are posted on the AG Webpage for reference.

A letter is sent home with each third-grade student to notify parents about the administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT 8) which is the first step in the AIG screening process. This letter communicates the purpose of the assessment and its use in the identification of students for gifted services. An AIG flyer accompanies this test administration notification and provides additional information on AG identification and service.

Elementary AG teachers and middle school Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) chairs participate in school-based beginning-of-year informational sessions and events to explain the AIG eligibility process

and spectrum of AG services.

The AG Department provides presentational documents regarding the screening and identification process to elementary AG teachers and middle school TAG Chairs to facilitate annual informational meetings with school staff.

In addition to documentation in the official student information management system, the AG Department maintains a database that houses information on all students in Guilford County Schools who have been screened by the AG Department. Questions about screening and eligibility from families and schools can thus be handled and resolved efficiently.

Practice F

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

District Response:

The AIG Department maintains a district AIG database which compiles cumulative information on all students who have received screening beyond the initial administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test (sweep screen), whether or not they have been identified to receive AIG services. The database archives annual standardized student achievement data and tracks any modifications made to a student's AIG record.

The Student Eligibility Record (SER) is generated from this database and is signed by members of the school Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) and by the District Oversight Committee (DOC). The SER indicates the tools and scores used to determine eligibility as well as the areas of identified service.

Families receive an eligibility letter which includes a copy of the SER. The SER is reviewed with families and is also filed in the student's AG folder within the Cumulative Folder.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

The AG Department will:

- expand the use of social media to share and promote AG opportunities
- increase the presentational capacity of the AG department to offer "meet them where they are" sessions by training AG teachers to speak on district-wide processes for identification
- develop additional visual aids in the form of a PowerPoint presentation or a short video explaining the screening and identification process which will be posted on the department webpage and available for teachers to use with families or staff
- expand Guilford Parent Academy's AG 101 presentation to include additional information for parents of primary-aged students concerning K-2 consultative service, Nurture curriculum, screening and identification and nurturing gifted characteristics and behaviors.

Sources of Evidence:

- AIG Plan
- District and school websites
- AG monthly newsletters
- AG teacher handbook
- AG database
- Agendas from school faculty meetings, district staff meetings, AG teacher meetings and Parent Academy sessions
- Feedback from stakeholders and survey results
- AG one-page information sheets (flyers)
- Student Eligibility Records (SER)
- AG student folders
- PowerSchool AIG state reports
- Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) notebooks with meeting agendas and minutes
- Documents regarding Very Strong (VS) service at the Academy at Lincoln
- Disaggregated AIG enrollment data
- Disaggregated AP/IB participation data
- Board of Education presentations

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

Practice A

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

District Response:

AIG programs and services differ according to grade span and are intended to best meet the needs of gifted learners in the specific educational settings.

K-2 Consultative Services

- Collaboration and consultation between AG teacher and general education teacher to identify differentiation strategies best suited to meet the individual needs of high performing students referred for consultation in reading and math in the general education classroom

K-1 Nurture Services

- AG Nurture Specialists conduct weekly whole group lessons in Kindergarten and first grade classrooms to cultivate the academic and intellectual talents of these students and to create scholarly classroom environments that fully engage students in the learning process.
- First grade students may also be served in small group settings to further evaluate student potential and plan individual student programming accordingly

Grade 2 Nurture

- AG teachers regularly conduct whole group sessions in second grade classrooms for the purpose of fostering creative and critical thinking skills.
- Instruction focuses on critical thinking and metacognitive skills and familiarizes students with test-taking strategies to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.
- The classroom teacher observes and makes note of evidence of gifted behaviors during the lessons
- AG teachers work with small groups on specific thinking skills

Subject and Grade Acceleration

- Available with demonstrated need and are subject to principal approval.
- The AG department provides guidance through the use of the *Iowa Acceleration Scale*.

Grades 3-5 Differentiation in Regular Education Classroom

- AG students are clustered in classrooms with teachers who are trained to work with gifted students.
- Teachers are expected to regularly differentiate instruction for AG students, based on pre-assessments and observations of skill mastery.

Grades 3-5 AG Pull-Out Enrichment

- AG teachers provide direct instruction in the AG classroom for a minimum of 90 minutes per week in each subject area of eligibility. Students identified in reading are served in AG Reading; students identified in math are served in AG Math and students identified in both areas are served in AG Reading and AG Math. Additional instructional time is recommended when possible. If a school cannot accommodate the recommended block of 90 minutes at a time, two 45-minute blocks are acceptable for each subject area of eligibility.
- In schools where AG eligible numbers are low, pull-out service in Reading may be provided in a multi-grade classroom upon approval by the AG department. This may occur as a 3/4 or 4/5 combination to allow for appropriate discussion and seminar-type activities. This structure is not available in Math due to necessary mastery of grade-level math skills and concepts.
- Since AG teachers are funded through state-allotted monies, the priority for AG teachers must be in the service of AIG identified and high-achieving students. Therefore, the majority of the AG teacher's day must be spent in service of AIG eligible and Talent Development students.
- Concept-based curricular units developed by the AG Department, which address the NC state standards, enrich and extend grade level standards. The units are culturally diverse and infused with future ready content and skills.

Grades 3-5 Intellectually Gifted (IG)

- Students who are Intellectually Gifted are assessed individually as to their needs. IG students may be served through AG pull-out enrichment services, consultative services to address the dissonance between aptitude and achievement or other services as determined by Team for Academically Gifted (TAG).

Grades 3-5 Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP)

- Students who were screened for AIG and do not meet AIG eligibility criteria but demonstrate high achievement in their local learning environment may participate in MAP Talent Development Service
- MAP is delivered in a pull-out model.
- If scheduling and student numbers necessitate, MAP may be provided in a multi-grade setting.
- MAP curriculum strengthens critical and creative thinking skills and may provide additional support in math and/or reading, according to student need.

Grades 4-8 Very Strong AIG Service (VS)

- VS is a full time, self-contained program for highly gifted students who meet the eligibility criteria for VS service. The program is offered exclusively on the campus of The Academy at Lincoln.
- The VS program addresses the highly gifted students' need for differentiation and acceleration in grades 4 through 8 with daily service in English Language Arts (ELA), math, science and social studies.
- The curriculum framework allows students to engage in complex, higher level, integrated thinking patterns, which transfer across the disciplines.
- The structure facilitates social/emotional support for highly gifted students.
- Middle School VS teachers must be highly qualified in the subject that they teach. All VS teachers must hold AIG licensure.

Grades 6-8 Advanced Coursework and Differentiated Instruction

- AR and AG students should be placed in advanced ELA course sections in middle school. Advanced ELA courses offer increased depth and complexity of curriculum as well as accelerated pacing.
- AM and AG students should be placed in one of the accelerated math sequences which include high school Math 1 and Math 2 unless recent achievement data does not meet district placement criteria which reflects NC House Bill 986.
- Teachers of Advanced ELA, AIMM and Accelerated Math will hold AIG licensure with the state or have met the LEA minimum requirements for teaching gifted students.
- AG students will receive instruction in social studies and science courses that is appropriately differentiated to meet their advanced learning needs.
- Accelerated sequences in English, science and social studies will be implemented over the next three years to provide students with the opportunity to take additional high school courses in middle school.

Grades 6-8 Academic Magnet

- Brown Summit Middle School Center for Advanced Academics offers advanced academic curriculum to prepare students to be successful in honors and advanced placement courses at the high school level. Rigorous instruction is provided in the core curriculum. In addition, each student receives three years of Latin instruction.
- The magnet has a criteria-based application. Students who meet eligibility criteria may apply during the district's magnet application window.
- In order to increase access to qualifying students, the district will establish a second Center for Advanced Academics site.

Grades 9-12 Advanced Coursework

- AG students in high school are encouraged to enroll in honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and college courses.
- AP courses are available at all district high schools with the exception of some Middle Colleges that offer dual enrollment opportunities. Advanced coursework is available to non-AIG students.
- The AP Capstone program is offered at two district high schools. Students participating in the Capstone program can earn an AP Capstone Certificate or Diploma.
- IB courses are available at four district high schools that offer the IB Diploma. IB courses are available to all students in an IB school, and students from other schools may apply to attend an IB school in pursuit of the IB diploma.
- Early college matriculation is available for high-performing students through Early Colleges located on the campuses of Guilford College and North Carolina A&T State University. These dual-enrollment programs allow students to earn college credit while still in high school. Students complete honors and Advanced Placement courses in 9th and 10th grades and are matriculated as full-time college students in 11th and 12th grades. The application process is highly competitive. The STEM Early College at NC A&T caters to qualifying students looking to pursue interests in STEM fields while the Guilford College program has a liberal arts focus.

Grades K-12 Thematic Magnets

- The district offers a variety of magnet programs throughout the district K-12 which address an array of thematic and curricular emphases that may be of interest to AG students to develop their critical and creative thinking, collaboration, communication, leadership, problem-solving

and other future ready skills. Themes include: Leadership, Global Studies, International Baccalaureate, Spanish Immersion, Performing and Visual Arts, STEM, and Career and Technical pursuits.

Practice B

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

District Response:

The focus of major district initiatives and the district's Strategic Plan is primarily based on supporting struggling scholars, closing achievement gaps and increasing access to resources and opportunities. While these areas of focus are necessary and of utmost importance, they often do not specifically include the academic and social-emotional needs of advanced learners.

The AG department continues to foster collaborative relationships with other departments across the district to ensure that the needs of AG students are included in district conversations and decisions. The AG Director meets bi-monthly with other directors in the division of Teaching, Learning and Professional Development, which provides opportunities to raise awareness about gifted programming with other curriculum and instructional leaders. The AG department is able to provide timely updates regarding AG services to principals and Curriculum Facilitators through the district's weekly electronic newsletters. The AG Supervisor works closely with EC Compliance Supervisor and EL Program Specialist regarding students who receive both AG and EC/EL services.

The AG Advisory Board membership includes a member of the Board of Education in the hopes that district policy or procedural discussions at the Board level can include informed representation of the needs of AG learners.

The AG department focuses efforts on providing adequate resources and support for AG teachers, TAG Chairs and AP/IB Coordinators so that advanced students in every school have access to appropriate programming and instruction. AG curricular and instructional resources are a supplement to district-adopted common curricula that are implemented in all regular education classrooms. These supplemental resources are provided by the AG department to support AG enrichment programming. The AG department has redesigned the AG Scope and Sequence to align with similar documents used by other curricular departments. The AG department also maintains a central library with resources that are available for checkout.

Practice C

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

District Response:

In addition to the required clustering of AG students for classroom placement, schools are instructed to

use Performance Matters (Unify), an online student data warehouse, to develop flexible grouping practices within classrooms and/or across grade levels. Through Performance Matters all teachers K-12 have access to student data on classroom, local, state, and national assessments, such as:

- mClass Assessments
- CogAT
- End-of Grade
- End-of-Course
- PreACT
- ACT

Student performance is provided in terms of both overall student proficiency as well as individual standard performance. The system is able to highlight how sub-groups of students, such as AIG students, are performing both within the district and individual schools. The analysis of this data is helpful in predicting AIG students' future success on standards and the need for additional curriculum compacting. The data provided is also used to form flexible student groups.

