

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

Approved by local Board of Education on: 21-MAY-19
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Jackson County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide LEAs to develop, coordinate and implement thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs.

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

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

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

Jackson County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Jackson County Public Schools supports and engages all learners. Each day our mission is to engage, enlighten, and enrich the students of Jackson County so they will be prepared to achieve their personal best as contributing members of their communities. Our Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program serves students in kindergarten through grade thirteen who manifest the ability to learn well beyond the expected level of their peers. The vision of the JCPS AIG program is to enrich students' learning opportunities through challenging, rigorous, and creative learning opportunities beyond the curriculum outlined by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. We wish to support AIG students emotionally, socially, and academically to prepare them for their future endeavors.

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

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$200663.00	\$9345.00	\$61057.600	\$115424.400

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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: Jackson County Public Schools has a screening and referral process in place that leads to AIG identifications at all grade levels. The goal for the JCPS screening and referral process is to identify gifted students in our schools. The screening process is used to ensure that under-represented populations are evaluated without bias. All JCPS students will be screened in the spring of their third grade year. To provide equity in the screening process students who do not have third grade screening scores will be screened in seventh grade. Students who achieve at least the minimum screening score will be referred to the Needs Determination Team and all items identified in Practice B will be evaluated for placement and service. The referral process is different from the screening process as it allows staff, parents, and students to request evaluation for AIG identification when a student exhibits signs of giftedness. Through the referral process the student will be administered an off-grade level abilities assessment and the Needs Determination Team will use this assessment and other criteria from Practice B to determine if the student should be identified. Students in kindergarten through twelfth grade are eligible for the referral process and may be referred during the fall and spring off-grade level windows.

AIG specialists at each school have access to a digital AIG reference manual that includes a flowchart of the AIG referral process, needs determination forms, observation checklist, parent permission for testing, portfolio rubrics and other referral information. The flowchart and needs determination forms are used to ensure the identification process is followed to fidelity. Both qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analyzed by the Needs Determination Team. NNAT 3 and COGAT scores are routinely used for screening and off-grade level assessments. Behavior checklists, observations tools, and portfolios are also used when more information is needed for the Needs Determination Team beyond quantitative measures.

AIG specialists and school administration inform school staff about the procedures for screening, referring, and identifying students who are gifted in their classrooms. Third grade students and their families receive a letter in their home language and a brochure outlining the Jackson County Public Schools AIG program of service (including the identification process) before the screening.

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: Giftedness is the manifestation of ability to learn well beyond the expected level of one's age mates. It can be discovered through outstanding student performance, high test scores, and/or through observation. These abilities are sometimes muted in students by unfavorable

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environmental circumstances and need to be actively sought. Jackson County Public Schools' personnel is committed to seeking AIG students from all student populations.

Indicators for placement are: Student Achievement, Student Interest, Student Motivation to Learn, Student Aptitude, Student Performance, and Observable Student Behaviors.

AIG identification in Jackson County Public Schools will be based on evidence of the multiple indicators seen above. Placement on the AIG headcount for AM (Academically Gifted in Math), AR (Academically Gifted in Reading), or AG (Academically Gifted) will occur when at least four of the six indicators are present (with AM corresponding with scores in Math, AR corresponding with scores in Reading, and AG or AIG corresponding with scores in both Math and Reading). Of those four, two must be quantitative, either student achievement, student aptitude, or student performance.

Placement on the AIG headcount for IG (Intellectually Gifted) will occur when a student scores in the 90th percentile or greater for student aptitude but does not meet any of the other quantitative indicators. The AIG Needs Determination Team will meet twice per year (fall window- October, spring window (April/May) to consider the following student information:

Student Achievement – Indicators of a student's knowledge may be shown through a standardized test score, such as an End-of-Grade/End-of-Course test score. Achievement may also be reflected by other criterion-referenced tests, such as K-3 reading and math screening assessments. Achievement of 93% or higher will be obtained.

Student Interest – Indicators of a student's focus areas and/or curiosity may be shown through a formal interest inventory/survey, an informal interview, or documentation of a student's particular passion. Interest may also be demonstrated through student's participation in extra-curricular activities.

Student Motivation to Learn – Indicators of a student's commitment to pursue learning experiences may be shown through school and/or outside of school activities. With some students this may be negated by unfavorable environmental or experiential circumstances. The Needs Determination Team must consider that some students, particularly from under-represented populations, may not readily show evidence of motivation to learn comparable to other gifted students. For these students, an individual case study may be important to reflect the student's specific areas of need.

