

**Johnston County Public Schools
Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan
Effective 2019-2022**

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Johnston County Public 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, Johnston County Public Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Johnston County Public Schools Vision for local AIG program: The Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program of Johnston County Public Schools ensures a rigorous academic curriculum within a safe, nurturing environment that empowers students to become innovative learners, creative problem solvers, and powerful communicators.

Core Values include

- Relationships - Stakeholders recognize and celebrate the unique needs of gifted and high ability students within the school structure, and beyond.
- Relevance - Students receive challenging, personalized learning experiences that meet their academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs.
- Innovation - Teachers and staff provide opportunities that allow gifted learners to fulfill their potentials to analyze, evaluate, create, and communicate.

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

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$1957823.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A

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

District Response: Johnston County Public Schools has developed comprehensive and equitable screening and referral processes. Stakeholders receive information regarding these processes from AIG Leads (ALs) in each school each year. While the system identifies students at any grade level who have supporting data, screening and referral processes differ by grade band based on the available data. The district expects classroom teachers to adjust instruction within the various tiers based on demonstrated need when students show academic potential or talent for all learners including gifted identified students.

While ALs accept nominations from stakeholders - including teachers, parents, students, and administrators - at any time during the year, school personnel screen traditional assessments and non-traditional indicators from various sources of returning students during the first nine weeks of school, including, but not limited to, the lists below. Transfer students retain gifted identification and services with receipt of documentation. Until the district receives documentation, administrators place students in appropriate learning environments based on data received.

Traditional Assessments Screened

- North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests (EOG)
- North Carolina End-of-Course Tests (EOC)
- Advanced Placement Tests (AP)
- Locally adopted benchmark assessments providing national norms
- Access Testing (Growth measures)
- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
- Iowa Assessments
- Other nationally normed standardized tests as approved by JCPS Testing and Accountability Office

Non-traditional Indicators

- Checklists
- Rating scales
- Portfolios
- Teacher and/or Parent Observations
- Literacy Assessments

With the leadership of the AL and the Advanced Learning Coach (ALC), a Problem Solving Team (PST) will follow the JCPS problem solving model within a Multi-Tiered System of Support to ensure district personnel make data based decisions for instruction and identification at each school. The team reviews nominations of returning 4th - 12th grade students during the first nine weeks. In addition, ALs gather data for parent, student, or teacher nominations not included in the achievement data file.

Grades 4-12

A district-created data file contains students who score at the 90th percentile or higher on End-of-Grade or End-of-Course assessments in ELA and/or mathematics. In addition, the data file includes three previous years' EOG/EOC data and the last four benchmark percentiles, as available. In addition, school personnel screen any available standardized data within their schools.

Grade 3

In order to maintain access and equity among all populations, the district supports universal ability assessments at third grade to inform instructional decisions for all learners. Further disaggregation of subtest and cluster data by school personnel opens conversations for nontraditional identifications and allows closer analysis of marginalized populations when making screening and instructional decisions. Advanced Learning Coaches (ALCs) oversee the screening of district-provided ability data and achievement data file for possible gifted referrals and supports instructional conversations with teachers based on this data.

Grades K-3

While broad screening occurs at third grade, teachers may nominate exceptional students in kindergarten through third grades based on various indicators (Accepted assessment tool, benchmark assessments, etc.) as they review data or create data walls. Teachers should nominate those students who consistently perform above grade level in either reading and/or mathematics.

Nominations to Referrals

PSTs may move screened students to referral, based on achievement trends or corresponding ability and achievement data. Students who earn a composite score at the 97th percentile or higher receive formal referrals. Some nominees whose data indicates academic or ability potential may need further qualitative data in order to support the move to formal referral. In the absence of substantiated quantitative data, stakeholders complete observation checklists, complete rating scales, or provide advocacy letters supporting the need for formal identification. Stakeholders may submit portfolio samples with products and reflections to support possible formal referral.

Following initial screening procedures at any grade, PSTs may revisit a student nomination as supporting criteria become available at any point during a school year or subsequent years. Principals will place students whose end-of-year data indicates need for gifted services in appropriate learning environments for the following school year, even without formal identification.

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 district supports multiple criteria for formal gifted identification as described below. District personnel review all areas of the learner profile to gather any available supporting data.

Multiple criteria (indicators)

-Observation - (45 points and above) The classroom teacher and/or parent must fill out the observation checklist when they elect to nominate a student who does not emerge from screening. Observation(s) should indicate the student exhibits gifted characteristics during learning situations, formal or informal. Students should exhibit "Need" or "Strong Need" on the district's observation checklist.

-Performance - (At or above 90% or Mastery of content) Classroom performance information includes mastery of standards, current and previous year's grades (as applicable), common formative assessments developed by Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), literacy assessments, and portfolio samples of differentiated work. Performance should consistently indicate the nominee works above grade level. Teachers of students evaluated by standards based mastery provide input regarding student performance indicators in regards to need.

-Ability - (At or above the 90th percentile) While aptitude measures the student's potential to learn a specific subject, ability indicates overall success in a school setting. Results reviewed must include national norm percentiles. This indicator includes subtests and cluster scores.

-Achievement - (At or above the 90th percentile) Achievement refers to the percentiles of subject area tests for either a state administered end of year achievement test or a nationally normed standardized achievement test.

-Interest/Motivation - While the Eligibility and Options Profile does not quantify interest and/or motivation, these qualitative areas may serve as key factors in needs-determination decisions. While portfolio samples may indicate above grade level work in specific areas, such samples may provide documentation for a student's need to access advanced learning opportunities. Advocacy letters documenting student involvement and attributes serve as alternative evidence for the need for formal identification.

Additional indicators for students in grades K-5 include repeated participation in advanced or cluster groups (such as K-3 small group Primary Education Thinking Skills). Middle school students' matrices data can support the need for further consideration. For students in grades 9-12, whether students have self-selected advanced courses including honors, AP, IB, and/or CCP, and their performance in those classes can support indication of the need for gifted services.

While a comprehensive learner profile provides an optimum lens to view learners for formal identification, some students' ability and/or achievement data support the need for advanced learning opportunities, regardless of displayed classroom performance. In addition, some learners' interest and motivation support the need for advanced learning opportunities, although social/emotional barriers may mask quantitative data. Other uncontrollable factors may also prevent quantitative data from showing the need for advanced services. However, students consistently display exceptional abilities or thinking. Johnston County Public Schools supports appropriate instructional framework and access to challenging curricula for all K-12 learners within Personalized Competency Based Education (PCBE).

Although all indicators provide information about learner profiles, needs determination teams review standardized measures with greater significance. While "No Need" in performance and/or observation

criteria factors into placement decisions, subjective measures may or may not hinder a child from formal identification. In addition, with supportive qualitative data, the PST may identify a student with marginal standardized data as needing Tier 2 services. Standard 2, practice A provides a further explanation of Tier instruction based on Multi-Tiered System of Support.

Academically Gifted (AG) Identification:

- Score at or above the 90th percentile on a subtest on an ability test, AND
- Achievement scores in corresponding areas at or above the 90th percentile in both reading/ELA AND mathematics, AND
- Observation and performance should reflect a need on the Summary of Eligibility and Options,

OR

- Achievement scores in both reading/ELA and mathematics indicate trends of qualifying scores, AND
- Observation and performance should reflect a need on the Summary of Eligibility and Options,

OR

- A combination of indicators leading to identification in both reading/ELA and mathematics

Intellectually Gifted (IG) Identification:

- Student composite ability score indicates the student is at the 97th percentile or higher, AND
- Observation and performance should reflect a need on the Summary of Eligibility and Options

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) Identification:

- Composite score at or above the 90th percentile on an ability test, AND
- Achievement scores in both reading/ELA AND mathematics indicate a trend at or above the 90th percentile, AND
- Observation and performance should reflect a need on the Summary of Eligibility and Options

Academically Gifted - Reading (AR) and
Academically Gifted - Math (AM) Identification:

- Score at or above the 90th percentile on a subtest on an ability test, AND
 - Achievement score in a corresponding area at or above the 90th percentile in either reading/ELA OR mathematics, AND
 - Observation and performance should reflect a need on the Summary of Eligibility and Options,
- OR
- Achievement scores in mathematics OR reading/ELA indicate trends of qualifying scores, AND
 - Observation and performance should reflect a need on the Summary of Eligibility and Options

Johnston County Public Schools strives to provide all learners, K-12, focused instruction based on PCBE. During various checkpoints within Tier I, teachers may explore Tier II services with students. (Tier information descriptions provided in Standard 2.) Before, during, or following this exploration, teachers may nominate these students for gifted identification.