Classroom teachers are expected to use pre and post-assessments incorporated in the adopted curricula to evaluate student mastery of skills and content. This includes the American Reading Company's 'Independent Reading Level Assessment' (IRLA), Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) formative unit assessments, mid-module and end-of module assessments for Eureka, and pre-unit, mid-unit, and end-of-unit assessments from Open Up. Daily formative assessments are provided in Eureka (Exit Tickets) and Open Up (Cool Downs) for ongoing formative assessment. This knowledge leads to adjustments in instruction and purposeful placement of students in temporary learning groups to address their specific needs and strengths. This also creates the potential for data-driven grade-level PLC conversations around appropriate instruction and re-evaluation of flexible learning groups.

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:

The AG Department webpage provides access to information regarding AIG programming and services, including the state gifted law Article 9b, the local AIG Plan, criteria for AIG identification and descriptions of services offered K-12.

A flipchart summarizing AG screening and identification criteria and procedures is distributed to each elementary, middle and high school to be housed in the front office for reference by staff and families.

Elementary AG teachers, middle school Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) chairs and high school AP/IB Coordinators attend monthly meetings hosted by the AG Department. To ensure consistency, these personnel receive common presentational documents for use in school wide communication.

Elementary and middle school TAG membership includes administrative, Exceptional Children (EC),

English as a Second Language (ESL) and grade-level representation which facilitates the communication of pertinent AIG Plan information with other staff members and supports collaboration in the delivery of differentiated services and instruction. AG teachers provide monthly AG newsletters to school staff regarding AG updates and events.

Annual Fidelity Checks are completed in elementary and middle schools to foster conversations with administration regarding best practices in gifted programming, student scheduling and placement with qualified teachers.

The AG Department shares pertinent information regarding gifted programming to K-12 Curriculum Facilitators and K-12 Principals through weekly electronic communication.

The AG Department takes advantage of existing GCS communication outlets such as Parent Academy, GCS News Briefs, ConnectEd and local news sources to provide information about AIG services.

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:

AG TAG Chairs at each elementary and middle school use the local AIG database to generate rosters of AG-identified students to facilitate course placement and transition from elementary to middle.

AG student folders, containing current documentation about a student's AIG eligibility and service, are readily available in the student's cumulative record, which follows the student from school to school.

To specifically support the transition of AG students to high school, the AG department hosts an Academic All-Star summer camp for rising 9th graders, which provides a rigorous experience to help prepare students for honors, AP & IB programs in high school.

The AG department participates in annual district registration meetings with school counselors to provide information about expectations for student placement in advanced courses to ensure AG service delivery. During the Elementary and Middle School Registration meeting, the department provides information about Advanced ELA and accelerated math placement criteria. During the Middle and High School Registration meeting, the department presents expectations and recommendations for AP and IB course recruitment.

The AG department hosts timely AG Transition information sessions for AG families, including families new to GCS, to inform them of the differences in AG services from elementary to middle and middle to high. The sessions address academic expectations and opportunities, social and emotional challenges that the student may face in a new learning setting and offer suggestions for supporting and advocating for student success.

Practice F

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

District Response:

Social/emotional traits of gifted students include enhanced manifestations of the following: divergent thinking ability, excitability, sensitivity, perfectionism, perceptiveness and self-awareness. The social and emotional needs of underrepresented student populations in gifted education have even more specialized needs that need to be met to maximize their potential.

Each elementary and middle school has a Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) which is the governing body for AIG matters in the building. TAG membership must include the following representation: administrative, EC, ESL, counseling and a teacher from each grade-level. TAG discussions take into account the social and emotional needs of individual students as they implement and monitor AIG services. In the case of an underachieving AIG student, there is often a social/emotional cause that the TAG is able to evaluate and strategically address.

To better communicate the social and emotional needs of AG students, the elementary AG teachers and middle school TAG chairs include an article in a monthly newsletter to raise awareness about the unique needs of these learners among parents and teachers.

The Guilford chapter of Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education (PAGE) leads the community charge to support the academic and social/emotional needs of gifted students in the district. The chapter frequently sponsors speakers and webinars on topics of social/emotional support for AIG students as well as professional development opportunities for teachers of AIG students.

Elementary AG teachers, middle school TAG chairs and high school AP/IB Coordinators receive training on topics such as Growth Mindset and Habits of Mind and their implications for gifted learners. They are encouraged to provide similar training in their school buildings using the presentations and resources provided by the AG Department.

The Division of Culture, Climate and Student Discipline sponsors a districtwide social and emotional awareness program. The AG department is represented on the Social and Emotional Learning District Planning Team and will ensure that the unique needs of gifted students are included in decisions and initiatives.

Practice G

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

District Response:

Content-Based Acceleration:

Content-based acceleration includes a variety of strategies that provide students with advanced content, skills, or understanding before the expected age or grade level. In content-based acceleration, students typically remain with peers of the same age and grade for most of the school day but receive higher grade-level instruction via advanced content. The following types of content-based acceleration are available in GCS:

- **Curriculum Compacting:**
Instructional practices of creating a scope and sequence that allows students to experience higher grade-level content within a lower grade level or course sequence. This practice is currently used on a district-wide basis in the accelerated math sequences in grades 6-8. The Very Strong (VS) program compacts all core content.
- **Credit By Demonstrated Mastery (CDM):**
Procedures outlined by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction that allows a student to demonstrate mastery for a course where the student has not yet enrolled through two phases of assessment:
 - Phase I: A standard exam, which shall be the EOC where applicable or a final exam developed locally.
 - Phase II: An artifact that requires the student to apply knowledge and skills relevant to the content standards. Performance tasks may be required.
 - Students must demonstrate mastery, not just proficiency, on Phase I to be eligible for Phase II.

Requests for CDM should be directed to the student's assigned counselor. Annually, the Counseling Department will collect data regarding the number of requests for CDM and the student success rate.

The CDM process is available to all students; however, it is not meant as an acceleration tool for an entire group of students and is offered in addition to other acceleration opportunities.

- **Advanced Placement (AP) Courses**
- **International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses**
- **Single-subject acceleration:**

The student must be achieving at least one grade level above his/her assigned grade level in the subject for which acceleration is being sought. Subject acceleration shall not be limited to core content subjects (e.g., a musically gifted student who demonstrates the need for acceleration).

Referrals for single-subject acceleration may be initiated by the child's parent or teacher by using the district's referral form. The completed referral form is submitted to the appropriate school-based staff: AG Teacher (elementary level), TAG Chair (middle school level), or assigned School Counselor (high school level). Once the request is received, the school-based staff member will contact the AG Department for the *Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS): A Guide for Whole Group Acceleration*, which is a tool designed to help educators and families make effective decisions regarding single-subject acceleration. At the elementary and middle school

levels, the IAS will be used by TAG (which must include the student's parent/guardians and classroom teacher(s)) to facilitate discussion on the academic and social characteristics of the student. After using the IAS to document the student's strengths and concerns, TAG will make a recommendation to the school principal who, by state statute, has the authority to make appropriate student placements.

- Acceleration within the classroom:

An approach to instruction that allows the student to work on higher grade-level content in their regular classroom in lieu of grade-level instruction. This is typically accomplished through differentiation practices implemented by the classroom teacher, which may include curriculum compacting. In these cases, the teacher uses pre-assessments to document grade-level proficiency on specified standards. Using the results of the pre-assessment the teacher adjusts the curriculum pacing for the student.

Tools available for Content-Based Acceleration:

The school's Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) or another school-based student support team should be consulted for all request for content-based acceleration. This group of educational professionals should be well versed in using differentiation to address varied student need and interest. Some common best practices or resources include:

- **Flexible Grouping:** The practice of using formative data to create instructional groups. Typically, these are fluid groups; however, when a student consistently performs one grade level about his/her peers the effective use of grouping allows the teacher to tailor assignments to meet the student's learning needs and interests
- **Digital Learning Opportunities:** For middle and high school students, it may be appropriate to register the student for an online course when the course that best meets the students need is not available on the school's campus. In these cases, the school-based student support team should consider the school personnel available to help the student maneuver online learning.
- **Time spent in a different class:** Suggested method for implementing single-subject acceleration.

Grade-Based Acceleration:

Commonly known as "grade skipping", grade-based acceleration strategies typically shorten the number of years a student spends in the K – 12 system. In grade-acceleration, a student is placed on a full-time basis in a higher-level that is typical given the student's age. Types of grade-based acceleration available in Guilford County Schools (GCS):

- **Early Entrance to Kindergarten**

Unlike other grade-acceleration options, early entrance to Kindergarten does not necessarily shorten the number of years a student spends in the K – 12 system, but shortens the wait to start school. The state of North Carolina dictates the Early Entrance to Kindergarten policy. Referrals for Early Entrance to Kindergarten are initiated by the child's parent or legal guardian. The parent will contact the district's Academically Gifted (AG) Department to document their request. The procedures for Early Entrance to Kindergarten are located on the AG Department's website.

- **Whole-grade Acceleration (grade skipping)**

To be considered for whole-grade acceleration, the student must be achieving at least two grade levels above his/her assigned grade level.

- Referrals for whole-grade acceleration may be initiated by the child's parent or teacher by using the district's referral form. The completed referral form is submitted to the appropriate school-based staff: AG Teacher (elementary level), Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) Chair (middle school level), or assigned School Counselor (high school level).
- Once the request is received, the school-based staff member will contact the AG Department for the *Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS): A Guide for Whole Group Acceleration*, which is a tool designed to help educators and families make effective decisions regarding whole-grade acceleration.
- At the elementary and middle school levels, the IAS will be used by TAG (which must include the student's parent/guardians and classroom teacher(s)) to facilitate discussion on the academic and social characteristics of the student. Using the IAS to document the student's strengths and concerns, TAG will make a recommendation to the school principal who, by state statute, has the authority to place and classify students.

- **Early Entrance to College**

In GCS, there are two ways students can be admitted to college early: Early Graduation and Dual-Enrollment programs.

- Early Graduation: Students who take advantage of early graduation finish high school in less than four years by increasing the amount of coursework taken each year in high school in order to meet NC graduation requirements early. For guidance around early graduation, the student and his/her family should consult with the student's assigned school counselor. Annually, the Student Information Department will provide to the AG Department a list of students who exited Guilford County Schools as "Early Graduates".
- Dual Enrollment: Career & College Promise (CCP) is North Carolina's dual enrollment program for high school students. This program allows eligible NC high school students to enroll in college classes at North Carolina community colleges and universities through their high school. Students who successfully complete college courses earn college credits they can take with them after high school graduation. Career & College Promise offers these pathways:
 - College Transfer – designed for students planning to continue their education career beyond high school to eventually achieve an Associate's or Bachelor's degree. For guidance on using CCP for college transfer credit, the student and his/her family should consult with the student's assigned school counselor. Annually, the Counseling Department will provide to the AG Department disaggregated data regarding students who participated in CCP transfer credit opportunities. Schools might use AP Potential Report to recommend students for college course work. Schools should track college course participation rate of their students, disaggregated by race and gender.
 - Career & Technical Education (CTE) – allows students to begin a certification or diploma program in a particular technical field or career area. For guidance of using CCP for CTE certifications or diploma programs, the student and his/her family should consult with the school's Career Development Coordinator. Annually, the CTE Department will provide to the AG Department disaggregated data regarding students who participated in CCP certification or diploma

opportunities.