Student Aptitude – Indicators of a student's capacity for learning involve reasoning, problem solving, memory, etc. Aptitude may be shown through an IQ score or demonstrated abilities. The Naglieri Non-verbal Ability Test version 3 (NNAT 3) will be used as a screening tool and will be administered to all students in third grade, with the exception of students being evaluated on the North Carolina extended standards. Students who do not have a NNAT 3 score from third grade and are not currently identified will be screened using the NNAT 3 in seventh grade. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) will be administered to students testing off-grade level who have previously taken the NNAT. Scores from a Woodcock Johnson administered by a licensed psychologist (either a school psychologist as part of a student evaluation for the Exceptional Children's Program or an outside provider) may be used and must be provided directly from the licensed evaluator to the AIG Coordinator. Other nationally normed IQ assessments may be approved by the AIG coordinator. Student aptitude scores of 90% or higher will be obtained.

*Students who are accepted for early entry to kindergarten using the standards set forth in the State Board Policy: Standards for Early Admission to Kindergarten shall be identified as AIG at entry to kindergarten.

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Student Performance – Indicators of a student's demonstrated mastery may be shown through work samples, portfolios, and grades. In some cases, performance may be demonstrated outside the school arena. Student performance will obtain 93% proficiency and student work samples and/or portfolio entries will be evaluated using a rubric and determined to be exemplary.

Observation of Student – Indicators of student's needs for differentiation, based on his/her observable behavior may be shown through the student's abilities using the characteristics recommended by Renzulli in the following areas:

- Communication – Highly expressive and effective use of words, numbers and symbols
- Motivation – Evidence of desire to learn
- Humor – Conveys and picks up on humor
- Inquiry – Questions, experiments, explores
- Insight – Quickly grasps new concepts and makes connections, senses deeper meaning
- Interests – Intense (sometimes unusual) interests
- Problem-Solving – Effective, often inventive, strategies for recognizing and solving problems
- Memory - Large storehouse of information on school or non-school topics
- Reasoning - Logical approaches to figuring out solutions
- Imagination/Creativity - Produces many ideas, highly original

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: Jackson County Public Schools continue to use a non-verbal test to allow for under-represented populations to be represented in the screening and referral pool. Based on the use of culturally-fair non-verbal screening and referral assessments, stakeholders identify the need to improve communication to regular education teachers about signs of giftedness and talent development strategies to ensure under-represented populations are not overlooked outside of the initial screening process. Continued communication between the AIG department and the Exceptional Children's Department and the English Language Learner's Department is also necessary to reach these students. The AIG Coordinator compares AIG sub-group data to district level data twice annually after the fall and spring NCDPI AIG Headcount submission. Based on historical data from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years the subgroups of Economically Disadvantaged, Hispanic, and American Indian are currently underrepresented in Jackson County Public Schools. Based on Fall 2018 data: 49% of JCPS students qualified for free or reduced meals (including 1.6 multiplier of community eligibility data for schools where all students receive free and reduced meals as CEP schools) and only 37% of AIG identified JCPS students qualified for free or reduced meals; 14% of JCPS students were identified as Hispanic, while only 4 % of AIG identified students were Hispanic; finally, 7% of JCPS students were identified as American Indian, while only 3% of AIG identified students were American Indian.

Under-represented Populations in the Student Search/Nomination: Initial Screening

A. General Information

1. The 'student search phase' of the placement process includes all activities designed to screen the general student population in order to determine which students may require further assessment for placement in the AIG program.
2. Particular attention during this process will be given to potentially gifted students from culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged populations, including assessments given in the language in which the student is most fluent (when allowable) and the use of non-verbal assessments.
3. Information collected at the final stage will lead either to a referral and additional assessment, or to a decision that the student currently does not require differentiated services. This process will establish a pool of highly able students in Jackson County.
 - a. If the student is referred, parents will be notified by the school-based AIG Needs Determination Team that further assessment is necessary. Parent consent will be required for testing.
 - b. If the AIG needs determination team finds that the student does not require differentiated services, documentation will be placed in the student file. This will alert future teachers that the learner has shown some indication of potential giftedness and deserves to be monitored to determine if the process should begin again.

B. Recognizing Giftedness in Under-Represented Populations

1. AIG specialist and school based administrators will provide training for teachers of characteristics of giftedness including those that are often considered not to be "teacher pleasing".
2. AIG specialist and school based administrators will provide training for teachers regarding cultural diversity and the impact on students' educational performance.

The district leadership team may consider local school norming for screening assessments for third grade students if the school identification drops below 4% of the total student population of a single school.

Practice D

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

District Response: AIG specialists have been provided training on screening, referral and identification processes and provided digital access to reference notebooks for use.

The responsibility of the school-based AIG Needs Determination Team in the Identification and Placement process is to:

1. Collect data from:
 - a. Tests and other sources of measurable performance (e.g., grades)
 - b. Nominations and supporting materials from teachers, students, and parents
 - c. Observations of student performance
2. Make an initial decision regarding which students need further review or referral for possible placement.
3. Notify parents in writing if the team decides to refer the student for possible services or when further review is necessary.
4. Make recommendations and suggest program options for appropriate placement (math, reading, or both).
5. Keep appropriate records of decisions regarding all students nominated for review, referral, and

placement by the team (for both students who are identified or not identified at that time)

A copy of the Jackson County Public Schools Individual Student Needs Determination Record for AIG and a copy of the current schools year's Differentiated Education Plan (if student has been identified) shall be placed in the student's cumulative record for easy access for school transfers. School AIG specialists will transfer student AIG folders within one month of a student transfer within district.