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: School personnel screen data across all demographics including those culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice exceptional students. Standard procedures outline additional steps to ensure all populations receive equal opportunities. As outlined by the 2017-2018 Identification Team, schools will screen the top 10% of underrepresented populations in schools who have less than 10% of their students identified in the screened grades. In addition, the district will purchase assessments to provide additional opportunities for marginalized populations.

The use of a universal screener at third grade provides insight to the abilities of all learners, receiving input from Exceptional Children and English Language Learner personnel. Regardless of teacher bias, teacher perception, or classroom behaviors which may shadow opportunities for higher ability learners, screening processes respond to all students who display high ability or potential on any subtest or cluster composite.

Procedures also mandate Problem Solving Team (PST) action on K-12 students who display academic trends in achievement, making identification decisions on data while weighing subjective measures with less significance.

As the system builds broader placement into instructional tiers or advanced learning environments in grades K-5, data team discussions increase attention to all populations. In grades 6-8, the continued use of matrices scores, which include EVAAS (probability of achievement) and benchmark data (percentiles), create an inclusive, nurturing environment for middle school advanced learners, regardless of formal identification. These students typically access Math 1 and/or English 1 in middle school. Students self-select honors and advanced coursework (AP/IB/CCP) in grades 9-12, regardless of gifted identification. Inclusive settings highlight students as potential gifted nominees, who staff may otherwise overlook.

Practice D

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

District Response: Principals appoint an Assistant Principal as AIG Lead (AL). The Advanced Learning Coach (ALC) works closely with the AL to support the structures of identifying and serving all advanced learners.

With the support of the AL and ALC, each school administrator creates a Problem Solving Team (PST) who will review nominations and referrals. This team includes two to four additional teachers from various grade bands/content areas who have gifted credentials, or equivalent training, to assist

in the decision-making processes.

As the district continues to develop a comprehensive system of support for all learners and shifts focus to PCBE, training will support gifted referral decisions made by trained Problem Solving Teams. During this transition, Office of Advanced Learning personnel will continue to support placement decisions with the AIG Lead/Administrator and ALC to determine if students' data indicate the need for gifted identification or if students need additional quantitative assessments or qualitative data. As ALs who have received training and maintain the role within the same school, the district will transition to verification of decisions.

Practice E

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

District Response: Johnston County Public Schools shares information regarding screening, referral, and identification processes with school AIG Lead (ALs). District personnel create formats that allow school choice on how they determine to share information with staff, parents/families, students, and their school communities. When students enter formal referral, teachers and school staff share processes.

Based on 2019 survey results - 33% of parent/guardian and 18% of teachers do not know where to find information or who to contact regarding gifted services. Based on these results, the district will determine other media to assist schools in sharing information regarding screening, referral, and identification information. In addition, district staff will review the website and develop user-friendly formats for sharing information with stakeholders.

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: As the district transitions to formal gifted identification through Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Problem Solving Teams, school personnel will maintain documentation for processes of decisions to serve advanced learners at Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III (defined in Standard 2). In addition, school administrators appoint designees to maintain secure documentation regarding formal gifted identification.

Gifted records contain the following documents:

- Your Rights as a Parent/Guardian and Procedures for Resolving Disagreements (AIG 1)
- Notice and Consent for Evaluation (AIG 2) - as needed
- Summary of Eligibility and Options Profile (AIG 3)
- Differentiated Education Plan/Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (AIG 4)
- Annual/Service Review documentation

7/22/2019

AIG Lead (ALs) provide eligibility and options profiles to parents/guardians of students whose indicators show evidence for formal gifted identification. If needed, parents/guardians must sign consent for evaluation prior to administering any additional assessments. Parents/Guardians receive the rights and due process document as part of consent or as a part of notification and consent to services. ALs oversee this communication with parents and maintain record security within each school. District fidelity checks and procedures verify parent communication and record maintenance.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: -Determine methods to engage high schools in screening

- Increase understanding and utilization of alternative pathways
- Establish procedures for alternative assessments
- Support continued training on problem-solving processes to build capacity
- Design info graphic or other tools to communicate (partner with other areas)
- Increase tweets on social media
- Research Gifted Rating Scales and other standardized tools
- Review website format
- Create a newsletter for Advanced Learning stakeholders

Sources of Evidence: -Flow charts, screen casts, process checks, and training documents on screening, referral, and identification

- Master Review record
- AIG forms (Observation, Rights/Due Process, Eligibility)
- Testing Drive files (data from standardized tests, meeting rosters, screening lists, school rosters)
- CogAT or other ability data
- Access data from EL

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: Johnston County Public Schools supports advanced and gifted programming through appropriate learning environments for students and professional development for teachers. System's services include targeted instruction by trained teachers in appropriate learning environments using advanced content (curricula and instructional strategies).

Administrators maintain the integrity of differentiated education plans the following ways:

- Elementary - Cluster and/or subject grouping as outlined in the AIG Plan
- Middle - Subject grouping based on matrix data
- High - Providing open access to all available advanced learning options
- ALL levels - Place teachers who have academically gifted certification, previously earned state endorsement or local credentials, and/or active participants in local ongoing gifted professional development as content teachers for gifted learners

Student placements align with their area or areas of gifted identification. Administrators build master schedules that ensure student opportunities match their areas of need.

While the system supports Personalized Competency Based Education (PCBE), according to 2019 survey results, only 22% of elementary, 33% of middle, and 52% of high school students feel they are always or often challenged by their school work. 38% of administrators rated that their staff purposefully plans and adapts the SCOS to meet the needs of advanced learners. Within the PCBE model, all students, K-12, should receive targeted Tier I Core instruction based on multiple data sources. Many advanced learners need differentiation beyond core instruction, or Tier II. Some students need sustained Tier II instruction within Tier III settings. While not typical, some Tier II and Tier III students may not hold formal gifted identification, these students must have access to the most rigorous learning environments. Through building the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), the district has committees addressing instruction, curricula, and Professional Learning Communities to determine steps appropriate to build a comprehensive and systematic approach to better meet the needs of all learners, including advanced learners.

Practice B

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

policy and practice.

District Response: The system supports Personalized Competency Based Education (PCBE) for all learners through tiered system of supports. While teachers support challenge and rigor for all students at various Ascending Levels of Intellectual Demand, they make daily instructional decisions that impact student growth opportunities.

Problem Solving Teams (PSTs) may identify some advanced and gifted learners who need to move from Tier I core differentiation to Tier II advanced content opportunities such as compacting and interest-based or independent studies. A few students may need intensive interventions in order to achieve growth that require Tier 3 instructional programs.

According to 2019 survey results - only 35% of teachers and 31% of administrators expressed that teachers always or often discuss gifted data and plan what to do when students know the material during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). In addition, only 35% of teachers and 27% of administrators expressed they have the appropriate resources to serve their gifted learners. With the expectation of personalized learning, schools must distribute efforts to address all variations of learners. In order to better meet students' needs, Advanced Learning Coaches (ALCs) will provide targeted questions for PLCs when planning for advanced learners and provide support for teachers in creating advanced learning opportunities for their students. In addition, the district will conduct a resource review to determine what resources teachers need to better served advanced students.