- Cooperative Innovative High Schools – North Carolina’s early colleges and other innovative high schools that are characterized by their small student population and their location on the campus of a college/university or community college, which allows students to simultaneously work toward completion of both the high school diploma and an associate degree, transferable credit, or certificate. Guilford County Schools has 11 Cooperative Innovative High Schools. Enrollment in these programs is a part of the Magnet/School Choice process. Data regarding student enrollment and participation is available through all state and district-wide reports.

Practice H

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

District Response:

The AG Supervisor, a central office position, was created specifically to oversee the department’s efforts to ensure equitable access to AIG programming and to research and develop opportunities that capitalize on the potential of underserved populations.

K – 1 Nurture Specialists:

The K-1 Nurture Program has been placed in schools with small numbers of AIG identified students is an effort to develop the talents of primary age students so that more may become eligible for enrichment experiences in grades 3-5. A Nurture Specialist provides whole group and small group instruction in Kindergarten and First Grade classes using the Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) curriculum. The goals of this program are to cultivate the academic and intellectual talents of K-1 students from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds, to increase the numbers of AG students eligible in impacted elementary schools and to create scholarly classroom environments that fully engage students in the learning process.

Grade 2 Nurture:

Grade 2 Nurture continues to cultivate the academic potential of primary aged students from underrepresented populations so that more may become eligible for enrichment experiences in grades 3-5.

Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP):

Students in Grades 3-5 who do not meet AG eligibility criteria but who demonstrate high potential may receive talent development services through Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP). Students from underrepresented groups are prioritized for participation in MAP Talent Development.

AG Advanced Learners:

Students from underrepresented populations have the opportunity to participate in pull-out enrichment services in grades 3 – 5. Although not officially identified in PowerSchool, these students receive the same enrichment opportunities provided to identified AG students in our 3 – 5 pull-out enrichment model.

AIG Pull-Out Enrichment in grades 3-5 employs instructional strategies and curriculum that are culturally responsive. The AG teachers use best practices in differentiation to address the needs of the highly gifted population, English language learners and dual exceptional students during the delivery of the enrichment units.

Very Strong (VS):

Highly gifted students may qualify to participate in the Very Strong (VS) services provided at the Academy at Lincoln which offers a self-contained learning environment to address the specific needs of this unique population. To ensure the stability of the program and alignment with the district's overall population, the AG Department will utilize a rubric when considering the placement of students from underrepresented groups. The use of the rubric serves to address the various circumstances that impact the performance and achievement of students from underrepresented populations, including, but not limited to:

- Institutional Racism
- Low Socioeconomic Status
- Cultural Gaps
- Educational Barriers (such as Title I, low teacher expectations)

Academic All Stars:

The GCS AG Department also sponsors a summer Academic All Star Camp for rising 9th graders which is attended by students from every middle school. To ensure equitable access, the top thirty students from each middle school are invited to attend the camp at no cost, with lunch and transportation provided. This unique experience provides an opportunity for intensive study in an area of interest, ACT preparation, leadership and team-building skills, preparation for advanced high school classes and informational sessions from colleges, guidance counselors, advanced study opportunities (AP, IB, Governor's School, School of Math and Science) and financial institutions. Students also attend field trips to surrounding universities.

AP Potential:

The AG department supports the district's strategic goal to increase access of students from underrepresented populations to rigorous college-level coursework such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes. The AG department monitors the use of AP Potential to identify and recruit students who demonstrate potential. The AG Director is also lead project manager for a partnership with Equal Opportunity Schools which seeks to shift the mindset regarding student potential and to increase diversity of participation in these courses.

Practice I

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

District Response:

Extra-curricular enrichment opportunities available to AG students in GCS schools include:

- Science Olympiad
- Odyssey of the Mind
- Continental Math League
- AG Reading Club
- Math Counts
- Mad Science
- Debate Club
- Energy Wise
- National Junior Honor Society
- Science Fair
- Chess Club
- Battle of the Books
- Robotics
- History Club
- High IQ
- Model UN
- Rubik's Club
- 24 Game Challenge

These opportunities are often promoted and/or facilitated by the AG teacher at the elementary school level or teacher of advanced courses in middle and high school but participation is not limited to AIG students.

AIG students are encouraged to participate in Duke TIP and Governor's School opportunities. The AG Department collaborates closely with Counseling Services to inform families, promote participation and celebrate student success.

The GCS AG Department also sponsors a summer Academic All Star Camp for rising 9th graders, which is attended by students from every middle school. The top thirty students from each middle school are invited to attend the camp at no cost. This unique experience provides an opportunity for intensive study in an area of interest, ACT preparation, leadership and team-building skills, preparation for advanced high school classes and informational sessions from colleges, guidance counselors, advanced study opportunities (AP, IB, Governor's School, School of Math and Science) and financial institutions.

Additional local and statewide summer enrichment opportunities are available on the AG Department webpage.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

The AG Department will:

- Continue to pursue regular AG representation at standing district meetings (principals, assistant principals, curriculum facilitators, counselors)
 - Consider digital options (i.e. posting updates/reminders in principal portal)
- Collaborate with the CTE department to ensure that academically-minded students also explore the alignment between career pathways and university requirements
 - Utilize mentorship, job shadowing, curriculum compacting for interest-based exploration and other strategies to respond to the needs of the students
 - GAP apprenticeship for management-level opportunities
 - Collaboration on CTE on the WOW career event
 - Explore including career exploration opportunities at the elementary level
- Gather feedback from students receiving Talent Development services to evaluate their experience in the AG program
- Establish an AG student council or advisory group

Sources of Evidence:

- AG Handbook
- K-2 Consultative Toolkit
- Scope and sequence of AG enrichment units
- Unit plans/lessons/activities and associated rubrics
- Student work samples and assignments involving 21st century content and skills
- Pre and Post Assessments from AG enrichment units
- Student rosters
- Elementary AG Student Progress Reports
- Action Service Learning Project results and demonstrations
- Agendas, rosters and handouts from professional development offered by AG department
- Agendas from AG teacher meetings and support sessions
- Agendas for AP/IB Coordinator meetings
- AP/IB syllabi
- Parent newsletters
- Agendas from student meetings at transitional years

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

Practice A

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

District Response:

Gifted students require curriculum and instruction beyond grade level expectations in their areas of strength. The NC Standard Course of Study is adapted for advanced learners through elementary AG enrichment units and through differentiated instruction in the regular education classroom K-12.

Enrichment is defined as a variety of learning opportunities that enhance a student's interest and talents through creative and academic exploration.

Extension is defined as instruction designed to broaden the understanding of a particular standard by adding depth and complexity. In GCS, we fully believe that AG students are AG all day, every day. To that end, the classroom teacher must take the lead in providing differentiation that allows students to uniquely experience the curriculum.

Acceleration is defined as the student's progress through an educational program at rates faster or at ages younger than conventional.

Opportunities for Enrichment

GCS offers over 50 magnet programs with the structure and resources needed to address a variety of student interests, including but not limited to, visual and performing arts, science and technology, and language immersion.

Annually, in grades K – 8, AG Teachers and TAG Chairs submit a Fidelity Checklist that includes the enrichment opportunities made available to AIG students at their schools. Schools are asked to provide participation rates of AG and non-AG students.

- AG enrichment is provided at each elementary school by the AG Teacher in the AG classroom.
 - Talent Development services
 - Pull-out enrichment in grades 3 – 5
- Middle and High School students may select from a variety of interest-based exploration courses ('Encore' or 'Elective') including technology, arts, music, World Language, and career exploration
- High School Options include Signature Academies with a career focus, Visual and Performing Arts and Global and World Language programs.

- Clubs or other extracurricular activities that allow students to explore areas of interests are available at many school sites. Examples include:
 - Duke TIP
 - Academic All Star Camp for Rising 9th Graders
 - Battle of the Books
 - Energy WISE
 - Student Council
 - Math 24 Challenge
 - Spelling Bee
 - Science Fair
 - Robotics Club
 - Rubik's Cube Club
 - Odyssey of the Mind
 - Science Olympiad
 - Chess Club
 - Quiz Bowl
 - Theater
 - Marching Band

Opportunities for Extension

The GCS department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development had adopted math and reading curricula that has embedded opportunities for extension of grade-level standards for the instruction of advanced learners.

- Core Knowledge Language Arts (Grades K-2)
The curriculum includes extension activities for each Listening and Learning Domain to facilitate knowledge building and vocabulary acquisition to deepen student understanding of vocabulary and concepts.
- American Reading Company (Grades 3 – 9)
Curriculum units include opportunities for project-based learning to extend student understanding of grade-level standards. The curriculum provides access to texts that support differentiation and provide opportunities for cognitive stretch of advanced learners. Through regular student-teacher conferencing and Independent Reading Level Assessment, each student establishes a personal Power Goal, which can address extension of grade-level standards.
- Eureka Mathematics (Grades K – 5)
The daily problem set for students is scaffolded and the problems are in order of complexity. The last few problems on each day's problem set are extension problems that take the standard to a higher level and the problems assigned to students are differentiated for students every day

- Open Up Mathematics (Grades 6 – 8)
Each daily lesson has a section titled “Are you Ready for More” that provides an extension to the standard being taught that day.

The minimum district expectation is that classroom teachers will fully implement all curriculum components designed for students who have demonstrated the need for curriculum extension. In Accelerated, Advanced and Honors courses, the Teaching, Learning and Professional Development Department provides Scope and Sequence documents which outline appropriate extension for advanced learners.

To ensure curriculum extension in secondary standard-level or grade-level courses, classroom teachers of AG students are required to implement the district-provided *Annual Plan for Differentiation* that details how standards will be differentiated in a manner that allows for depth and complexity.

These written plans are shared with school administrators, parents, and are submitted to the AG Department. During informal and formal observations, school administrators monitor the ability of classroom teachers to use classroom and formative assessments to provide the curriculum extension opportunities detailed within their Annual Plan. This monitoring helps principals document teaching performance on Standard 2 (Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of students with special needs).