A random sampling of new AIG placement folders are reviewed for consistency by the AIG Coordinator each year.

AIG specialists at each school will provide training to general education teachers about the screening, referral, and identification process to ensure consistency across the district.

The Jackson County Public Schools Flowchart of the AIG Referral Process will be made available to all staff.

The AIG Coordinator attends the JCPS Central Office Leadership Team meetings and the District Level Leadership meetings attended by directors and principals. AIG updates and statistics are provided to both groups.

Practice E

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

District Response: AIG specialists and school administration inform school staff about the procedures for screening, referring, and identifying students who are gifted in their classrooms. Third grade students and their families receive a letter in their home language and a brochure outlining the Jackson County Public Schools AIG program of service (including the identification process) before the screening.

Printed copies of brochures that outline the JCPS gifted program identification, service, and supports are available to parents, faculty, staff, and the community at any time. The brochure is also available on the JCPS AIG website.

Information about the identification process can also be found on the Jackson County Public Schools AIG Webpage by the community-at-large.

JCPS AIG Advisory Board meetings are open to all stakeholders and are publicly advertised.

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: Individual student folders maintained at each school document the review by the Needs Determination Team and if identification occurs. All documentation materials should remain in the students AIG folder regardless of identification for future reference.

1. Each student folder must contain data from:

- a. Student aptitude- AIG Screening results (NNAT, CoGAT, or other approved assessment)
- b. Student achievement- EOG/EOC percentiles, K-3 math and reading screening percentiles

- c. Student performance- semester or year final grades, portfolio rubric scores, etc.
2. Each student folder must contain these items when data from the above quantitative measures do not provide enough information about student identification:
 - a. Nominations and supporting materials from teachers, students, and parents
 - b. Observations of student performance
3. The JCPS Individual Needs Determination Record should be completed using data from sections 1 and 2.
4. Families are requested to attend a Needs Determination Meeting during which all student data, interests, and strengths are discussed. The Needs Determination Team, including the parent(s) of the student will determine if identification is appropriate and discuss service options. All participants should sign the Identification Determination Record and this document should be placed in the student AIG file.
5. A copy of the JCPS Individual Needs Determination Record and Identification Determination Record will be shared with families.
6. Keep appropriate records of decisions regarding all students nominated for review, referral, and placement by the team.

An additional copy of the Jackson County Public Schools Individual Student Needs Determination Record for AIG from initial identification and a copy of the current schools year's Differentiated Education Plan (if student has been identified) shall be placed in the student's cumulative record for easy access for school transfers. School AIG specialists will transfer student AIG folders within one month of a student transfer within district.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: To improve the identification process for Jackson County Public Schools students the AIG advisory board recommends:

- Developing better communications methods (additional information on AIG website, updated brochures)
- Providing professional development to AIG specialist, classroom teachers, administrators, and families
- Improving communication opportunities between AIG, Exceptional Childrens, Limited English Proficiency, and Intervention staff
- Improving procedures for transfer student identification and placement records

Sources of Evidence: •JCPS AIG Digital Reference Manual

- JCPS AIG brochure and cover letter sent to all students being screened and available as needed
- JCPS student folders containing identification information and AIG records
- JCPS AIG website
- Semi-Annual Data review of identification statistics

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: All AIG specialists have AIG licensure or are completing course work to obtain licensure and are trained in meeting the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners. Local professional development on these skills is available to general education teachers.

AIG services, including differentiation, will be delivered across all grade levels and settings by all staff through the JCPS MTSS model which includes differentiated core curriculum for all students. Additional supports for differentiation in the classroom include on-going training of all teachers in research-based system initiatives such as Reading Research to Classroom Practice (RRtCP) and Foundations of Math (FOM) that incorporate differentiation into all classrooms, and on-going training of teachers in Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Differentiation will be monitored using the Teacher Evaluation Instrument provided by the North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System to document differentiation occurring in the classroom.

Content Differentiation

Four ways to differentiate content are described by Gallagher in Teaching the Gifted Child (1994) which can be used along with enrichment opportunities. Content differentiation and enrichment opportunities aligned to the student's identification area, current grade level, and social and emotional needs are decided upon by the teacher providing differentiation and the AIG Specialist. Differentiation should be aligned to the student's identification area (AM, AR, AG, AIG, IG) and documented using the district Differentiated Education Plan. AIG specialists consult and coach regular education teachers who deliver the differentiation strategies identified below.

Content Acceleration- advanced materials that match the student's level of performance regardless of their grade placement.