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: District personnel work with administrators to identify gifted students, as well as students who exhibit the potential to perform at higher levels. The Office of Advanced Learning conveys to administrators the need to serve gifted identified learners and provide access to advanced services for potential students in order to meet N.C.G.S. 15C-150.5-.8 (Article 9B), as well as State Board Policy ACIG-000, Standard 1, Practice b.

Grades K-3

Gifted identified students must have opportunities to work with ability peers in flexible groups within classrooms, within grade levels, and across grade levels. School personnel will document learning goals and environments on Individualized Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs) for identified learners or through Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for learners with high academic indicators. With limited numbers of identified students in grades K-3, counselors and gifted trained staff should support the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of the identified students on a consultative basis.

Grades 4-5

Gifted identified students must receive daily services in mathematics and/or English/Language Arts with one or more gifted-trained teachers (outlined in Standard 4, Practice D) in clusters of no less than 5 identified students (or with high ability learners in grade levels with less than 5 identified students). Administrators have the option to heterogeneously group homerooms if their scheduling

supports authentic gifted services for reading/ELA and/or mathematics presented by gifted-trained teacher(s) in the content areas of math and/or reading. Gifted-trained teacher(s) serve as the reading and/or math teacher(s) of record.

Grades 6-12

Teachers in grades 6-12 must implement in-class flexible grouping based on students' readiness, interest, and learning profiles within the advanced classes. The gifted-trained teachers should base readiness groups on data obtained from standardized assessments, benchmark assessments, classroom formative assessments, school/PLC-developed formative assessments, and/or RCD pre/post tests (when available).

Recommended Grouping Practices

According to 2019 program evaluation, 35% of elementary, 51% of middle, and 40% of high school students express teachers only sometimes or never allow them time to work with other advanced students who learn in similar ways. In order to ensure equity and access to all learners, the district recommends grouping practices inclusive of students who demonstrate academic potential, regardless of gifted identification. While schools must ensure these practices do not create tracking or pathways that do not allow flexibility where needed or do not create 'all day' homogeneous classes, teachers can create greater opportunities for growth when focused on specific academic needs.

Elementary schools with small numbers of AIG students - 15 or less students per identified area (ELA or Math) per grade level

Administrators place all gifted ELA/reading identified students and other high ability reading students within one English/Language Arts class with a gifted-trained teacher. Administrators place all gifted Mathematics identified students and other high ability math students within one math class with a gifted-trained teacher. Based on trend data, administrators should place other high ability reading and/or math students within the advanced content class(es) to accommodate the needs of both gifted identified and high ability students. In rare situations, administrators must contact the Office of Advanced Learning.

Trend data should include:

- CogAt (Verbal, Quantitative, Nonverbal or Composite scores)
- Benchmark percentiles (past 3 test sessions)
- BOG/EOG
- Accepted assessment tool (3rd & 4th grade)
- Classroom performance for past 2 years (4th & 5th grade)

Elementary schools with large numbers of identified students - 16 or more students per identified area (ELA or Math) per grade

If schools have a large number of gifted ELA/reading identified students (16 or more) or a large number of gifted Mathematics identified students (16 or more) at each grade level, administrators may divide students into multiple groups, allowing for inclusion of other bright learners and leaving room for transfer/transition students. However, if dividing gifted identified students across different advanced classes, the number of cluster students in each class must not fall below 8 identified students and each teacher must have gifted training as outlined in Standard 4, Practice D. In rare situations, administrators must contact the Office of Advanced Learning. Based on trend data,

administrators should place other high ability reading and/or math students within the advanced content class(es) to accommodate the needs of both gifted identified and high ability students.

Trend data should include:

- CogAt (Verbal, Quantitative, Nonverbal or Composite scores)
- Benchmark percentiles (past 3 test sessions)
- BOG/EOG
- Accepted assessment tool (3rd & 4th grade)
- Classroom performance for past 2 years (4th & 5th grade)

The teachers may flexibly group other students within their own classrooms or across the grade level. During the school year, the teachers review benchmark and other available data. Instructional groups may change based on these data points as the administrator deems appropriate.

Grades 6-8

School administrators examine trend data to determine mathematics and language arts placement for incoming sixth grade students. Administrators place students into Math 6 Plus and/or Advanced Language Arts in the sixth grade if students meet criteria on the district-approved matrix. Administrators place gifted identified students in advanced language arts and/or advanced math classes in clusters within classes with gifted-trained teachers. When 15 or less AIG identified students in the grade level qualify, administrators should cluster those students within the same advanced class for language arts and/or math according to their identification area(s). A school with 16 or more AIG identified students in a grade level who qualify, administrators can group in the same advanced class or can distribute these students evenly across multiple advanced classes. However, if dividing gifted identified students across different advanced classes, the number of cluster students in each class must not fall below 8 identified students. In exceptional situations, administrators must contact the Office of Advanced Learning.

At the conclusion of each year in middle school, students should continue to move into the advanced courses unless data proves students no longer need advanced courses. School personnel should review each gifted student who initially does not qualify for advanced classes for possible future placement in advanced classes.

Grades 9-12

High school students self-select their courses of study. Students who enroll in honors, advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, and Career and College Promise courses will benefit from their academic rigor. Therefore, AIG identified students must enroll in at least one advanced course per semester (two per year). Students enrolled in the Early College Academy, CTLA, or other innovative high school programs meet this requirement. District personnel will monitor service implementation, and encourage identified students who opt-out of services to return to gifted services.

Since only 39% of elementary, 27% of middle, and 17% of high school students reported that teachers change assignments or instruction when they already know the content or demonstrate mastery according to the 2019 survey results, the system must address the academic needs of higher ability students in order to increase growth. The system will continue to establish appropriate

responses through tiered instruction and problem solving teams.

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 Office of Advanced Learning personnel share updated and relevant gifted information with central personnel, administrators, AIG Leads, and Advanced Learning Coaches (ALCs) each year. Each school determines how they share information with their staff to provide updates and actions steps in order to appropriately implement advanced learning services outlined in the district's gifted plan. Communication also includes updated district and school websites, as well as district and school meetings.

According to the 2019 survey results, only 25% of administrators and 30% of teachers feel their schools have provided communication often or always in relationship to gifted services and progress. Within their open-ended responses, many teachers and administrators expressed the need for dedicated personnel to work with gifted learners and classroom teachers, appropriate professional development, and updated resources.

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: School personnel work closely to ensure continuation of services for gifted students between grade levels and at key transition times and in the case of student transfers. The Office of Advanced Learning implements procedures to ensure effective transitions each year by creating rosters and supporting administrators and counselors with placement decisions. Administrators and/or their designees inform classroom teachers of their gifted identified learners.

Transition from elementary to middle schools -

The district provides administrators matrices data that identifies gifted and advanced learners using unbiased indicators. As administrators place students into classes, procedures instruct them to examine data to determine any gifted identified outliers. Administrators who place gifted identified learners into regular classrooms with gifted trained teachers who will meet their needs to assist with supporting a transition back to an advanced setting.

Transition from middle to high schools -

Personnel from various departments provide support for students as they transition from middle to high schools. With a large number of programming options, the district implemented a common application to assist students who wish to apply to multiple non-traditional high school and/or dual enrollment programs. Administrators build master schedules to ensure advanced learners have appropriate settings and course offerings.

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: As the district has shifted focus to relationships, the need for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) goals has become apparent. The district has appointed dedicated staff to oversee social and emotional learning targets. While building protocols within Multi-Tiered System of Support, the district has included trained personnel, in both SEL and gifted, as key members of this steering team. With SEL targets within the various tiers of intervention and advancement, training will allow teachers and school staff to address the unique needs of advanced learners.

A district-wide program evaluation in 2017-2018 resulted in the need for social and emotional support within the various buildings. With the minimal number of counselors available in each building, teachers and administrators must collaborate to find ways to incorporate opportunities for advanced learners to connect and incorporate social/emotional learning through content, whether through class or club/activity structures.