Opportunities for Acceleration

The district-provided access to Performance Matters (Unify) allows classroom teachers to easily track and document student achievement. Classroom teachers are expected to use formative data to identify students who demonstrate advanced mastery of grade-level skills and content. Through their partnership with the child’s family, classroom teachers are expected to include parental feedback in their analysis of student achievement, when acceleration options are being considered. Using both qualitative and quantitative data, the following acceleration opportunities are available:

K - 5 Opportunities:

- Early entry to Kindergarten
 - Must meet guidelines established by the state
- Consultative services provided by the AG Teacher
- Subject Acceleration
 - Use of mClass and IRLA data to create flexible groupings that allows students to progress through standard expectations at a faster rate
 - At the principal’s discretion, students receive subject acceleration when they are performing one year ahead of their peers
- Grade Acceleration
 - Use of the Iowa Acceleration Scale
 - At principal’s discretion when the student is performing two years ahead of their peers
- Acceleration within Grade-Level Classrooms
 - Based on continuous formative assessment
 - Allows students to move more quickly through content when mastery of the current skill or content is evident

- Students spend more time on application of skills to real-world situations, depth of research and abstract concepts

Grades 6 – 8 Opportunities:

- Subject Acceleration
 - Advanced ability grouped classes in Language Arts and mathematics
- Mathematics placement is done using the district criteria which addresses House Bill 986 Enrollment in Advanced Mathematics Courses Section 2.(a). These guidelines dictate placement of middle school students in high school math courses (NC Math 1 and NC Math 2)
- Over the next three years, the AG Department will collaborate with the district's Secondary ELA Coordinators to establish written guidelines for the acceleration of ELA. The ultimate goal is to develop a qualitative definition of Advanced ELA by December 2019, to appropriately differentiate the curriculum by August 2020 and to provide an opportunity for students to take high school English 1 prior to leaving middle school by August 2022 districtwide.
 - Digital one-to-one initiative allows teachers to assign online modules that uniquely address student need for acceleration. The district's access to APEX allows teachers to assign tutorials that move students ahead of their peers.
 - Access to the district's virtual courses through APEX allowing counselors to individually schedule students requiring extensive subject acceleration.
 - Students receiving Very Strong (VS) services at the Academy at Lincoln receive subject acceleration in all core subject areas.
- Grade Acceleration
 - Use of the *Iowa Acceleration Scale*, which evaluates multiple academic and social/emotional factors
 - At principal's discretion when the student is performing two years ahead of their peers
 - Students receiving Very Strong (VS) services also receive grade acceleration in that courses are designed to cover standards from multiple grade levels.

Grades 9 – 12 Opportunities:

- Dual Enrollment through two Early College programs (The Early College at Guilford and STEM Early College at NC A&T). Students complete most of high school graduation credit requirements in grades 9 & 10. In grades 11 & 12, students receive all instruction from college/university professors. Since most high school credit requirements are completed in grades 9 & 10, many of the courses taken at the college level can be used for transfer credit when the students transition from high school to post-secondary opportunities.
- Dual Enrollment through middle college programs, specialized academies, and Career and College Promise. These opportunities allow high school students to fulfill high school credit requirements via their participation in community college courses.
- Access to the district's virtual courses through APEX allowing counselors to individually schedule students requiring extensive subject acceleration
- Enrollment in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses
- Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM), which is an opportunity for students to earn credit for high school courses without fulfilling seat-time requirements. Students can earn credit for high school classes through a two-part assessment process:
 - Phase I: A standard exam, which shall be the EOC where applicable or a final exam

developed locally.

- Phase II: An artifact that requires the student to apply knowledge and skills relevant to the content standards. Performance tasks may be required.
- Students must demonstrate mastery, not just proficiency, on Phase I to be eligible for Phase II

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:

Regular Education Classroom (K-12)

Curriculum and instruction are built on best practices to address the rigor and depth of the NC State Standards. The district-wide ELA and math AG units require the use of diverse and effective instructional practices and strategies for differentiation and extension. Instruction of these units is supported through regular professional development opportunities and support sessions.

The district supports best practices such as pre-assessment for readiness, the use of interest and learning inventories to develop student learning profiles, the use of small group instruction and personalized learning. The AG Department provides professional learning opportunities for classroom teachers on instructional strategies that add depth and complexity and provoke critical thinking. Some of the specific strategies emphasized during the training include:

- Accelerated content
- Curriculum compacting
- Learning centers
- Embedded student choice
- Literature circles
- Socratic seminars
- Tiered assignments
- Problem-Based learning
- Authentic learning
- Simulations

Advanced/accelerated coursework in middle school and Honors classes in high school should include, at a minimum, the following instructional practices:

- Pre-assessments used to evaluate student readiness, interest and learning style
- Independent research opportunities
- Choice of product
- A variety of instructional delivery methods
- Student-driven discussions
- Socratic seminars
- Intentional alignment of student interest to future-ready skills

- Interdisciplinary connections
- Focus on concepts, big ideas and generalizations

Elementary AG Enrichment:

AG elementary instructional units are based on rich research-based strategies which support the growth of advanced learners. These units are built upon overarching concepts and are designed to provoke higher level thinking and quality discussions among the students. AG teachers utilize Learning Styles, Multiple Intelligences, and Interest Inventories to inform differentiation practices.

Students interact with multiple units throughout the year including such concepts as Human Rights, Freedom as a Voice and timely topics such as Fighting Fake News. Additional enrichment is embedded to build vocabulary and to master poetry skills through *Caesar's English*. These units are delivered by an AIG licensed teacher in a separate classroom setting that fosters stimulating and fulfilling interaction among intellectual peers.

Practice C

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

District Response: Instructional units have been developed for the AG elementary classroom using a variety of research-based supplemental resources and materials. Units of study provide students with rich, culturally diverse text, conceptual themes, advanced literary analysis, and vocabulary development. The units include classic literature studies, service learning, Socratic seminars, authentic performance tasks, simulations and engaging scenarios. These units are designed to provide outlets for creativity, divergent thinking and discovery during the weekly 90-minute pull-out sessions. While the units are based on high frequency grade-level standards and align as much as possible with classroom pacing, they are not designed as curricular extensions of daily classroom instruction.

Using Ainsworth's *Rigorous Curriculum Design*, Wiggins and McTighe's *Understanding by Design* and Carol Ann Erickson's *Concept-Based Learning* as curricular models, the AG pull-out enrichment units incorporate a variety of research-based resources, materials and strategies including:

- Michael Clay Thompson's *Caesar's English*
- The National Paideia Center
- Joyce VanTassel-Baska and Tamara Stambaugh's *Jacob's Ladder*
- William and Mary's *Beyond Base Ten*

Other resources include:

- Brian Housand's *Fighting Fake News*
- Boaler's, Munson's, and Williams' *Mindset Mathematics* (Grades 3 – 5)
- *Ratios, Rates, & Proportions* by Interact
- *Algebra: Into the Unknown* by Interact

- Zaccaro's *Twenty-five Math Investigations that will Astound Teachers and Students*
- Draze's *The Stock Market Game: A Simulation of Stock Market Trading*

The Talent Development curricular resources include:

- Costa and Kallick's *Habits of Mind*
- Nichols', Thomson's, Wolfe's, and Merrit's *Primary Education Thinking Skills* (Kindergarten and Levels 1-3)
- Ricci's *Nothing You Can't Do: The Secret Power of Growth Mindsets*
- Ricci's *Mindset in the Classroom*
- *It's Your Future* by Interact
- *Missing Persons* by Interact

The Very Strong (VS) program at the Academy at Lincoln uses:

- William and Mary Center for Gifted Education ELA units
- Shelagh Gallagher's Problem-Based Learning units

The AG Department has established a professional library of research-based materials that are available to AG teachers and classroom teachers. Resources in the library include materials that are broad-based gifted education theory and research as well as materials that provide specific lessons and strategies that teachers can implement in their instructional plans. Examples include:

- Small's *Good Questions: Great Ways to Differentiate Mathematics Instruction in the Standards-Based Classroom*
- Small's and Lin's *More Good Questions: Great Ways to Differentiate Secondary Mathematics Instruction*
- Roberts' and Inman's *Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices for the Classroom* (3rd Edition)
- Westphal's *Differentiating Instruction with Menus* (All core subject areas in grades 3 – 8)
- Adams' and Pierce's *Differentiation that Really Works: Strategies from Real Teachers for Real Classrooms* (All core subject areas)
- Winebrenner's *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use* (4th Edition)

Practice D

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

District Response:

Elementary AG enrichment units are intentionally developed to include global inquiry and to emphasize social responsibility through service learning. Through these units, students build and apply skills in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, leadership, and metacognition that support student success in the classroom.

Student service projects provide an annual opportunity to apply developing skills. Quarterly progress reports for elementary AG enrichment allow students to assess their own learning behaviors and

future-ready skills and acknowledge progress.

In the middle grades, advanced courses become more collaborative and student-driven in nature. Students complete independent Research Labs based on real-world issues in Advanced English/Language Arts. Students can select a variety of elective courses which are interest-based, provide connections to the real world and address the future-ready skills needed to be successful in career and college endeavors. Furthermore, the district's one-to-one initiative allows middle school students to extend their knowledge acquisition and content manipulation to the digital realm, allowing students to develop crucial technological skills.

Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate curricula are designed to promote future-ready content and skills. Instruction includes problem-solving, inquiry, collaboration, experimentation, leadership, and reasoning skills on a regular basis. Career-based Signature Academies will soon be available in every high school for students to explore potential career pathways and the soft skills needed to be successful and competitive in their future career and/or college endeavors. Other extra-curricular opportunities to develop leadership and collaborative skills are available:

- Service Learning Diploma
- Career Day
- Model UN
- Odyssey of the Mind
- Mentorships
- Apprenticeships

Practice E

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

District Response: GCS has purchased the use of Performance Matters: Unify, which is an online system used to link student performance to teacher professional development needs. Through Performance Matters all teachers K – 12 have access to student data on classroom, local, state, and national assessments, such as:

- mClass Assessments
- CogAT
- End-of Grade
- End-of-Course
- PreACT
- ACT

Student performance is provided in terms of both overall student proficiency as well as individual standard performance. The system is able to highlight how sub-groups of students, such as AIG students, are performing both within the district and individual schools.

The analysis of this data is helpful in predicting AIG students' future success on standards and the

need for additional curriculum compacting. The data provided is also used to form flexible student groups.

Based on how students are performing, the system can recommend district provided Professional Development opportunities to classroom teachers. The district expectation is that teachers of underperforming AIG students attend the district's AG PD series to learn how to best address the academic needs AIG students through differentiation.

Classroom teachers are expected to use pre and post-assessments to evaluate student mastery of skills and content. This knowledge leads to adjustments in instruction and purposeful placement of students in temporary learning groups to address their specific needs and strengths. This also creates the potential for data-driven grade-level PLC conversations around appropriate instruction.

At monthly meetings, AG Teachers, TAG Chairs, and AP/IB coordinators will review district data to determine district trends and the need for corrective action at a district level.

Practice F

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

District Response:

A GCS initiative recently established a partnership with Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to provide a district-wide focus on:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making

This initiative has raised awareness about the importance of addressing the social and emotional needs of all students both within and outside of the classroom.

AG Department efforts:

AG elementary instructional units purposefully embed topics and resources relevant to the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Additionally, the instructional practices and learning environment of the AG separate setting and Talent Development classrooms infuse strategies that are rooted in Costa's *Habits of Mind* and Dweck's *Mindset* which enhance the social and emotional well-being of the gifted learner.

The professional development provided by the AG Department for classroom teachers includes specific information and strategies that address the unique social/emotional needs of gifted students.

Monthly AG newsletters distributed at the elementary and middle grades include information for

parents regarding social/emotional needs of their gifted learners.

The AG Department organizes and hosts a summer camp for gifted rising freshmen. The Academic All-Star Camp brings together intellectual peers from across the district. Benefits of the camp include in-depth pursuit of an area of academic interest, honing leadership skills, and strengthening organization and time management skills that are essential to success in high school.