Examples:

K-3:

Differentiated Units

Curriculum Compacting

Computer-Based Instruction

Learning Contracts

Advanced Classroom Placement Singular Subject

Advanced Classroom Placement Multiple Subjects

Cross-Age Grouping

4-8:

Advanced Math- Grade(s) above
Advanced Language Arts- Grade(s) above
Credit By Demonstrated Mastery
Online Courses- using Edgenuity or NCVPS

9-13:

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
NC School of Math and Science Online Courses
Career and College Promise Coursework- with Southwestern Community College
Dual Enrollment Coursework- with Western Carolina University
Early Graduation/Early Admission

Content Enrichment- a variety of materials or resources that elaborate upon the basic concepts taught in the regular program.

Examples:

K-3:

Advanced Math
Advanced Language Arts

4-8:

Advanced Math
Advanced Language Arts
Advanced Science/Social Studies

9-13:

Honors/AP/College Level Math
Honors/AP/College Level Language Arts
Honors/AP/College Level Science
Honors/AP/College Level Social Studies
Honors/AP/College Level Electives including Arts, Languages, etc.
Advanced Career and Technical Education Courses

Content Sophistication- providing more complex materials that allows students to see the larger system of ideas and concepts related to the basic content.

Examples:

K-3

Differentiated Units
Computer –Based Instruction
Learning Contracts
Thematic Units
Learning Centers
Student Choice
Individualized Units
Tiered Assignments
Standards-Based Grading

4-8

Resource
Differentiated Units

Computer –Based Instruction
Learning Contracts
Thematic Units
Learning Centers
Student Choice
Individualized Units
Tiered Assignments
Standards-Based Grading

9-12
Honors Level Courses
Advanced Placement Courses
College Courses

Content Novelty- introduce completely different materials not necessarily provided in the regular curriculum to students.

Examples:
K-3
Project Based Learning
Individualized Units
Learning Centers
Centers

4-8
Resource
Project Based Learning
Competitions
Extracurricular/Club

9-12
Project Based Learning
Internships
Mentorships
Seminars
Special Electives
Work Study
Competitions
Extracurricular/Club
Field Trips
College Visit

The Needs Determination Team at each school, which includes at least one general education teacher and the AIG specialist, decides upon specific ways the teacher/specialist delivers differentiated content and at what frequency. All of these methods are effective in both

heterogeneous and homogeneous classes.

Enrichment

Stimulating interests and developing potential in all students at all levels is vital. Many students have highly developed interests that need appropriate outlets for expression.

Elementary and middle school levels, regular education classes and AIG specialists are encouraged to promote interest development through methods such as classroom centers, special activities, project-based learning, special mini-courses, and enrichment clusters. AIG specialists and general education teachers work together to provide information about special activities such as Rocket to Creativity summer camp, as well as Novel Inventions units both provided by our local collaboration with Western Carolina University.

At the secondary level, interests and talents addressed in special elective courses and opportunities for independent investigation on a topic of interest through seminars, mentoring and internships provide enrichment.

AIG students are also encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities such as Battle of the Books, Science Olympiad, Robotics, etc.

Support Services Social/Emotional Guidance and Counseling

Jackson County Public Schools recognizes that often AIG students have unique social and/or emotional needs that affect their learning. In an effort to meet the diverse needs of all AIG students, including those with different social-emotional levels, learning styles, and those who may be at risk, the system follows a team-based problem-solving model to identify and develop a plan to support social and emotional needs. A school level team of teachers, specialists and support staff can identify and support social and emotional wellness using the BASC-3 social-emotional screener and collecting teacher observation data as well as self-reporting behaviors. This plan includes increased communication between the AIG Specialists and content area teachers, as well as counselors and parents. It is a goal for JCPS to educate the majority of school faculty members in Youth Mental Health First Aid as well as Resiliency Training to allow for easier identification of social and emotional needs. JCPS, in collaboration with Meridian Behavioral Health Services, can support students beyond the classroom.

At the elementary/middle school level, content area teachers, principals, and support staff work with AIG Specialists to support students through nurturing programs, resource, additional guidance/counseling screening and support, and the multi-tier systems of supports (MTSS) process. At the secondary level, individual post-secondary and career planning becomes essential through opportunities for academic planning, career guidance and college preparation. Workforce development teachers and vocational counselors are involved in working with AIG students regarding the development of their four-year plans as these students select their career pathways, are provided career/college planning sessions, and access to college visits.

Practice B

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

District Response: All AIG specialists have their AIG licensure. Future hires must be licensed or completing coursework to obtain licensure. All AIG specialists attend professional development focused on meeting the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners. DEPs

are developed to address program placement aligned with needs and identified areas of placement at all grade levels and are current and on file.

The Jackson County Board of Education is committed to meeting the needs of all students. AIG funding is utilized to fund at least a half-time AIG specialist at each elementary school, and to fund AIG licensed specialists at the high schools.