Student services, who oversees school counselors, allows gifted personnel multiple opportunities to interact with counselors during the year, including training regarding the unique needs of advanced learners, and providing support for academic programming, such as Duke TIP and Governor's School. Trainings with counselors highlight the characteristics and unique SEL needs of bright and gifted learners. The counselors work with the teachers in the schools and share this information in various methods.

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: Classroom teachers who work with gifted and high ability learners provide curriculum compacting, interest-based studies with voice and choice, independent research projects, and problem-based learning when students demonstrate need.

Data used by schools in Problem Solving Team (PST) in determining the need for potential Tier II students

- Teacher-created pretests
- PLC-created pretests
- Benchmark assessment
- Standardized test data

Using results of pre-tests, teachers respond as follows:

- Eliminate repetitive, unnecessary instructional time for students who show mastery of the objectives
- Streamline instruction of those objectives students who demonstrate mastery more quickly than their classmates

-Offer challenging alternatives provided by compacting, interest-based studies with voice and choice, independent research projects, and problem-based learning

In addition, the district compacts three years of middle school mathematics curricula into two years so that advanced students can enroll in Math 1 in eighth grade. The district also supports student enrollment in eighth grade English 1.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

Students enrolled in the district have the option of participating in Credit by Demonstrated Mastery. Students who successfully earn scores determined by the state and complete the artifact process as outlined by Johnston County Public Schools may receive credit for a course without seat time in the course. Johnston County Public Schools' website contains more information.

Early Admittance to Kindergarten

Early admittance to kindergarten follows state statutes. Parents/Guardians with questions concerning early admittance may contact the school's principal. The district has linked the state policy on the district's website or interested parties may go to bit.ly/earlyentry2K.

Enrollment for Transfers in Advanced Courses

Any transfer student whose course sequence from his/her previous school does not align with that of Johnston County Public Schools must present course descriptions for consideration before enrolling in accelerated courses or off-level courses. Administrators, in conjunction with executive directors and officers in Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability, will make placement decisions.

Course Credit for Non-JCPS Courses While Enrolled in JCPS

In accordance with JCPS policies, the superintendent or his/her designee and the principal must approve advanced courses from outside providers, including summer opportunities, prior to enrollment.

Standards for Grade and Subject Acceleration

Grades Kindergarten through Eight

Johnston County Public Schools offers grade and subject acceleration to meet the needs of K-8 students who demonstrate extraordinary levels of academic ability and maturity.

Review and Approval Process

Teachers or parents/guardians interested in recommending grade or subject acceleration for a student should contact the school administrator prior to gathering any documentation. School personnel will counsel the parent/guardian regarding the review and approval process and potential future impact on a child of a grade or subject acceleration determination.

Following counseling, teacher(s) or other school staff should gather available information pertinent to

a student's potential grade promotion or subject acceleration, including but not limited to the following:

- BOG/EOG/EOC data
- Available standardized assessment data, including district benchmark data
- Accepted assessment tool data
- Observable student behavior
- Portfolio of student work (reading, math and writing)
- Qualitative data (interviews, questionnaires, inventories, etc.)

Parents/Guardians of students who have never enrolled in JCPS will have to provide, in addition to the information noted above, a portfolio of specific information to help with the decision-making process. This portfolio must include work samples (reading, math, and writing) that indicate a child's need for acceleration and at least two letters of recommendation from non-relative adults who have knowledge of the child's academic performance, social and emotional maturity, and motivation and interest in pursuing grade or subject acceleration, in addition to the information listed below.

The Principal establishes a Problem Solving Team for the purpose of reviewing the available above-listed information which should include the following:

- School administrator
- Guidance Counselor
- Teacher from the target grade/subject area for which acceleration is under review
- Other principal designee trained in gifted education

The Problem Solving Team will utilize the Iowa Acceleration Scales (IAS) instrument to assist in reviewing the information noted above and determining whether the principal should accelerate a student by grade or subject. This tool provides a uniform procedure for reviewing potential need for formal acceleration and ensures holistic evaluations of a student, from multiple perspectives. The IAS includes the following sections:

- I. General Information
- II. School History
- III. Critical Items
- IV. Assessment of Ability
- V. Assessment of Aptitude
- VI. Assessment of Achievement
- VII. School and Academic Factors (Motivation)
- VIII. Developmental Factors (Physical)
- IX. Interpersonal Skills (Social)
- X. Attitude and Support (Interest)

The Problem Solving Team will review the information as described above and make a recommendation to the principal. The principal will communicate the final decision regarding grade or subject acceleration to the parent/guardian within five school days of receiving the Problem Solving Team's recommendation.

Consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-288(a), the principal shall have final authority to determine a student's grade placement.

Grade Acceleration for Grades Kindergarten through Eight

Problem Solving Team Considerations

Characteristics/Behaviors which may indicate a student's need for grade acceleration include the following:

- Demonstrate academic and social function at least two years beyond their peers
- Work well independently and within groups in a demanding school environment
- Follow verbal and written instructions accurately
- Possess an eagerness to learn and excitement about new school experiences
- Display a thirst for knowledge, consequently requiring new and challenging learning situations on a consistent basis

Differentiated Portfolio - Classroom Performance Indicators (May include, but not limited to)

- Accepted assessment tool - Scores above highest level for assigned grade
- Lexile Score - Two or more grade levels above present grade
- Scores of 90 or higher on common assessments
- Writing samples - Exemplary status for the grade to be skipped
- Work samples - Two or more grade levels above the current grade with high level of accuracy in all core subject areas; assignments at the highest tiers of differentiation
- Student scores consistently in the top percent in all core subject areas: reading, writing, language, mathematics, social studies, and science

Single Subject Acceleration for Grades Kindergarten through Eight

The Problem Solving Team will consider the same indicators within the Iowa Acceleration Scale used for grade acceleration. However, in assessing whether formal subject acceleration is appropriate for a student, the team shall afford significant weight to data relative to the subject through which the student might accelerate with greater significance.

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: Johnston County Public Schools commits to consistent services so that all students have the same opportunities for learning and growth. The district ensures access to our most rigorous courses to a diverse group of students who demonstrate a need for rigorous coursework. Administrators place gifted learners and potentially gifted learners in advanced classes in elementary and middle schools based on multiple data sources. In high schools, students self-select advanced course opportunities. When students' data does not support the more rigorous environment, the system supports parent/guardian waiver to allow access when permitted by other policies and programming. These wide, inclusive, academic settings provide advanced learning opportunities for all underrepresented populations.

In addition, the system administers a universal ability screener to all third graders including English

language learners and students identified by the exceptional children's program based on the desires of the school. By implementation of this screener, teachers discover academic potential that they might not have seen demonstrated within the classroom, especially among culturally or ethnically diverse populations. Many times, highly gifted students surface and teachers adjust their instructional decisions based on this data. Schools use the data to inform flex groups to target academic needs. The district encourages school staff to use the data to broaden opportunities and provide advanced tiered instruction to students and provide support for needed interventions for students who may struggle.

Practice I

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

District Response: Gifted programming supports several academic endeavors within the district. In addition, schools create extra-curricular programs to support the interests of advanced learners and provide social and emotional support to their unique needs. This list provides some school and district opportunities.