Guilford Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education (PAGE) provides annual speakers and webinars that focus on topics of interest to AG families, including social/emotional needs of gifted students.

The AG Department delivers parent informational sessions that include: supporting students new to AG, anticipating the transition from elementary to middle school, and anticipating the transition from middle school to high school.

The AG Department has created presentation modules regarding growth mindset and the specific implications for gifted learners. These modules are delivered to school-based AG leads during monthly meetings who in turn share with their school faculties.

The AG department provides a library for teachers of available scholarly-based resources centered on the best practices for meeting the social and emotional needs of gifted students. Such titles include:

- Cross' *On the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Children* (4th Edition)
- Dweck's *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success on How We Can Learn to Fulfill Our Potential*
- Duckworth's *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*
- Sanguras' *Grit in the Classroom: Building Perseverance for Excellence in Today's Students*
- Costa's and Kallick's *Habits of Mind Across the Curriculum: Practical and Creative Strategies for Teachers*
- Boyes' and Watts' *Developing Habits of Mind in Elementary Schools*
- Ricci's *Ready-to-Use Resources for Mindsets in the Classroom*

Additional SEL Resources:

- Leutenberg's and Liptak's Social and Emotional Gifted Teen Series:
 - *Friendship Workbook for Gifted and Talented Teens*
 - *Boredom Workbook for Gifted and Talented Teens*
 - *Creativity Workbook for Gifted and Talented Teens*
 - *Motivation Workbook for Gifted and Talented Teens*
 - *Stress Workbook for Gifted and Talented Teens*
- Brock's and Hundley's *The Growth Mindset Coach: A Teacher's Month-by-Month Handbook for Empowering Students to Achieve*
- Ricci's *Mindsets in the Classroom: Building a Culture of Success and Student Achievement in Schools*

Practice G

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

District Response:

AG teachers are required to reserve regular weekly meeting time to collaborate with K-2 teachers on their needs to appropriately differentiate instruction for the high-performing or high-potential students in their classrooms. The AG department provides a K-2 Consultative Toolkit to help facilitate this collaboration and K-2 teachers can identify instructional strategies, resources and materials to assist in supporting these students in their classrooms.

In addition to consultative services offered to help K-2 classroom teachers address the unique needs of gifted students, the AG Department has established a model to provide early primary enrichment. This model attends to the needs of culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged students.

The K-1 Nurture Program has been placed in schools with small numbers of AIG identified students is an effort to develop the talents of primary age students so that more may become eligible for enrichment experiences in grades 3-5. A Nurture Specialist provides whole group and small group instruction in Kindergarten and First Grade classes using the *Primary Education Thinking Skills* (PETS) curriculum. The goals of this program are to cultivate the academic and intellectual talents of K-1 students, increase the numbers of AG students eligible in impacted elementary schools and create scholarly classroom environments that fully engage students in the learning process.

Grade 2 Nurture continues to cultivate the academic potential of primary aged students so that more may become eligible for enrichment experiences in grades 3-5. To maintain consistency, the Grade 2 Nurture program also implements the Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) curriculum through 12 whole group lessons during which the classroom teachers remains in the room to observe and make note of evidence of gifted behaviors on the Gifted Behavior Checklist included in the PETS curriculum. These observations lead to the identification of groups of students who demonstrate the need for more individualized talent development.

Students in Grade 3 who do not meet AG eligibility criteria but who demonstrate high potential may receive talent development services through Maximizing Academic Potential (MAP) which continues the PETS curriculum to deepen student understanding and use of specific thinking skills through a small group setting.

Practice H

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

District Response:

Each elementary and middle school has a cross grade level, interdisciplinary team of faculty, staff

and parents who serve as the Team for Academically Gifted (TAG). The intent of this team is to serve as the governing body for AG programming and service in that building. Grade-level representatives are present to provide instructional updates and to collaborate on strategies to differentiate content and instruction for advanced learners. The interdisciplinary nature of the team allows for multiple perspectives to be represented and broadens the impact of the program.

Elementary AG teachers meet monthly to share best practices and to collaborate on curriculum and instructional delivery in the AG classroom and on support of regular education teachers. AG teachers also meet regularly with school-based grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to help classroom teachers adjust instruction and curriculum for advanced learners in the regular education classroom. Following the administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), AG teachers are expected to meet with classroom teachers to discuss students' individualized reports and implications for differentiated classroom instruction based upon the student profile which highlights relative strengths and areas for growth.

The AG department delivers monthly informational sessions to lateral entry teachers as a part of their on-going onboarding process to raise awareness and share best practices for the instruction of advanced learners.

The AG department hosts an annual AP/IB Saturday professional learning and collaboration opportunity for all AP and IB teachers in the district. Teachers come together to plan and problem-solve with content peers from other high schools.

Directors from the Teaching, Learning and Professional Development Department meet bi-monthly to collaborate on curriculum and instructional issues and concerns across the district. This cross-disciplinary collaboration enhances the effectiveness of the AG program as other entities become more aware of the core values of gifted education.

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:

Student Differentiated Education Plans (DEP) document the specific eligibility areas and applicable service models for all AIG students in elementary and middle school. The DEP is reviewed annually and adjustments to service delivery and/or eligibility are documented. The high school DEP is an addendum to the Four-Year Plan created for students in grade 8 as they plan for the transition to high school coursework.

At the elementary level, students who are identified as Intellectually Gifted receive an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) to document specific service and support.

Differentiated Education Plans require a parent/guardian signature upon initial eligibility and at transitions to middle and to high school since the service delivery model changes. Annual Review letters are generated at the beginning of each school year to confirm continued service or eligibility in an additional area.

Additionally, teachers complete Group Annual Plans for Differentiation which communicate plans for curricular and instructional differentiation in content, process, and product. At the elementary level, AG teachers collaborate with regular education teachers to develop a Group Annual Plan which outlines instruction for AG students both in the AG enrichment classroom and in the general education classroom. At the middle school level, the Annual Plans are developed by Core content (ELA, math, science, social studies) teachers who teach standard-level courses containing AG students. Common Group Annual Plans are provided by the district for Advanced and Accelerated ELA and math courses.

Group Annual Plans are communicated to families annually at the beginning of each school year through an informational session. They are also maintained in the school Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) notebook and available to administration and staff. This improves the principal's ability to monitor, support and communicate the appropriate teaching and learning of gifted students within their building.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

The AG Department will:

- develop focused parent workshops on the unique challenges and opportunities of raising gifted students in underrepresented populations
- collaborate with Student Services to embed AIG components into the four-year plans already used during academic counseling in high school
- develop modules for middle and high school counselors to use with small groups of AIG students which address social and emotional issues that these students are likely to experience. (i.e. perfectionism, growth mindset, over-commitment, stress, organizational challenges, etc.
- increase awareness of the benefits of subject or grade acceleration for highly gifted students through the education of stakeholders
- participate more frequently in district-wide Curriculum Facilitator meetings to collaborate on appropriate differentiation of curriculum and instruction for gifted learners
- be more intentional in collaborating with the EC and ESL contacts at the school to identify potential twice exceptional gifted students or high ability second language learners
- continue to encourage intentional cluster grouping
 - cluster group like ability students in reading and math within grade-level classrooms
 - use flexible grouping in grade-level reading and math blocks
 - use subject acceleration across grades K-3 in reading and math

Sources of Evidence:

- AG Handbook
- K-2 Consultative Toolkit
- Instructional resources devoted to implementation of the Grade 2 Talent Development Model
- Scope and sequence of AG enrichment units
- Unit plans/lessons/activities and associated rubrics
- Student work samples and assignments involving 21st century content and skills
- Pre and Post Assessments from AG enrichment units
- Student rosters
- Elementary AG Student Progress Reports
- Action Service Learning Project results and demonstrations
- Agendas, rosters and handouts from professional development offered by AG department
- Agendas from AG teacher meetings and support sessions
- Agendas for AP/IB Coordinator meetings
- AP/IB syllabi
- Parent newsletters
- Agendas from student meetings at transitional years
- AG database
- TAG notebooks

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

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

Practice A

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

District Response:

The AG Director is AIG-licensed and oversees the AG Department including an AG Supervisor, two AG Coordinators and elementary AG teachers, all of whom are also AIG-licensed. The Director is charged with the implementation and monitoring of the local AIG program and Plan K-12.

The Director oversees all AG Department practices and procedures to ensure full implementation of the AIG plan; including curriculum development, screening and identification, data collection, AIG service models K-12, professional development for individuals serving AIG students directly in any capacity, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, college readiness, and supervision of the AG Supervisor and AG Coordinators. The Director serves as a liaison between the AG Department and all stakeholders.

Practice B

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

District Response:

The district AG Supervisor and AG Coordinators are AIG-licensed and serve as a link between administration and the 69 elementary, 23 middle and 28 high schools. The AG teachers assigned to the 69 elementary schools are AIG- licensed by the state of North Carolina.

Elementary and middle school AG teachers who directly instruct students in the self-contained, full time program for Very Strong service must have AIG certification. These AIG-licensed teachers provide direct instruction in all four core content areas for AIG-identified students.

Elementary AG teachers are funded through state AIG monies and thus must use 100% of their allotted instructional time at their assigned site(s) for the academic advancement of high ability students.

The elementary AG teachers carry out screening and identification procedures, maintain the AIG database, collaborate with classroom teachers, deliver school-based staff development and provide direct instruction for AIG students in reading and math. Elementary AG teachers provide appropriate differentiated instruction for AIG identified students through a pull-out enrichment model using reading

and math curriculum units which extend and enrich the NC curriculum beyond what is available in the regular classroom. Social and emotional issues are addressed in part through the study of Habits of Mind, which is embedded in the curriculum and intentional focus on cultivating a Growth Mindset. AG teachers are also available to collaborate with general education teachers to ensure that AIG students' needs are being met in the regular education classroom.

The AG Coordinators oversee specific schools to ensure compliance with screening and identification procedures, support AG teachers in instruction and curriculum, provide staff development for AG teachers, and serve as a liaison with principals and parents to ensure that AIG students are receiving curriculum and instruction that meets their needs.

The AG Supervisor oversees the department's efforts to increase representation of underserved populations in AIG, serves as a community liaison, organizes and facilitates the Academic All-Star summer camp and organizes and delivers professional development to support departmental initiatives. The AG Supervisor is responsible for gathering data and input from other departments such as the Division of Research and Accountability, the EC Department and the English Learners Department and for analyzing AG identification, performance and retention data to evaluate and monitor Plan implementation. The AG Supervisor oversees the implementation of AIG services and compliance in middle school and provides professional development and support for middle school Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) Chairs in each middle school. The Supervisor also serves as the liaison with the Very Strong (VS) program at the Academy at Lincoln to assist with recruitment, testing, parent communication and support for quality programming and instructional resources.