Grades K-3: Students receive consultative collaboration. All teachers who teach gifted students will use differentiated instruction to accommodate the strengths and needs of students identified as AIG, AR or AM. Each AIG specialist will provide general classroom teachers with differentiation strategies and explain/support methods of content differentiation. Classroom teachers will use multiple assessments and evaluation tools, such as K-3 normed reading and math screeners for monitoring student understanding and achievement in areas of math and reading. It is the school's responsibility to provide any alternative assessments to meet these requirements. Students identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG) will receive differentiated support in an effort to support their intellectual ability through immersion and targeted intervention using the multi-tiered systems of support.

Grades 4-8: All teachers who teach gifted students will use differentiated instruction to accommodate the strengths and needs of students identified as AIG. Each AIG specialist will provide general classroom teachers with differentiation strategies. AIG specialists will use multiple assessments and evaluation tools for monitoring student understanding and achievement. It is the school's responsibility to provide alternative assessments to meet these requirements. Resource (pull-out) programs at the elementary/middle level serve students based on the content area license of the AIG specialist. Currently, students are primarily served for AIG pull-out services in the area of English Language Arts. General education teachers provide differentiation in math. Students identified as Academically Gifted in Math (AM), benefit from advanced math classes. Additionally, some AIG specialist provide enrichment to all AIG students weekly in any area of their identification. Students identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG) will receive differentiated support in organization and application to academics.

Grades 9-12: Students are provided scheduling and career counseling twice a year. The AIG specialist attends as a support to determine appropriate placement into classes that meet the student's identification, future goals, and social and emotional development. Classroom teachers who teach gifted students will work with the AIG specialist to develop a plan to differentiate in the classroom based on the student's identification. Classroom teachers will use differentiated instruction to accommodate the strengths and needs of students identified as AIG. Each AIG specialist will provide general classroom teachers with differentiation strategies.

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: Identified AIG students should be grouped intentionally based upon their identification area, i.e. AG, AM, AR, IG, in elementary schools, served in their area of giftedness, and provided opportunities to work collaboratively with peers sharing their identification. Students grouped in intentional and flexible groupings in regular classrooms and AIG classrooms based upon readiness, interest, and/or learner profiles, allows for facilitation of effective instruction where students engage with peers and grow academically. Flexible groupings in K-6 allow students to move from one reading group to another or from one math grouping to another depending on interest, engagement and readiness. When school size allows cluster grouping should be used in grades 5-8 to encourage

teacher differentiation and peer collaboration with similarly identified students. Students in grades 9-12 and their families are actively engaged in their registration process and are able to self-select classes that allow for flexibility and increased rigor based on their preferences.

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 Jackson County Public Schools AIG Advisory Board includes AIG specialists, teachers, parents, community members, and the AIG coordinator. The Advisory Board participates in the review, evaluation, and development of the local AIG Plan. A review of plan development is shared with the public via emailed invitations and information on the district webpage. The plan is posted on the district website. Parent and community members who participate on the AIG Advisory Board are asked to share questions, recommendations for changes, and updated procedures with other parents and community members to elicit feedback beyond the participant group.

Each school has an AIG Needs Determination Team (AIG NDT) that meets to make determinations concerning student identification in the AIG program and provide input into the annual DEPs at each school. Each AIG Specialist provides the AIG NDT with information concerning identification procedures and criteria to facilitate the most informed decisions.

The AIG Coordinator participates in all professional development planning for the system. This ensures the integration of AIG program standards in all curriculum and PD. Additionally, the AIG Coordinator brings updates for procedures to school administrators at monthly District Leadership Team Meetings, and meets at least quarterly with AIG Specialist to provide updates and discuss program growth and improvements.

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: AIG specialists meet annually with the faculties of their schools to inform them of screening, identification, and placement procedures for the AIG program. General education teachers participate in the development of the DEPs for the students they serve. Four of the five JCPS elementary schools are K-8 schools and thus the same AIG specialist manages services from identification through 8th grade. AIG specialists at the elementary and high level meet with eighth grade students to help develop high school schedules and discuss the AIG program at the high school level. Additionally, these eighth grade students participate in freshman orientation and school visitation. The fifth JCPS elementary school, Blue Ridge School, is a K-6 school that is a shared campus with Blue Ridge Early College, a virtual Early College serving students in grades 7-13. Due to the shared campus and small size of each school many teachers are shared across both schools, including the AIG specialist and school counselor. This ensures that the transition from year to year for AIG students is very smooth at this location.

The AIG Coordinator facilitates quarterly AIG district level meetings for AIG Specialists to allow for

discussion about service and opportunities between schools.

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: Each school has an AIG Needs Determination Team (AIG NDT) that meets to make determinations concerning student placement in the AIG program and provide input into the annual DEPs at each school. The AIG NDT can include AIG specialist, a school administrator, general education teachers, school counselors and any additional school personnel working directly with the student such as EL, special education or other program specific teachers. The school counselor is especially important to help address the social and emotional needs of AIG students and should be included in DEP meetings as frequently as possible. The annual review of the DEP is the best opportunity to review the social and emotional well-being of a student over time from a variety of adults who interact with the student.