Elementary Programs

- Duke TIP
- Battle of the Books
- Science Fairs
- Spelling Bee
- Chess Clubs
- Arts/Music opportunities
- Science Olympiad

Secondary Programs

- Duke TIP
- Math Counts
- Battle of the Books
- Spelling Bee
- Science Olympiad
- Governor's School
- Summer Ventures
- Superintendent's Student Leadership Council
- Service Learning Projects

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:

- Investigate and advocate for changes in service model
- Include advanced learning conversations within PLCs
- Research possible high school credits within middle schools (Earth and Environmental Science, World History, foreign languages)
- Provide opportunities for more academic competitions for high school students (membership in

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Scholastic Association)

- Provide targeted PLC questions regarding gifted data to support extended conversations about advanced learners
- Provide support for math competition for elementary schools
- Increase consistency across district of enrichment programs and opportunities
- Increase awareness of identification and appropriate levels of service, especially for AI and IG
- Support additional training options for various departments
- Extend SEL opportunities to classrooms, clubs, and activities to better support specific needs
- Reevaluate website and formats for gifted communication
- Create a quarterly newsletter

Sources of Evidence:

- Administrator Notes (Shares requirements regarding services)
- Fidelity checks (Including matrices, CogAT data)
- Staff and parent presentations and documents
- Communication documents (label files)
- SEL communication
- Staff documents regarding advanced learning opportunities
- Website (Early Entry, Subject/Grade Acceleration, processes links, important links)
- Twitter (Current readings, happenings, and trends)
- CDM website
- Academic competitions budget, rosters, and programs

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: Johnston County Public Schools implements Personalized Competency Based Education (PCBE) in an effort to provide challenging opportunities to all learners at all levels in relevant and innovative ways. Through extensive training in Standards Based Teaching and Learning and learning profiles, the district enables teachers to provide opportunities for students based on readiness, interest, and learning profiles. Teachers adapt the standard course of study to provide personalized learning opportunities based on the various tiers within Multi Systems of Support (MTSS).

As the system refines their instructional model and builds MTSS standard operating procedures, instructional coaches and leaders within each building will provide support for K-12 classroom teachers. With training and support, teachers will implement enrichment and extensions within the learning pathways.

Currently, Tier I core instruction meets learners within their ascending levels of intellectual demand based on a variety of formative and summative data. These students may complete tiered assignments, seminars, problem based learning activities, or other personalized instruction as enrichment of the standards. For many gifted identified gifted learners, teachers implement Tier II instruction including curriculum compacting, independent study, and other instructional practices that support extensions and acceleration. With an appropriate body of supporting evidence, administrators provide informal opportunities for Tier III instruction for teachers to flex within classrooms, within grade levels, or across grade levels to provide extensions and accelerations. Principals, with the right to grade and place, engage in data-based problem solving within the MTSS framework when making formal acceleration decisions which includes review of triangulation of data from the Iowa Acceleration Scales.

Tier I

(Grades K-12)

- Content/Process/Product differentiation based on data
- Tiered assignments - based on readiness, interests, learning profiles
- Interest-based assignments within personalized learning pathways
- Interdisciplinary units - supports connections, creativity

Tier II

(Grades K-3)

- Informal readiness groups within and across grade levels

- Leveled texts
- Investigations extensions/enrichment

(Grades 3-5)

- Advanced ELA (including William and Mary curricula)
- Advanced Math (including Mentoring Mathematical Minds)

(Grades 6-8)

- Advanced ELA (Grades 6 & 7 - including William and Mary curricula)
- Math Plus (Grades 6 & 7- including CMP3)
- English 1 (Grade 8 - including William and Mary curricula)
- Math 1 (Grade 8)

(Grades 9-12)

- Honors
- Advanced Placement
- International Baccalaureate
- Dual Enrollment (CCP, NCSSM, etc.)

Tier III

(Grades K-7)

- Formal subject or grade acceleration

(Grades 7-12)

- Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

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: Johnston County Public Schools encourages teachers to use instructional practices that address the diversity of learners within their classes based on learning profiles. In addition to Personalized Competency Based Education (PCBE) implementation where teachers allow students instructional options, including voice and choice based on individualized needs, school coaches and instructional leaders provide support for teachers to offer differentiated assignments through specific training and Professional Learning Communities conversations.

These instructional strategies currently implemented with high ability and gifted learners include, but are not limited to:

- Tiered assignments
- Curriculum compacting
- Independent studies
- Levels of Questioning
- Parallel Curriculum
- Literature Circles
- Paideia Seminars

- Problem-based Learning
- Personalized Learning
- In-class/Across-grade flexible grouping (student movement based upon current data to encourage development of potential)

Practice C

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

District Response: Johnston County Public Schools provides curricula resources for teachers to implement gifted services. In addition, the AIG program supports academic competitions that enhance student learning and growth opportunities.

Resources provided to schools include, but not limited to the following:

- William and Mary Language Arts Units
- William and Mary Science Units
- Jacob's Ladder
- Navigator units
- Mentoring Mathematical Minds
- Investigations Math
- Connected Mathematics Project (CMP3)

Practice D

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

District Response: Teachers have access to resources, such as William and Mary Language Arts Units and Math Investigations, to provide opportunities for students to think critically, creatively, and globally. Teachers implement strategies that allow students to work in collaborative groups, teaming together in problem-based learning situations. The district's departments work cohesively to ensure teachers are aware of the digital learning competencies.

According to 2019 survey data, 40% of middle and 42% of high school students, their activities and assignments always or often relate to things that happen in the world around them. 43% of teachers also agree that what they offer always or often relates to real-world situations. With recent initiatives to implement Problem Based Learning, the results expose teachers need additional support for full implementation. While some skills may be taught in isolation, the survey has revealed opportunities for improvement.

Practice E

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

District Response: The system has adopted Standards Based Teaching and Learning practices to assist teachers in aligning instructional activities with standards and student assessments. Based on data from prior summative assessments and benchmark formative assessments, schools create opportunities for flexible groups within classrooms, within grade levels, or across grades. Teachers may use formative pre-tests and check in's to design instruction within Multi-Tiered System of Support.

Since the 2019 survey revealed only 39% of elementary, 27% of middle, and 17% of high school students feel their teachers change or differ assignments based on what the students have mastered, the results identified an area of much needed focus. Teachers should use formative assessments to make instructional decisions about the need for core differentiated instruction, Tier II instruction, or Tier III explorations. Schools should base Tier III decisions on the outcome of Problem Solving Teams, ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders.

Practice F

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

District Response: Through a collaborative effort between the gifted education program and student services program within Johnston County Public Schools, the system must build capacity with regular education teachers and counselors in appropriate practices to encourage affective development of gifted learners.

Counselors support appropriate placement of gifted students through services when applicable as follows:

- Subject acceleration
- Grade acceleration
- Early entrance to kindergarten
- Dual enrollment
- Early College
- International Baccalaureate

Counselors also meet the needs of gifted students by assisting them with:

- Course selections
- Grade transitions
- College applications
- Career planning
- Scholarships
- Enrichment opportunities

Previous training has included information and resources on how to deal with special problems and issues pertaining to the gifted learner, including

- subject or grade accelerated students,
- underachieving; underperforming students,
- twice exceptional students,

- students from diverse populations, and
- intellectually gifted students.

Since few teachers and administrators feel that gifted students have the needed support for social and emotional issues, the system must integrate social/emotional learning within their instructional practices. After attending the spring coordinator's institute, the district has developed ideas to explore creating book lists which highlight character development to support intentional opportunities for advanced learners to discuss social/emotional pressures or concerns.

Practice G

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

District Response: Students in grades K-3 receive enrichment and acceleration opportunities as indicated by performance on informal assessments and determined by grade level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at each school. Options within Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) allow schools to use tiered instruction to make meaningful and intentional curricular decisions.

In order to recognize gifted potential, the district provides Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) to each elementary school to offer opportunities for talent development. Students demonstrating critical and creative thinking at the highest levels work together in small groups to further develop inductive convergent, divergent, visual, and evaluative thinking. All students in K-3 have an opportunity to participate in PETS using resources supplied by the district, as supported by school administrators.

The system's accountability department implemented a program evaluation of all curricula programs within the district. Based on the data, the district has decided to review other possible K-3 talent development curricula. The district has created an action team of K-3 teachers who will assist in reviewing possibilities and the decision-making process.

Practice H

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

District Response: Johnston County Public Schools implements initiatives that assist the gifted program in collaborating with other departments. Program personnel collaborate to develop and implement differentiated units and grouping strategies for instructional delivery. Teachers and district personnel have worked to prioritize standards and develop proficiency scales. Through these efforts, teachers should have more tools needed to implement personalization.