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:

Out of almost 5,000 GCS teachers, fewer than 300 teachers K-12 hold AIG licensure. GCS has established an annual scholarship opportunity to provide AIG licensure for teachers through a partnership with an Institution of Higher Education. The scholarship helps to build teacher capacity within the regular education classroom to recognize and address the unique academic, social and emotional needs of gifted learners. The AG Department is working to increase the diversity of the AG teaching staff so that it better reflects the demographics of the district. As such, the selection process is purposeful and intentional in selecting teachers from underrepresented groups (teachers of color, male teachers).

During the course of the 2019-2022 AIG Plan, GCS will identify a Title I elementary school to pilot a full staff AIG licensure cohort to leverage high quality gifted professional development and instructional strategies to positively impact outcomes for students.

The AG Department reserves the right to place AG teachers in elementary schools and assign

allotments. Currently, the AG Department screens candidates for elementary AG teachers and is increasingly involved in the interview or selection process. The AG Department also participates, upon request, in the interview process for teachers of the Very Strong service model.

The AG Department has established an LEA minimum requirement for all personnel who instruct AIG students in the regular education setting and who do not hold and are not pursuing AIG licensure. The professional development series provides teachers with information about gifted characteristics and differentiation. Other staff development opportunities are available through the AG Department for all personnel.

At the high school level, professional development is provided for teachers of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses. The district funds initial and renewal training for all teachers of these courses. Administrative personnel are also encouraged to pursue training in these areas in order to better support the programs. Teachers in schools partnering with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) receive professional development around equitable practices and support of students from underrepresented populations.

Monthly professional development is provided for elementary AG teachers, including curriculum support, social and emotional needs, instructional practices, technology and cultivation of K-2 students. Middle school TAG chairs and AP/IB Coordinators also receive monthly sessions regarding AIG program implementation and support.

The AG Department continues to expand professional development opportunities to respond to the need for purposeful, targeted professional development for classroom teachers K-12, school administrators and other departments on recognizing giftedness and exceptional abilities in students and best practices for cultivating high potential, particularly through differentiation.

Practice D

Provides general education services by personnel who have earned an AIG add-on license or have met the LEA requirements for that position.

District Response:

The AG Department annually provides scheduling and placement guidelines to assist school principals with classroom planning for the following school year. These guidelines encourage clustering of AIG students in the fewest number of classrooms possible and require placement of AG students with teachers who have AIG licensure or have completed the local AIG professional development.

Cluster Grouping

Cluster groups of 6-8 AG students maximize opportunities for appropriate differentiation within the regular education classroom.

In elementary schools, the AG Department requires the following best practice for cluster grouping to

ensure appropriate student service:

- Schools with fewer than 8 AG identified students in a grade level will place all AG students in one classroom, assigned to a teacher with state AIG add-on licensure or who has met minimum LEA requirements.
- In schools with larger numbers of AG students, students will be clustered in groups of 6-8 or more per grade-level classroom and assigned to a teacher with state AIG add-on licensure or who has met minimum LEA requirements.
- Students may be flexibly grouped in math and reading/language arts where AIG students are assigned to a teacher with AIG licensure or who has met minimum LEA requirements.

In middle schools, the AG Department requires the following best practices for grouping that best fits the needs of the site:

- AIG students are grouped with their similarly-achieving peers in the fewest grade level classrooms possible and placed in the Advanced ELA and/or accelerated math courses according to their area of AG identification. These students will be assigned to a teacher with AIG licensure or who has met minimum LEA requirements. Cross-teaming should be used when necessary to accurately place students according to academic need.
- In heterogeneously grouped science and social studies classes, all students are cluster-grouped (8-10) by ability such that any given classroom has a minimum number of ability levels for which to differentiate instruction. Students in AIG clusters will be assigned to a teacher with AIG licensure or who has met minimum LEA requirements. Cross-teaming should be used when necessary to accurately place students according to academic need.
- GCS practices a policy of open enrollment for advanced courses in high school such as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) to ensure equity of access for any student wishing to challenge himself academically. However, best practice would also indicate the need to group the most advanced learners to ensure learning collaboration with like-minded peers.

Monitoring

In order to monitor appropriate student placement and teacher assignment:

- At the elementary level, the AG Director collaborates with the Student Information Office to verify student placement in classes prior to the beginning of the school year to ensure that clustering recommendations have been followed.
- At the middle school level, appropriate student placement in accelerated math courses is verified at the district level based on current district criteria.
- The district generates an Advanced Placement Discrepancy report to ensure that high schools are not overlooking students who demonstrate potential for AP course enrollment.
- Additionally, elementary AG teachers and middle school TAG chairs meet bi-annually with principals to complete a Fidelity Checklist which evaluates the effective implementation of AIG Plan expectations regarding AIG student grouping and placement. This tool helps to facilitate reflective discussions on best practices for grouping and teacher assignment.
- AIG Add-On Licensure Scholarship recipients are submitted to the Board of Education and published on the AG webpage for public recognition.

Practice E

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

District Response:

The AG Department has established strong Professional Development opportunities for AG teachers and general education teachers, grades K-12, which are aligned with AG goals, other district initiatives and research-based practices supported by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).

Through professional development opportunities, the AG Department addresses the need to increase the number and diversity of classroom teachers who meet the minimum LEA requirement for working with gifted students, to further teacher understanding of the unique attributes of gifted learners and to build teacher capacity to provide appropriate rigor in instructional design in the general classroom.

The AG Department offers a two-part series which serves as the district's minimum requirement for teaching gifted students: Characteristics of Gifted Learners and Classroom Practices for High Ability Learners. These six-hour sessions are delivered throughout the year on Saturdays and designated teacher workdays. Schools may opt to provide the series to the entire staff when they are able to dedicate workdays to complete the two six-hour sessions.

Characteristics of Gifted Learners covers the following topics:

- Understanding the district's identification and service model
- Recognizing characteristics of gifted students from underrepresented populations (i.e. dual exceptionalities, students of poverty, students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds)
- Recognizing the characteristics of gifted learners
- Recognizing common myths associated with gifted learners
- Recognizing characteristics of underachievement among gifted students
- Supporting the social and emotional needs of gifted students (segment that focuses on Growth Mindset)

Classroom Practices for High Ability Learners covers the following topics:

- Learning effective tools to inventory student's learning preferences (i.e., multiple intelligence, interest inventories)
- Embedding higher level questioning into daily instruction
- Strategies for differentiation, acceleration and increased rigor

The AG Department also partners with the Guilford Parent Academy and Professional Learning Department to provide additional professional learning sessions, such as:

- Content-specific support for teaching gifted students in all core subjects, including a focus on flexible grouping techniques to maximize differentiation
- Understanding metacognition by 'Making Thinking Visible'
- Encouraging Growth Mindset in teachers, students and parents
- Black Boy Hustle: Recognizing Giftedness in African American Males
- Money Talks: Recognizing Giftedness in Students of Poverty
- I, Too, Am AG: Understanding the Needs of 2E Students
- Recognizing Giftedness in EL Learners

- Girls Do Code: Recognizing STEM gifts and talents in girls

Teaching, Learning and Professional Development departments will embed best practices in differentiation for advanced learners in district-wide content professional learning sessions.

Practice F

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

District Response: AG elementary teachers gather monthly with district personnel to collaborate on instructional and procedural matters.

At these required meetings, teachers receive training on the appropriate implementation of AIG processes, including screening and identification, documentation, database management, communication, teacher collaboration, student performance review, etc. in order to ensure consistency across the district.

- District personnel facilitate training and discussion regarding the social and emotional support of gifted students and new research and trends in gifted education.
- Opportunities are provided for teacher collaboration on unit and lesson planning where AG teachers can refine, reflect on and share their instructional practices and resources.
- An AG SharePoint site and AG Canvas page are central collection sites for materials distributed during monthly AG teacher meetings, resources shared and the handbook of procedures and documents. Through online collaborative Microsoft Teams, teachers have the ability to upload resources to share with their colleagues.
- Teachers are also expected to bring back new knowledge and skills learned in outside professional development and participation in conferences, such as NCAGT, to share with AG colleagues.

AG elementary teachers are expected to provide staff development in their own buildings on topics specific to educating advanced learners. The AG district office provides modules that can be personalized for school based professional development. During the monthly AG teacher meetings, teachers have the opportunity to share their experiences and learn from one another.

The AIG Department sponsors participation in the NCAGT conference for as many teachers as the budget allows. Sponsored teachers are required to share highlights of the conference and specific take-aways that are beneficial to the teaching core.

Teachers new to the AG classroom receive additional structured support from the AG Department and veteran AG teachers.

Required monthly middle school TAG chair meetings provide an opportunity to receive training on the appropriate implementation of AIG processes, communication, student performance review, etc. in order to ensure consistency across the district. The AIG Department provides professional development on social and emotional needs of AIG students and instructional strategies for teaching advanced learners that can be taken back to schools and shared with staff.

Each high school has an AP and/or IB coordinator that attends monthly meetings facilitated by the AIG Department. Topics such as AP/IB enrollment, data-driven decision making, teacher needs, AP syllabi support, and AP testing are addressed during these required sessions.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

The AG Department will:

- collaborate with the Student Information department to generate high school AIG rosters and course selection in order to audit participation in advanced coursework
- collaborate with the Data and Analytics department to provide PD for administrators and teachers on understanding data analysis of CogAT scores to inform grouping practices and instructional practices for all students
- provide PD for administrators on using Annual Plans and AG Scope and Sequence to conduct meaningful classroom observations

Sources of Evidence:

- Job descriptions for Central Office Academically Gifted staff
- Roster of AIG-certified district personnel
- Elementary AG teachers' schedules
- AG scheduling and placement guidelines
- Elementary and Middle Annual Fidelity Checklists
- Documentation of professional development participation
- AG professional development schedule
- AG teacher meeting agendas and presentations
- TAG chair meeting agendas and presentations
- AP/IB Coordinator meeting agendas and presentations

Standard 5: Partnerships

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

Practice A

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

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional

District Response:

The GCS AG Department is very fortunate to have an active Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education (PAGE) chapter which facilitates partnerships between the department and AG families. The PAGE Board meets with AG staff regularly to align communications, events and targeted support to needs in the district.

For example, the AG department works hand-in-hand with PAGE members to:

- Communicate and address concerns raised by AG families around the appropriateness for gifted learners of a newly adopted district-wide core curricula
- Organize events and speakers to address social and emotional issues that families of gifted students are experiencing such as anxiety, stress and perfectionism
- Offer informational sessions for AG families – AG 101, AG Transitions to Middle School, AG Transitions to High School – which include panels of student/family representatives of various AG programs to discuss the impact that these programs and opportunities have had on their families
- Offer visits to college campuses such as Wake Forest and Duke University for rising 9th grade AG students who attend the Academic All Star summer camp
- Provide articles and updates communicated through the PAGE newsletter that is distributed to families of gifted students
- Facilitate opportunities for families of gifted students to ask questions, share concerns and have a common voice so that the AG department will remain informed of any misconceptions, issues or misinformation that needs to be clarified

The AG department partners closely with parents of highly gifted students enrolled in the Very Strong (VS) program at the Academy at Lincoln to:

- Publicize accomplishments of students and student groups, including academic team competitions, unique enrichment projects and individual student awards and achievements
- Promote the unique academic and social/emotional benefits of the program for highly gifted students from the parent and student perspective to raise awareness throughout the district
- Purposefully recruit highly gifted students from underrepresented populations to encourage families to consider and accept the invitation to enroll in the program
- Include parent participation in school programming including serving as guest speakers and as authentic audiences for real-world projects

Elementary AG enrichment units create opportunities for parental involvement through partnerships, speaker opportunities and authentic engaging scenarios where students link their conceptual

learning to real world applications through service learning.