Jackson County Public Schools has a clearly outlined plan for meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners throughout the school year allowing for referrals from school personnel, parents, or students themselves at any time. When concerns arise that a student may be at risk socially and/or emotionally, regardless of academic performance, the person recognizing the risk should first reach out to the school counselor. (Except when school safety is a concern, during which time, the person recognizing the risk should immediately report the concern to school administration and/or school resources officers.) When appropriate, the school counselor should then share concerns with the AIG specialist, classroom teachers, parents, extra-curricular coaches and other pertinent adults in the student's life.

Social/Emotional Guidance and Counseling

Jackson County Public Schools is cognizant of and supports the affective domain of gifted students. Students provided with emotional balance and coping mechanism support become successful in reaching personal potential. The school utilizes the services of the Student Support Services personnel in this endeavor. All JCPS teachers are encouraged to refer underachieving gifted students for counseling services. All AIG specialists, as well as the AIG coordinator, endeavor to pay special heed to the social-emotional needs of their students. When concerns are noticed the student should be referred.

The system recognizes that often AIG students have unique social and/or emotional needs that affect their learning. In an effort to meet the diverse needs of all AIG students, including those with different social-emotional levels, learning styles, and those who may be at risk, the system has established a plan to recognize and nurture the unique social-emotional needs of gifted learners. This plan includes AIG specialist including information about social-emotional concerns in their annual updates to staff (self-pressure for perfection, poor social skills, etc). The plan also includes increased communication between the AIG specialists and content area teachers, as well as school counselors, school social workers and other school personnel. Additionally, students may be referred to a contracted behavioral and mental health provider that the district partners with for increased supports. A variety of services are available throughout the district to address emotional needs, career planning, and interventions for students who may be at risk.

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: Compacted Content

Compacted content should be used as a differentiation strategy for students who show mastery of certain standards and/or skills on pre-test assessments. These students should be provided accelerated standards for a particular domain or strand of a subject which they show evidence to already be proficient at. Enrichment and acceleration of standards is appropriate in lieu of "more work" because a student is already proficient at a standard.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery is offered to all students in grades 8-12. Students may request the opportunity to show proficiency for a course and earn credit for a course through participation in the North Carolina Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) program. Interested students must contact their school counselor, AIG specialist or CDM Coordinator to apply for Phase I of the CDM process in any of the three windows: fall, spring, and summer.

Subject Acceleration

Highly gifted students may be considered for subject acceleration for a single subject without grade acceleration when determined appropriate by the student's DEP team. This provides opportunities for advanced learning without removal from the students peer group for the entire day. Thus, avoiding social and emotional concerns that may occur with full grade acceleration.

Grade Acceleration/Double Promotion

Highly gifted students may be considered for grade skipping/grade acceleration/double promotion. Only those students who score at the 98 or 99 percentile on both achievement and aptitude tests will be considered for this learning environment option. Such students are typically performing two grade levels above their same age peers and may be better served in an educational setting that is developmentally more appropriate. These students will be considered for grade acceleration only after exhibiting a desire to be so accelerated. In addition, a team of professionals will be assembled to complete the Iowa Acceleration Scale to determine the appropriateness of acceleration and make planning decisions. The members of the team will include, but not be limited to: principal, parents, current teacher, potential receiving teacher, AIG Coordinator, school counselor, etc. All other service delivery options must have been considered before this learning option is available.

Jackson County Schools will follow state board policy for early entry to Kindergarten.

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: AIG specialists will continue to be trained in recognizing giftedness and providing services to under-represented populations in ways that best meet their needs. AIG subgroup data

and district-wide subgroup data is analyzed and discussed to encourage equitable access for all under-represented populations. AIG specialists will collaborate with regular education teachers to recognize signs of giftedness that may appear differently in under-represented populations and coach regular education teachers of the use of talent development strategies to increase student proficiency for under-represented populations.

The AIG Coordinator and AIG specialists will continue to collaborate with JCPS ESL teachers, EC teachers, and other program specific specialists to build a broader profile of potentially gifted students from under-represented populations and again share talent development strategies that can be combined with specific program goals to increase student proficiency.

Practice I

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

District Response: Extra-curricular programs are encouraged and broadly disseminated through school newsletters, the Jackson County Public Schools Website and social media. The AIG Coordinator pursues grants to assist with extra-curricular club expenses when possible. AIG specialists in schools encourage students to participate in extra-curricular programs and events.