While supporting district goals to transition to Personalized Competency Based Education (PCBE), gifted programming provides higher level curricula to support differentiated learning in the following ways:

Elementary and Middle School Advanced Language Arts (ALA)

Through advanced content courses for elementary and middle school AIG reading and nurtured students, the gifted program:

- Implements William and Mary curricular units
- Provides online opportunities for district Professional Learning Community (PLC) and collaboration
- Works with district personnel to compact curricula standards that allows for middle school students to enroll in high school course(s)
- Works with district personnel to determine class placement criteria

Elementary Mathematics

The district has implemented Investigations as a core curriculum program in grades K-5. This research-based curriculum provides extensions and enrichments in addition to appropriate, conceptual development across mathematical domains. District personnel will continue to support Investigations implementation and Mentoring Mathematical Minds to address needs for higher ability and gifted math learners.

Middle School Advanced Mathematics

The district has expanded Investigations used in elementary to continue as a core curriculum program in grades 6-8. Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3) provides a research-based curriculum focused on problem solving, mathematical reasoning, and inquiry-based learning. Through advanced content courses for middle school AIG math students, district programming:

- Works with district personnel to compact curricula standards that allow for middle school students to enroll in high school course(s)
- Works with district personnel to determine class placement criteria

High School Honors Courses

Teachers implement honors level curricula which vary from standard level classes through content, process, and/or product modification based on readiness, interest, and learning profiles.

Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate

Teachers offer higher level content through AP and IB coursework. Teachers receive additional training as outlined at the district level in order to ensure increased rigor and content enrichment.

Dual Enrollment

The system collaborates with local community colleges, universities, and industries to support dual enrollment where students receive high school and college credit or certifications for professional advancement. Students enrolled in these opportunities must meet the outlined criteria by the cooperating institution.

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: Johnston County Public Schools provides a Differentiated Education Plan for identified learners each year. This plan outlines content, process, and product modification options

that teachers can implement based on readiness, interest, and learner profiles. In addition, the document indicates the initial learning environment for grades K-5 (approved cluster/subject grouping) and grades 6-8 (Advanced Language Arts or Advanced Mathematics sequences). For students in grades 9-12, the DEP provides the learning pathway and documentation of services. All DEPs provide the area(s) of identification and expected methods for communication of progress.

Classroom teachers who provide advanced learning services communicate with parents/guardians at the beginning of the year/semester about the development of the DEPs and how instruction will change to meet the academic needs of the various learners. The district considers at least one face-to-face meeting with parents, at a minimum, a best practice. Many schools offer group meetings with follow up individual parent/guardian conference opportunities, where teachers actively involve parents/guardians in goal setting and establishing learning pathways.

Teachers update students and parents/guardians regarding academic performance and progress on overall instructional goals throughout the semester/year. While high school students self-select advanced programming, elementary and middle school teachers share progress within advanced instructional tiers, and maintain documentation for continued placement. If teachers think a student should receive a formal acceleration opportunity or temporary reduction of services, the decision process must include the principal, Problem Solving Team, and parents/guardians.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:

- Investigate and advocate for changes in service model
- Include advanced learning conversations within PLCs
- Research possible high school credits within middle schools (Earth and Environmental Science, World History, foreign languages)
- Provide opportunities for more academic competitions for high school students (membership in Scholastic Association)
- Provide targeted PLC questions regarding gifted data to support extended conversations about advanced learners
- Provide support for math competition for elementary schools
- Increase consistency across district of enrichment programs and opportunities
- Increase awareness of identification and appropriate levels of service, especially for AI and IG
- Support additional training options for various departments
- Extend SEL opportunities to classrooms, clubs, and activities to better support specific needs
- Reevaluate website and formats for gifted communication
- Create a quarterly newsletter

Sources of Evidence:

- Administrator Notes (Shares requirements regarding services)
- Fidelity checks (Including matrices, CogAT data)
- Staff and parent presentations and documents
- Communication documents (label files)
- SEL communication
- Staff documents regarding advanced learning opportunities
- Website (Early Entry, Subject/Grade Acceleration, processes links, important links)
- Twitter (Current readings, happenings, and trends)

- CDM website
- Academic competitions budget, rosters, and programs

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: Johnston County Public Schools employs an AIG-licensed educator to oversee gifted programming and opportunities of advanced learning. Knowledge, roles and responsibilities, and qualifications as outlined provide a strong foundation for a focused, comprehensive program.

Knowledge and Responsibilities:

- Establishes clear, equitable, and comprehensive student identification procedures for gifted screening, referrals, and identification
- Ensures consistency in program implementation
- Maintains the documentation of Central Review Team decisions
- Oversees processes for Differentiated Education Plans and annual reviews
- Provides curricula resources to appropriately challenge and serve gifted learners and students with gifted potential
- Provides support to personnel overseeing the delivery and planning of AIG instruction
- Encourages and supports the use of 21st Century content and resources
- Organizes and oversees district professional development required for teachers of gifted learners within advanced content courses
- Monitors the credentials of teachers of AIG students
- Provides professional development opportunities for district personnel to plan, implement, and refine applications of gifted programming
- Forms partnerships with school personnel from various departments including, but not limited to Exceptional Children program specialists, subject area coordinators, finance and accountability officials, and student services to meet the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners
- Oversees accelerative instructional and placement options within the schools
- Encourages extra-curricular programs, competitions, and contests
- Forms partnerships with AIG stakeholders and district personnel to promote the goals of gifted education
- Coordinates communication with all AIG stakeholders including the Gifted Leadership Advisory Team, publications, and any paperwork regarding AIG program and services
- Evaluates, refines, and informs AIG stakeholders of all aspects of AIG programming including a written plan, services fidelity, state funding, program evaluation, data collection and dissemination, and rights of AIG stakeholders
- Participates actively in area meetings, professional development opportunities, and other state initiatives to support gifted programs
- Performs duties designated by supervisor

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Qualifications:

- Master's Degree in School Administration from an accredited college/university
- Academically or Intellectually Gifted Licensure
- Knowledge of North Carolina Standard Course of Study
- Knowledge of North Carolina State and National Gifted Standards
- Knowledge of educational guidelines
- Knowledge of effective teaching methodologies

Practice B

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

District Response: Johnston County Public Schools funds Advanced Learning Coaches (ALCs) to support the various schools. These coaches provide support to classroom teachers and administrators, impacting instruction within the various classrooms. Other district and school personnel assist with the transition to Personalized Competency Based Education for every student. Through improved personalized instruction, gifted learners will benefit in all aspects - academic, intellectual, social, and emotional. Each school will provide AIG Leads (ALs) who will communicate with ALCs to oversee many procedures and processes within gifted programming. This person serves as a liaison between the district and schools and families.

Additionally, the system employs part-time Advanced Learning Leads who provide administrative services for gifted programming. Advanced Learning Leads, Advanced Learning Coaches, and AIG Leads work together to support tasks related to gifted programming.

Roles and responsibilities may include, but not limited to:

- Serves as a member of school Problem Solving Team and maintains records for the Central Services regarding gifted identification
- Provides accurate rosters for administrators, teachers, and counselors
- Supports AIG programming by educating school personnel on the processes, procedures, and protocols in gifted education
- Works with school personnel and data information services to complete fidelity checks related to program services, teacher credentials, and required communications
- Manages tasks related to fidelity checks
- Provides parent/guardian letters and DEPs
- Assists in reviewing students and school data in program evaluation data
- Assists in the development of processes related to screening, referral, identification, and placement of gifted students
- Meets with PLCs at schools upon request to assist in implementing strategies for AIG students
- Organizes testing procedures for school personnel to test for appropriate student services
- Distributes materials and resources to schools
- Serves on AIG Leadership Team (parent, teacher, principal group)
- Helps redesign professional development for various gifted programming, such as, but not limited to William and Mary, Jacob's Ladder, PETS, etc. to support system structures
- Provides training or assistance to ALCs in matters related to advanced learning
- Performs duties designated by supervisor

Qualifications

- Possess North Carolina Teaching License
- Possess certification in Academically or Intellectually Gifted (Specialists/Coaches)
- Possess working knowledge of JCPS Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Program

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: The Office of Advanced Learning has opportunities during each school year to work with support staff. In addition to the broader, systematic training within the system, Advanced Learning Leads and Advanced Learning Coaches (ALCs) offer training on specialized topics during each year.