Partnerships with parents often occur to support extracurricular enrichment opportunities for AG students across grade levels, including academic competition coaching, club advisors and to provide expertise in a given domain (robotics, history, STEM, arts).

Parents are often called upon to share their experience and gained understanding about raising a gifted child, navigating gifted education and social/emotional challenges as well as appropriate academic and extracurricular opportunities for gifted students. Parents partner with the AG department to share with other families during AG informational sessions about Governor's School, Academic All Star Camp and other sessions on gifted programming.

Parents of AG students serve as members of the Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) at each elementary and middle school. The TAG is responsible for AIG decision making at the school level. Parents are also active members of the AG Advisory Board and participate in parent forums and focus groups conducted during AIG Plan writing years.

Practice B

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

District Response:

The GCS AG Department disseminates information to all stakeholders about the goals and policies of the AIG Plan and program. The AIG website is a resource for students, parents, and the community to access information about the AIG Plan, program, and processes. Additionally, the AG Department will continue to partner with the Parent Academy, PAGE, and the GCS District Relations Department to develop a network of communication feeds for all stakeholders, including Parent Forums, Connect-Ed phone calls, and newsletters.

The AG Department:

- Communicates through weekly newsletters to principals
- Attends district-wide counselor, curriculum facilitator, and principal meetings
- Requires AG teachers to write monthly newsletters and maintain a school AG webpage
- Requires Middle School TAG Chairs to distribute monthly newsletters
- Ensures that schools hold regular parent information sessions led by AG teachers at the beginning, mid-year, and end of the school year to discuss screening, identification and eligibility; curriculum; transitions; and other needs
- Continues to partner with Parent Academy to provide presentations on topics of interest in a timely manner. i.e. before 2nd grade screening, before middle and high school registration.
- Publishes parents/students' rights on the AIG website
- Posts the current AIG Plan on the GCS AG Website
- Continues to have parent representatives as well as principals, counselors, and teachers from across the grade spans on the AG Advisory Board

- Utilize District Communication outlets, including a weekly news brief, media briefings, social media, School Board and Superintendent updates, and GCSTV spotlights to share information about gifted education

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:

The AG Department has made an intentional effort to balance stakeholder representation on the AG Advisory Board in order to have as many perspectives represented as possible to monitor and develop the program and plan. The Board is culturally and ethnically diverse and is made up of parents of identified gifted students, AG and regular education teachers, EC and ESL representatives, counselors, school-based administration, school board members, and district administration including AG Coordinators, Supervisor and the AG Executive Director. All grade spans are represented in order to gain input and support regarding programs for elementary, middle, and high school students. The Advisory Board meets regularly to monitor the implementation of the AIG Plan.

The AG Department continually asks for feedback on the Plan and programs, as well as gives opportunities for parents and community members to volunteer to be a part of the Advisory Board. Open forum sessions and surveys provide the opportunity for students, parents, school personnel and members of the community to have a voice regarding gifted programming. This input is analyzed and shared with the AIG Advisory Board so that informed decisions can be made.

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:

As linguistic diversity increases so does the need for additional sources of interpretation. Through collaboration with the ESL department, the AG Department presently supports non-English speaking parents through translations of letters and forms, by advocating for non-English speaking students, and by providing translators as needed. Translators are used to inform and counsel parents on educational options that may be available within the school system for their student.

Many resources and opportunities for AIG students, such as services and enrichment activities, are

listed on the GCS website, which has the capacity to translate the text into multiple languages.

The AG Department showcases AIG student achievements on our website, through the weekly GCS News Brief, and through local news media outlets.

AG Teachers and TAG chairs distribute monthly newsletters to AG families which document current AG programming topics and provide information regarding extracurricular opportunities appropriate for gifted learners.

District-sponsored parent meetings are held at various locations across the district to ensure participation. Topics include Governor's School information, ACT/SAT preparation and the Academic All-Star summer camp.

A district-sponsored GCS Choice Showcase is held annually to allow families to explore the numerous learning options available through the magnet schools and programs. GCS also holds an annual College Night and Career Fair where students and families can explore post-high school opportunities. Translators are available at these events to assist families.

Practice E

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

District Response:

GCS is fortunate to be located in close proximity to several colleges and universities: UNC Greensboro, North Carolina A & T, Bennett College, Greensboro College, Guilford College, High Point University, Elon University, Wake Forest University, Duke University and Guilford Technical Community Colleges. Partnerships with these institutions can be leveraged to support and extend the way in which AIG students are served throughout the district.

At the present time, GCS partners with several local universities to provide early college and middle college experiences for students. In GCS Early Colleges, high performing students are fully matriculated college students beginning in grade 11.

Furthermore, the AG department partners with accredited universities to offer AIG certification courses by funding course tuition for district personnel who apply for and are awarded a scholarship.

The Academic All-Star Camp is a summer enrichment opportunity that targets high-performing rising 9th grade students across the district. Through collaboration with local universities, students explore future academic opportunities through information sessions and campus tours.

Additionally, local businesses and industry have taken a marked interest in partnering with GCS to provide the students of Guilford County the most advantageous education possible, resulting in multiple new Career and Technical Education Signature Academies which focus on the most needed

and marketable skills in today's career fields.

GCS Parent Academy has partnered with the AG Department to host several informational meetings concerning AIG students' needs. The Parent Academy includes the AG Department in district-wide community conferences and events. Title I Parent Ambassadors and other business and parent groups provide additional perspectives and potential partnerships.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

The AG Department will:

- invite members of the local business community and universities to participate on the AG Advisory Board
- increase communication with university and business partners to raise awareness about existing opportunities for enrichment, mentorships, internships, etc.

Sources of Evidence:

- PAGE newsletters and fliers
- Agendas and presentations from Guilford Parent Academy sessions
- AIG Plan
- AG website
- AG newsletters
- AG survey responses
- AG teacher handbook
- AG parent handbook
- AG Advisory Board membership, agendas and presentations
- Academic All-Star Camp brochure
- AG Scholarship contract and documentation

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 local board of education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

District Response:

The development of the GCS AIG Plan includes the following actions/steps:

- Plan implementation monitoring and exploration of strategies to improve during the first two years of the Plan.
- Department attendance at regional meetings and technical assistance visits with Department of Public Instruction staff to support plan development and improvement.
- Review of DPI feedback on current AIG Plan.
- Gathering of stakeholder input throughout the plan development process via surveys, public forums, and monthly meetings with AG elementary teachers, Middle School TAG Chairs and AP/IB Coordinators.
- Regular Advisory Board collaboration sessions to review input and propose revisions.
- Presentation of an executive summary of proposed revisions to the Superintendent's Council.
- Proposed revisions are posted for public comment for a 30-day period prior to Board presentation.
- Presentation to the GCS Board of Education for approval.
- Submission to the Department of Public Instruction.

Practice B

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

District Response:

The AIG plan is monitored by the AG Director, AG Supervisor, AG Coordinators and the AG Advisory Board.

AG Central Office personnel meet weekly to address implementation matters, including consistency of implementation across the district, any legislative updates that would impact AG programming, adjustments needed to align to district and state policies and considering individual school challenges and needs.

AG Coordinators conduct observations and compliance visits in all district elementary schools throughout the year to ensure consistent implementation of the district AIG Plan. Teacher Monitoring documents are maintained for each elementary AG teacher. This documentation records compliance with AIG plan components such as service delivery, utilization of AG enrichment curriculum, fidelity of screening and identification processes, collaboration and leadership activities, communication with stakeholders, and staff development initiatives.

The AG Supervisor monitors the implementation of identification and service at the middle school level and for the Very Strong Program at The Academy at Lincoln. Monitoring documents for school-based TAG teams record compliance with AG identification processes and documentation, communication with stakeholders, development of Annual Plans for differentiation, and collaboration among classroom teachers to ensure service delivery through advanced coursework.

Additionally, Fidelity Checks are completed with elementary and middle school principals to verify recommended AIG grouping and scheduling practices both at the beginning of the year and mid-year to help facilitate registration decisions.

The AG Director monitors the implementation of AP and IB programming in the district's high schools. Monthly AP Coordinator meetings ensure consistency and equity in availability, access, recruitment practices and quality control for advanced coursework. Likewise, monthly IB Coordinator meetings align programming practices among the four IB high schools to ensure fidelity and consistency.

The Director also meets regularly with the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning and Professional Development to review data as it relates to AIG Plan implementation, progress on new initiatives and pilot programs and student identification and service.

The AG Advisory Board meets quarterly to monitor progress on implementation of the AIG Plan. These meetings are used to complete Interim Reports provided by NCDPI, to gather concerns or suggestions from stakeholder representatives and provide annual updates based on AIG data collection.

Practice C

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

District Response:

The GCS Finance department develops the LEA budget, which includes the distribution of state and local 034 funds. The budget is approved by the Board of Education and managed and monitored by the AG Director.

State funding allotted for AIG programming is directed primarily for AIG elementary staffing purposes. Approximately 50 AG teachers serve 69 elementary schools.

State AIG funds are also used:

- to provide scholarships for teachers who wish to pursue AIG licensure in an effort to increase the number of AIG licensed personnel in the district
- to support teachers serving as district mentors for teachers new to AP or IB
- to remunerate teachers for curriculum development for the AG classroom
- to hire AG diagnosticians to assist with AG identification testing in order to ensure consistency across the district
- to implement K-1 Nurture
- to purchase and scan Iowa Achievement tests for AG identification

GCS contributes above and beyond state funding to ensure full implementation of the AIG Plan.

Local funds are used for:

- the development of appropriate differentiated curriculum
- resources to support AG-specific curriculum
- talent development programs geared toward building potential in underserved populations and closing the excellence gap
- the development and delivery of professional learning for district personnel on meeting the needs of gifted learners
- professional learning opportunities for AG personnel including state and national gifted conferences
- training for teachers new to AP or IB, renewal training and training for curricular revisions
- four IB Diploma Programs, including membership fees, postage and instructional supplies
- the Academic All-Star Camp, including staff salaries and instructional supplies
- supplemental PSAT funds in order to provide SAT preparation and AP Potential for all 10th and 11th graders
- the purchase and scanning of the CogAT as the district's sweep screen for initial AG identification

Practice D

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

District Response:

All public reporting of student data is coordinated through the GCS Division of Accountability and Research and the Communications department to protect student confidentiality and to adhere to the rules of FERPA.

The Division of Accountability and Research composes an annual report on student performance, disaggregated by demographics, for the district. This report is distributed directly to schools and district administration; from there it is disseminated among department staff. In the case of schools, data from the reports is also shared with principals, parents and the local community through methods that include, but are not limited to, ConnectEd and school newsletters. District-wide data from the report is published in the local newspaper and posted on the district website. Drop-out data is also included in district-wide reports.