Examples of Enrichment Options*

K-3:

Accelerated Reader
Art Club
Lego Club

4-8:

Accelerated Reader
Art Club
Battle of the Books
Chess Club
Debate Club
Drama Club
Duke University Motivation for Academic Performance (MAP) Program
Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP)
Essay Contests
History Day
Math Counts
Robotics
Science Fair Competitions
Science Olympiad
STEM-E Clubs
Summer Programs for Gifted Students

9-13:

Art Club

Debate Club
Drama Club
Essay Contests
Foreign Language Club
Governor's School
History Day
National Youth Leadership Conferences
NC Legislature Page Program
Orchestra
Quiz Bowl
Robotics
Science Fair Competitions
Science Olympiad
Seminars
Summer Programs for Gifted Students
Tarheel Junior Historians
University Workshops
*Options may vary from year to year and by school

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: • Continue to work toward equitable services at each school and shared resources.

- Develop Talent Development strategies for classroom and AIG specialist to use that support under-represented populations.
- Continue to work to align gifted curriculum resources with LEA instructional programs.
- Develop an AIG Quick Guide for teachers, administrators, and families.
- Continue to provide teachers with differentiation strategies.

Sources of Evidence: •DEPs/IDEPs

- Program descriptions
- Lesson plans
- Meeting agendas and sign-in sheets
- Website postings
- Survey data
- Evidence of accelerations
- JCPS CDM website

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: The JCPS Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and the district strategic plan supports the NC Standard Course of Study and expects students to receive instruction in a strong differentiated core curriculum. The NC Educator Evaluation System requires all teachers to differentiate for all students.

All students identified as AIG will experience curricula that build upon and extend beyond the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS). Enrichment, extension, and acceleration of the NCSCOS are adapted through rigor in the classroom through teachers reviewing student data and standards mastery to meet students' needs. The AIG program will provide students with opportunities to study curricula in greater depth and at a quicker pace than covered by the NCSCOS and to explore areas of interest beyond the NCSCOS.

Enrichment and Extension:

Every student identified as AIG will be engaged in many opportunities for enrichment and extension including, but not limited to:

- Broadening classroom studies through self-selected activities
- Studying in areas of personal interest
- Creating individual project-based learning opportunities to allow for personal in-depth study
- Engaging in civic responsibility lessons and activities
- Study groups, group presentations, and collaborative projects
- Project Based Learning
- Honors, Advanced Placement, and Career and College Promise courses
- Participating in various extra-curricular activities such as robotics, Science Olympiad, and Battle of the Books.

Acceleration:

Highly gifted students may be considered for subject acceleration for a single subject without grade acceleration when determined appropriate by the student's DEP team. Highly gifted students may be considered for grade skipping/grade acceleration/double promotion. Students may also request Credit by Demonstrated Mastery to accelerate their course opportunities. See Standard 2, Practice G for additional information.

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: Current district instructional initiatives including Reading Research to Classroom Practice and Foundations of Math aligned with the JCPS MTSS goal of a strong differentiated core curriculum for all students sets the expectations of instructional practices to meet the needs of gifted learners both in the AIG classroom and the regular education classroom. All teachers who teach gifted students will use differentiated instruction to accommodate the strengths and needs of students identified as AIG. Each AIG specialist will annually provide professional development to general classroom teachers on effective differentiation strategies. AIG specialists will use multiple assessments and evaluation tools for monitoring student understanding and achievement. Jackson County Public Schools board policy states that all teachers should have an average of five hours weekly allotted planning time. In adherence to this policy, school administration is responsible for ensuring that planning time is provided to AIG specialist during the regular school day (JCPS Board Policy 3120). It is also the school administration's responsibility to ensure that there is development of differentiated curricula and programs.

Differentiated Curriculum Strategies:

All students who are identified as AIG will experience curricula that build upon and extend beyond the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS). The AIG program will provide students with opportunities to study curricula in greater depth and at a quicker pace than covered by the NCSCOS and to explore areas of interest beyond the NCSCOS. Every student identified as AIG will be engaged in many opportunities for extension including, but not limited to:

- Personalized blended learning for all students through the JCPS 1:1 initiative.
- Broadening classroom studies through self-selected activities
- Studying in areas of personal interest
- Creating individual learning opportunities to allow for personal in-depth study

Differentiated Enrichment Strategies:

In addition, gifted students will be encouraged to participate in enrichment options or extra-curricular activities such as:

- Mentoring programs connecting students with experts in the community in areas of student interest
- Online opportunities – facilitating student access to online study
- Allowing opportunities for students to engage in organized academic teams such as Lego Robotics, Battle of the Books, and Science Olympiad.
- Pull-out students grouped with able peers

Differentiated Assessment Strategies:

Learners will also be engaged in various classroom assessments through choice of projects, products, writing, etc. that demonstrate student mastery of content. Student work samples can be used to facilitate this assessment.