Gifted Professional Development Topics for ALL Teachers

- Instructional Practices/Strategies
- Characteristics of Bright and Gifted Learners

Resource Training for Classroom Teachers

- Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS)
- Jacob's Ladder
- William and Mary Language Arts Units
- Mentoring Mathematical Minds
- William and Mary Navigators

Professional Development Topics for Counselors

- Social and emotional needs
- Gifted opportunities
- Issues in gifted education
- Counseling CDM candidates

AIG Procedures, Processes, and Protocol Topics

- Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) implementation
- Screening, nomination, and referral processes
- Evaluation
- Service/Annual reviews
- Transition guidelines
- CDM implementation
- Scheduling and placement options
- Advanced content protocols

AIG Locally Approved Professional Development

ALCs oversee ongoing blended professional development for classroom teachers who provide instruction to AIG learners at the elementary and middle school levels. This instruction may consist of

online modules, face-to-face instruction, classroom visits, and lesson planning/coaching components, based on the needs of the school. Teachers of high school identified learners who teach honors must complete an honors portfolio process as directed by the executive director who oversees high school programming.

Topics include the following:

- Professionalism and Advocacy (History, Legislation)
- Characteristics (Development and Issues)
- Identification (Assessment, Multiple Criteria)
- Learning Environments (Physical, Social, Questioning)
- Instruction (Methods/Models)

Gifted personnel provide training for administrators in the various AIG protocols and processes, as well as topics supporting gifted identification and programming throughout the school year, as requested.

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: Administrators place gifted identified learners in classes with academically gifted certified teachers, teachers previously credentialed by the state or district, or teachers enrolled in ongoing professional development. In addition to gifted identified students, high ability students whose trend data supports their potential to achieve at higher levels should have access to advanced content with teachers who have specific training in how to continue to grow gifted learners.

Grades 4-5 teachers - teachers in reading and/or math who have gifted identified students (typically clusters)

Grades 6-8 teachers - teachers of advanced content (including English 1 and Math 1) who have gifted identified students in the class

Grades 9-12 teachers - honors teachers in core content areas

Teachers may obtain AIG licensure through a college or university at their own expense. In addition, teachers may earn academically gifted certification by obtaining a qualifying score through the Praxis. School designees monitor the fidelity of student placement and teacher credentials for these learning environments and report to school and district administration. Administrators sign documentation that students are appropriately placed with AIG credentialed teachers or teachers enrolled in local professional development.

Practice E

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

District Response: Johnston County Public Schools desires to provide a Personalized Competency

Based Education (PCBE) to all learners within the district. In order to create focused efforts, the Office of Educator Effectiveness oversees training for classroom teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators. The Office of Communication and Engagement facilitates learning for counselors. With implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), all teaching and learning, including social and emotional learning, operates within the total school programming. As the district creates structures for MTSS and PCBE, teachers will implement opportunities for advanced learners, supported by best practices for advanced learners. The district plans to pilot PCBE activities for advanced learners in two elementary schools.

Practice F

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

District Response: Advanced Learning Coaches (ALCs) provide support for teachers during Professional Learning Communities and professional development. Instructional leaders within each building work with teachers to design personalized instruction for diverse learners. Coaches will review lesson plans with teachers and visit classrooms to support refinement of the gifted planning process.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:

- Employ dedicated school-based gifted teachers/specialists to serve each school
- Rebuild district advanced learning lead specialists, beginning with at least one at elementary and one at secondary
- Research possible professional development with IHE to assist with gifted Praxis
- Possible gifted course included in master's cohort programs
- Possible matrix for advanced elementary inclusion of high potential learners
- Update professional development training for all levels

Sources of Evidence:

- Professional Growth Plan
- JCPS AIG Calendar
- Professional Development agendas, rosters
- Placement fidelity checks
- PLC discussion prompts
- Professional development plans
- List of teachers with gifted credentials
- Workshop/conference registrations
- Instructional snapshots, visits

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 system values relationships in bridging the gap between the whole child and the larger community by engaging all stakeholders in the learning process. In order to develop partnerships and stakeholder understanding, the system implements several opportunities for two-way dialogue and stakeholder feedback. This feedback includes sharing celebrations and concerns surrounding teaching and learning and social and emotional aspects of school.

During the last year, the district has focused on Social and Emotional Learning as part of the overall school system of supports. As the district builds Standard Operating Protocols within Multi-Tiered System of Support, gifted personnel will serve on the district team in order to ensure the system includes social and emotional goals for advanced learners as MTSS considers the academic and socio-emotional needs of all learners.

While system structures place much of the gifted program dialogue on school personnel, the district provides support by holding meetings regarding policies, procedures, and programming, as well as training for stakeholders on gifted needs. In addition, the system updates the website with information on gifted services and programs.

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: Johnston County Public Schools' AIG Program shares information with all stakeholders regarding the local program, plan, and policies through various media, and face-to-face meetings. District personnel present AIG programming information and updates annually. School staffs hold annual meetings with parents/families regarding services. The district website includes general programming information and a copy of the AIG plan, as well as highlights AIG policies and practices.

Based on the 2019 survey open-ended responses, parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators expressed the need for more communication related to gifted programs and services. The district plans to provide quarterly newsletters to parents about general information and will create procedures to support teachers in providing more information to students and parents/guardians.

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 system establishes a Gifted Leadership Advisory Team (GLAT) who review and recommend district responses within the AIG Plan, analyze data about program effectiveness, and discuss ideas for implementation. This team invites participation based on the district demographics and includes parents/guardians, community members, classroom teachers, administrators, and central leadership. Typical members serve two-year terms, with rotations providing stability within the various roles. The team includes representation from various school feeder patterns, Exceptional Children's, English Learners, Student Services (including counselors), and Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability who review program evaluation results and determines program goals. They provide input and feedback on program processes and procedures.

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: Johnston County Public Schools' AIG Program ensures the participation of stakeholders through informational meetings, published articles, and AIG surveys. Gifted personnel work with ELL personnel to deliver and explain AIG information to interested Spanish-speaking parents/guardians at school meetings and provide all written information in Spanish. As requested, personnel will seek translators for other languages to appropriately support all populations.

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: The system provides information regarding gifted identification and programming to any interested stakeholders including the community. In addition to sharing within the schools, district personnel collaborate with various departments to update the public through comments at local board meetings, work with local industries and business for mentoring programs and certifications, and provide information regarding opportunities with local colleges and universities.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:

-Develop plan to improve communication with all stakeholders (quarterly newsletter, increase social

media presence)

-Create assurance documents or other methods to gauge how/when AIG Leads shared information

Sources of Evidence:

-Gifted Leadership Advisory Team agenda

-Website

-Survey and results

-Communication with various departments

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: Using data from a gifted program evaluation, the Office of Advanced Learning personnel create a draft plan reviewed by various stakeholders. Once district leadership, school administrators, and the Gifted Leadership Advisory Team have provided input, the Deputy Superintendent or his/her designee submit a preliminary draft to the local board for approval. Once approved and submitted to the Department of Public Instruction for comment, the district implements procedures as outlined in the areas of identification, programming, differentiated curriculum and instruction, personnel and professional development, partnerships, and accountability in order to meet Article 9B and SBE policies ACIG-000.

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: District personnel monitor program implementation through the use of the following:

- Fidelity checks
- Compulsory reviews
- Stakeholder surveys
- Meeting/visits with classroom teachers, parents/guardians, and students
- Input from district leadership
- Gifted Leadership Advisory Team meetings
- Anecdotal information

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: Johnston County Public Schools utilizes state-allotted funds for AIG licensed personnel to instruct gifted and potentially gifted students in general classroom settings. The budget allocates for AIG testing materials and scoring, curricula resources, and professional development for advanced learning staff, and professional development for appropriate resource implementation.