The AG Department analyzes and evaluates school performance data and AIG subgroup data to inform service delivery decisions for individual schools. Additionally, AIG student data is reviewed to:

- analyze attrition and dropout rate of AG students, identifying early graduates and students transitioning to charters/private schools for middle school
- monitor talent development students to evaluate growth and progress toward identification
- identify the placement of K-1 talent development programs

The AG Department uses a secured SharePoint site to ensure efficient and equitable availability of student data for AG school-based personnel. Likewise, performance data obtained from College Board regarding Advanced Placement participation and performance is shared with AP Coordinators through the secured SharePoint site to inform instruction and student support. PSAT results are used to encourage participation in rigorous high school coursework.

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:

GCS is a majority minority district with the following general demographic breakdown:

- 41% African-American
- 33% White
- 16% Hispanic
- 6% Asian
- 4% Multi-racial

Approximately 14% of GCS students are identified for EC services and 9% are identified for EL services.

20% of the overall district student population is identified as AG. The demographic breakdown of this AG subgroup is:

- 20% African-American
- 57% White
- 10% Hispanic
- 8% Asian
- 5% Multi-racial

Approximately 2% of AG-identified students are also identified for EC services and less than one percent are also identified for EL services.

The AG Supervisor position was developed specifically to monitor and address the representation, performance and retention of under-represented populations.

As such the Supervisor is tasked with:

- generating reports through PowerSchool and the district AG database to compare the demographic breakdown of the AIG student population in relation to overall district and individual school populations
- analyzing disaggregated reports on AG student achievement
- determining targeted professional development to raise awareness of areas of disparity and of the needs of gifted learners from these groups
- researching best practices in identification and programming for underrepresented students
- reporting out identification by demographic group three times per year – after fall screening, after third grade screening and after summer testing
- collaborating with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to include AG data in departmental trainings and presentations
- collaborating with the Exceptional Children and English Learners departments to ensure the inclusion of these student populations

The performance of AIG students is monitored annually upon the release of EOG/EOC score data. The AG department collaborates with the Division of Accountability and Research to verify that students from underrepresented populations have not been overlooked at the school level in the AG identification process.

An annual review of individual student performance may result in a change of service or the implementation of a Student Support Plan to strategize solutions for students whose scores may indicate underachievement or insufficient growth. Outcomes of annual reviews are communicated to parents by the school TAG chairperson.

At the high school level, AP/IB participation and performance data is analyzed to identify gaps in participation and performance of underrepresented groups. Schools use AP Potential data consistently to identify students who could experience success in this advanced coursework. A district-funded partnership with Equal Opportunity Schools will focus on identifying barriers and perceptions that hinder student enrollment in AP/IB courses.

Practice F

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

District Response:

Information regarding the licensure of personnel serving AG students is currently available through the Principal Portal (online HR access for principals) and the Human Resource Department.

A minimum LEA AIG course requirement has been established for teachers who do not hold AIG licensure but who instruct AG students. The AG Department maintains a record of participation and completion of this local training.

Information regarding AIG licensure credentials and completion of minimum LEA requirements is communicated to school principals during the bi-annual fidelity checks.

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:

The AG Department gathers feedback through various modes:

- The AG Advisory Board whose membership reflects a variety of stakeholder groups, school types and locations
- Monthly AG teacher, middle school TAG Chair meetings, and AP/IB Coordinator meetings
- Monthly Teaching, Learning and Professional Development divisional meetings
- Monthly school-based TAG meetings include parent representation and opportunities for feedback
- Regular meetings with the PAGE Board liaison
- The Let's Talk district online communication tool provides a means for stakeholders to ask questions and share concerns while maintaining anonymity if desired
- Stakeholder surveys that allow for anonymity if desired

Regular parent informational meetings are conducted at the school and district level. These interactions always include question and answer sessions which provide opportunities for parents to ask questions, clarify misunderstandings and express concerns.

In partnership with the Guilford Parent Academy, the AG department offers informational sessions such as:

- AG 101 for families new to the AG identification process
- AG Transitions to Middle School and AG Transitions to High School to inform families about the AG service model in secondary settings
- Very Strong Program informational meetings to communicate opportunities for the highly gifted

- Governor's School sessions to inform families about this unique summer opportunity for gifted students

The locations for these sessions are strategically selected to be accessible for families in both Greensboro and High Point, families relying on public transportation and within communities which are typically underrepresented in AG programming. To increase participation of families from underrepresented populations, the AG department will host some sessions in local community centers.

At the school level, AG school contacts conduct school-specific sessions that include the opportunity for stakeholder feedback such as:

- participation in Professional Learning Communities to gather input from regular education teachers
- Beginning-of-Year AG meetings to inform families of service provision and enrichment opportunities
- Initial AG Screening and Identification meetings
- Talent Development parent meetings
- Transition meetings
- AP Potential meetings

Practice H

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

District Response:

The AG Department gathers and evaluates multiple sources of data to analyze progress toward stated goals and areas in need of improvement. This analysis is used to amend and enhance the AIG Plan and program.

The AG Department compiles and examines the following information for the purpose of decision-making and planning:

- Survey responses
- Parent forums
- Student achievement data
- Student growth data
- Advisory committee input
- Demographic data analysis
- Advanced course enrollment data
- Input from AG teachers, TAG chairs, AP Coordinators, IB Coordinators
- Input from PAGE
- BOE indicators of progress toward district Strategic Plan goals

Practice I

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

District Response:

All data from evaluation of the local AIG program gathered during the revision of the AIG Plan is shared to the public through the Board of Education approval process. Prior to Board approval, proposed revisions are posted for public comment for a 30-day period. Once approved, the revised plan is published on the AG website.

Data from evaluation of the AIG program will be available on the AG website, including:

- Summary of survey responses
- Official spring AIG headcount
- Demographic breakdown of eligible AG students based on spring AIG headcount
- AP and IB participation data

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:

AIG student rights are currently protected through the general GCS student rights policies and procedures. Additionally, the enforcement of Article 9b through AG program procedures and practices protects the unique needs of gifted students. These practices and procedures are codified in an AG Teacher Handbook, TAG Chair Handbook and AP Toolkit.

Practices and procedures are carefully monitored for consistency and fairness across the district by the AG Department and the AG program coordinators.

Testing for AIG screening and identification requires prior parent notification and consent. Before AIG services can begin, parents must consent via signature on the student's Differentiated Education Plan and/or course registration forms.

The Annual Review process includes a review of AIG student performance and allows for communication of additional eligibility and changes in service.

Honor Previous Placement procedures:

Students in grades 3-12 arriving in GCS from other North Carolina districts who were receiving AIG services in their previous district will maintain AIG eligibility and services will be determined based

upon most recent data. Eligibility will be verified through PowerSchool for districts with AIG Plans filed with the state and/or official AIG documentation.

Students who were identified for AG eligibility prior to grade 3 will be reassessed according to GCS eligibility criteria.

Students in grades K-12 arriving in GCS for districts outside of North Carolina who provide documentation of AIG eligibility in their previous district will be assessed for AIG services according to GCS eligibility criteria.

A process to resolve disagreements is in place and is communicated to parents. The "Resolving Disagreements" document is located in the GCS AIG Handbook and on the AIG website. This document provides parents with the steps to follow should they have a disagreement with an AG decision.

The procedure for resolving disagreements is as follows:

Procedures to Resolve Disagreements

A parent or guardian who disagrees with a decision made by the school's AG Team concerning processes involved in identification of a student for differentiated services in the school's AG Program, or appropriate services provided to the student, has the right to appeal that decision, According to Chapter 115C, Article 9B, of the General Statutes of North Carolina.

Guilford County Schools' Academically Gifted Department's program goals, objectives and service delivery are communicated to parents through letters, handbooks at the school, and on www.gcsnc.com/.

Step 1: Parent Request

Parents who have questions or concerns should first talk with the regular education classroom teacher and the academically gifted specialist. When decisions about screening, identification and services follow the procedures outlined in the current GCS AIG Plan, the decision of the school-based Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) and the District Oversight Committee, are upheld. If the disagreement continues to be unresolved and the school believes that the appropriate procedures have been followed, the parents may take the following steps.

Step 2: School Review

If parents have a disagreement concerning procedures involved in screening, identification or services, they may request in writing a meeting with the principal to discuss their concerns. The principal convenes the TAG, with the parents, to review the procedures and resulting decisions. Minutes are recorded and signatures obtained from those present. TAG provides the parent/guardian with a written statement of the decision and/or next steps within 10 school days after the meeting is held.

Step 3 – Administrative Review

If the disagreement is not resolved at the school level, the parents may request an administrative review at the district level. A written request should be sent to the Executive Director of the AG department within 10 school days of the school level meeting. The Executive Director of AG and the District Oversight Committee convenes a meeting with the parents to review the procedures and

resulting decisions. Minutes are recorded and signatures obtained from those present. The Executive Director provides the parent/guardian with a copy of the meeting minutes and written statement of the decision and/or next steps within 10 school days after the meeting is held. The minutes are copied to the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development. If the disagreement is not resolved at the district level within the AG department, the case is reviewed by the School Support Officer. A copy of the meeting minutes and written statement of the decision and/or next steps will be provided to the parent/guardian within 10 school days after the review is held.

Step 4 – School Board Review

If agreement cannot be reached administratively, the parents may appeal to the Guilford County Board of Education. The Board will offer a written decision to parents within thirty days.

Step 5 – Mediation

Parents, administrators or the Board of Education may request mediation by an impartial facilitator. The mediator will be selected from an approved list provided by the Department of Public Instruction.

Step 6 – Administrative Law Hearing

If mediation fails to resolve the disagreement satisfactorily, the parents may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the North Carolina General Statutes.

According to the law, “The scope of the hearing shall be limited to:

- (i) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted students, or
- (ii) whether the local plan developed under G.S. 115C-150.7 has been implemented appropriately with regard to the child.”

Following the hearing, the administrative law judge will make a decision based on the findings of facts and conclusion of the law. The decision of the administrative law judge is final, is binding on all parties and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. Legal fees are the responsibility of the parents.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:

The AG Department will:

- consider additional school-level quantitative and qualitative data, such as K-1 Nurture frequency, in the evaluation of program effectiveness
- provide annual surveys rather than just AIG Plan year
- improve opportunities for student input
- include a business representative and/or a representative from an institution of higher learning as members of the AIG Advisory Board
- increase the presentational capacity of the AG department to offer “meet them where they are” sessions by training AG teachers to speak on district-wide processes for identification

Sources of Evidence:

- AIG Plan
- AG website
- Elementary and Middle Annual Fidelity Checks
- Teacher Monitoring Document
- TAG Monitoring Document
- Disaggregated AIG enrollment data
- Disaggregated AP/IB participation data
- Disaggregated EOG and EOC data
- EVAAS data for AIG subgroup
- Roster of AIG-certified personnel
- Professional development records
- Use of AG funds
- Advisory Board membership, agendas and presentations
- Stakeholder survey data
- Differentiated Education Plans (DEP)
- Student Eligibility Records (SER)
- Board of Education presentations

Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

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