Other expenditures include academic contests and approved programs, such as Governor's School.

Practice D

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

District Response: Johnston County Public Schools maintains, analyzes, and shares information about student achievement and growth data. District personnel share district, school, and grade level data with administrators and school improvement teams. Each administrator presents school, grade, and subject data to the PLCs, and teachers receive their personal data for previous students and projected data for current students. District and school personnel include AIG performance as a subgroup in this data analysis. Through support of Student Services, district personnel can obtain drop-out data for gifted identified students to determine trends or identify potential areas for reform.

Practice E

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

District Response: The Office of Advanced Learning monitors the representation of various subgroups within gifted programming. District accountability team provides data for schools to review the performance of all gifted learners, in proficiency and growth.

In response to the Superintendents' institute prior to the National Gifted Conference in 2017, district leadership implemented two action teams. During 2017-2018, the district created an identification team to review district processes and a services team to restructure gifted programming to ensure equity and access to a broader, more diverse population aligned with district demographics. Schools have implemented pilots of those proposals during 2018-2019. These processes include creation of a broader sweep with underrepresented populations, using advocacy letters to support nominations/referrals, needs determinations made with school personnel, and processing of transfers at central services.

Practice F

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

District Response: The system service model requires regular classroom teachers to provide services to gifted and advanced learners. The county considers teachers who teach gifted identified students to hold an academically gifted license as a best practice. The system outlines ongoing local professional development for teachers who do not hold certification or have not earned credentials through a previously established professional development program, which will provide support for completing the Praxis as a means of certification at the end of five years. The AIG program office

maintains databases of all teachers who have AIG licensure, previous state AIG endorsement, previous honors credentials, or completion of locally-approved professional development. Principals of each school monitor Advanced Placement credentials.

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: In addition to many district opportunities for input from the stakeholders in various aspects of teaching and learning, the Office of Advanced Learning provides survey that target gifted programming and advanced academic opportunities. Program personnel share results with district leadership and with the Gifted Leadership Advisory Team. The team analyzes survey results and revises survey questions annually.

Practice H

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

District Response: System personnel use multiple data sources when drafting the local plan responses. In addition to targeted surveys for advanced and gifted programming, the system uses results from Advanced Ed evaluations, school climate data, and anecdotal information from various stakeholders to review, refine, and revise gifted programming.

Practice I

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

District Response: The Office of Advanced Learning currently shares program evaluation data with the Gifted Leadership Advisory Team and with the local board when requested. In addition, program personnel will provide summary data to school stakeholders to help strengthen advanced learning opportunities. District leadership will explore other avenues to share program evaluation data with the public.

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: Responses to the practices within the board-adopted AIG Plan become standard

operating procedures, practices, and binding policies (where referenced in BOE policies and regulations). The district assesses all students through a universal screener at third grade and reassesses using screening procedures annually in grades four through nine. If a student needs additional evaluations to support additional areas of identification or higher levels of service, school personnel obtains written consent from the parent/guardian. While schools follow reciprocity with previously identified gifted transfers, the district must obtain written documentation of previous identification and consent of parent/guardian for formal identification and services to continue. Thus, the district may serve students based on data and other indicators present, yet only formally identifies students upon written consent of parent/guardian.

The following section includes parent/guardian rights and procedures to resolve disagreement which parents/guardians receive during the evaluation and review processes.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARENT/GUARDIAN

All academically or intellectually gifted students must be provided a free appropriate public education. Differentiated services will be provided for academically or intellectually gifted student (1) at no expense to the parent/guardian, (2) according to the guidelines of the Johnston County Public Schools Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program, and (3) according to the student's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP).

Nomination: When any person thinks that a child is academically or intellectually gifted and may need differentiated educational services, that person should inform school personnel in writing the reasons for nominating the child and complete the appropriate student checklist as requested. The nomination should include information about the student's characteristics and strengths that require differentiated services.

A student must be enrolled in a public school, and the nomination should be given to the student's teacher, AIG lead contact, or principal.

Screening and Evaluation: After a child has been nominated and in order to determine his/her need for differentiated services in the Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program, a screening process must be followed:

1. A Site Review Team must review nominations and based on need, make recommendations for referral for further evaluation.
2. The parent/guardian must give written consent before any individual evaluation may be administered.
3. Student eligibility for differentiated services will be determined by a Site Review Team trained to make appropriate recommendations for an individual student.

Parent/Guardian receives a written copy of the team decision. The parent/guardian has the right to ask to meet with the Site Review Team to review the decision. In order for the school to provide formal gifted services, a parent/guardian must provide written consent.

If the parent/guardian does not agree with the system's decision concerning eligibility, he/she has the right to submit results of an independent educational and intellectual evaluation. The evaluation must be administered by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the education agency responsible for the student's education. Measures of intellectual aptitude and achievement are two of the formal

criteria considered in determining eligibility, and additional measures do not necessarily guarantee placement in the Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program, although those results will be considered.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM DOES NOT PAY FOR INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL OR INTELLECTUAL EVALUATIONS.

For students identified as academically or intellectually gifted, a Differentiated Education Plan or program must be written.

Such a plan will include student strengths and the options considered by the school-site team as appropriate to meet the student's educational needs. Placement is the end result of referral, evaluation, consideration of all criteria involved in giftedness, and the development of the DEP. The school system must ensure that placement is based on multiple indicators of giftedness and that options chosen are based on the needs of the student.

PROCEDURE FOR RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the District's determination that a student is not academically or intellectually gifted or is concerned about the appropriateness of services offered per this plan, the following procedure will be followed:

STEP 1: The parent/guardian may request a conference with the Principal and AIG Site Review Team to discuss his/her concerns regarding identification or appropriateness of services. Such request must be made in writing and submitted to the school principal. Any request for conference regarding identification must be submitted within 30 days of the Site Review Team's determination.

STEP 2: If the parent's/guardian's disagreement persists after the meeting with the Principal and AIG Site Review Team, he/she may appeal the District's decision regarding identification or services by making a written request for reconsideration to the Deputy Superintendent within 30 days of the conference with the AIG Site Review Team. A designee of the Deputy Superintendent and Central Review Team will review the information made available to the Site Review Team and the decision of the team and grant a conference with the parent/guardian to be held within 10 school days of the parent/guardian request. The Deputy Superintendent Designee will issue the decision of the team in writing within five school days of the conference.

STEP 3: If the parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the decision of the Deputy Superintendent Designee and Central Review Team, the parent/guardian may request to have the decision reviewed by the Superintendent. Such request must be made in writing and submitted to the Superintendent within 10 days of issuance of the Central Review Team's decision per Step 2. The Superintendent will review the information made available to the Site Review Team, the identification or services determination at issue, and the parent's written request for review. The Superintendent shall issue a decision in writing within 10 days of receipt of the parent's request for review.

STEP 4: If the parent is dissatisfied with the decision of the Superintendent, the parent may request to have the decision reviewed by the Johnston County Board of Education. Such request must be made in writing and submitted to the Board within 10 days of issuance of the Superintendent's decision per Step 3. The Board shall review the information made available to the Site Review Team, the identification or services determination at issue, and the parent's request for review. The Board

shall issue a decision in writing within 30 days of receipt of the parent's request for review.

STEP 5: In the event that the local grievance procedure fails to resolve the disagreement, the parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The scope of the review shall be limited to (i) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted student, or (ii) whether the local plan developed under G.S. 115C-150.7 has been implemented appropriately with regard to the child.

ATTORNEY FEES ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:

- Provide consistent updates to BOE
- Develop method for transparency with program evaluation

Sources of Evidence:

- PDF of AIG Plan
- BOE agendas
- Approval documentation
- State feedback
- Fidelity checks
- Survey documentation
- Interim reports
- Credentials file
- Budget proposals/expenditures
- Drop-out data

Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

boe approval aig 19-07222019061244.pdf (*Local Board Approval Document*)