Differentiated Environmental Strategies:

In all classrooms in all grades grouping may be used to meet individual instructional needs. Such grouping can be flexible; for example, within/between/among individual classrooms or teams. Students may be placed in a group based on their ability, performance, interests, and/or needs. Such

flexibility allows students to be moved in and out of groups based on needs and performance.
Supporting Differentiation in JCPS classrooms

- JCPS will continue to provide district-wide professional development to all teachers on differentiation strategies. JCPS is exploring the development of a CANVAS course including highly effective differentiation strategies.
- JCPS will continue to partner with WRESA and the FRIDAY institute to provide training to staff about differentiation and personalized learning opportunities in 1:1 computer environments for students in grades 7-13 and in digitally rich environments for grades K-6
- Use of teacher evaluation instrument and Professional Growth Plans to document differentiation in the classroom
- Differentiation strategies documented during teacher observations
- Allocation of funding for AIG specialist to continue to grow their practice through local, state, and national conferences
- Individual student DEPs

Practice C

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

District Response: The AIG Coordinator also serves as the Director of Elementary Education and Title I and the Textbook Coordinator. In this combined roll the AIG Coordinator evaluates curriculum program choices to ensure that they have appropriate resources for differentiating curriculum to advanced levels. Supplemental resources should be aligned to core resources for consistency and to ensure NCSCOS goals and objectives are met. The majority of augmented curriculum and instruction for JCPS advanced learners comes through personalized learning, blended learning, and project based learning focused around compacted standards and student interest.

A system-wide list of research-based supplemental resources to augment curriculum and instruction is available. AIG specialists and the AIG Coordinator will continue to work to identify resources currently available in schools and identify when additional resources may be needed. Additionally, the AIG Coordinator has a collection of professional development materials addressing the needs of AIG students and how to meet those needs available for check-out.

Practice D

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

District Response: Through district level leadership and a partnership between the local county government and the GoldenLEAF foundation all students in JCPS schools in grades 7-13 have access to 1:1 devices which may be used both at home and at school. JCPS recognizes the importance of professional development in the shift to blended learning in a 1:1 environment and has prioritized funding to contracts with the FRIDAY institute, employment of two instructional technology facilitators and development of local teacher leaders as experts in the fields to implementing 21st century content and skills into the classroom. The JCPS 1:1 initiative has not be focused on devices, but is focused on moving the classroom to a 21st century model where critical thinking,

communication, creativity, leadership, and future-ready skills are important.

AIG Specialists are included in all professional development opportunities and model 21st century skills in their instruction. AIG specialists design activities to foster students' collaborative and critical thinking skills as well as incorporate a variety of technologies into units and lessons for students in all grades (even those who are not part of the 1:1 initiative). Additionally, students have the opportunity to participate in Science Olympiad, Battle of the Books, Science Fair, community service involvement and other extra-curricular activities.

Practice E

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

District Response: All teachers participate in data literacy training as part of school professional learning communities (PLCs) to become proficient in using data to inform instruction and provide differentiation. The district's Director of Testing and Accountability works with schools teams and departments to analyze data and provide data in a format that is easy to understand and manipulate for differentiation. The Director of Testing and Accountability also maintains a district assessment calendar to aid and notify in the collection of assessment data and to analyze performance. Teachers use results as feedback and monitor results to determine effectiveness of content, instruction, and differentiation. All teachers are encouraged to study growth and proficiency of students and discuss with support staff. Assessment tools also allow for clarity in relating performance levels to expectations. Principals and school leadership teams use results from multiple data sources to establish classroom lists and promote flexible grouping when feasible.

The district has access to:

State testing results- EOG, EOC, NC Final Exams, CTE Post Assessments, ACT, ACT WorkKeys, Read-to-Achieve, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, CDM, AP Assessments

Summative and formative classroom assessment- teacher made and curriculum aligned

Self-assessments and rubrics for student use

Benchmarking data: mClass reading assessments, iReady Math Screener, NC Check-Ins, teacher created benchmarks for high school coursework, BASC-3 BESS Behavioral and Emotional Screening System

Practice F

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

District Response: Jackson County Schools recognizes that often AIG students have unique social and/or emotional needs that affect their learning. In an effort to meet the diverse needs of all AIG students, including those with different social-emotional levels, learning styles, and those who may be at risk, the system has established a plan to recognize and nurture the unique socio-emotional needs

of gifted learners. This plan includes increased communication between the AIG Specialists and content area teachers, as well as guidance counselors and other school personnel. A variety of services are available throughout the district to all JCPS students to address emotional needs, career planning, and interventions for students who may be at risk for academic achievement. The district has prioritized student safety and social-emotional well-being through the addition of two district behavior specialists and 6 various student support specialist roles (mostly counselors and social workers) to lower the student to staff ratio for student support services. AIG students have access to school counselors, social workers, and Meridian Behavioral Health Services while at school.

The district MTSS team has provided district-wide training on the NCDPI MTSS modules 1 and 2 which highlight social-emotional and behavioral as an important part of the MTSS process. The district now uses Educator's Handbook to document behavioral concerns and uses the BASC 3-BESS Behavioral and Emotional Screener. Many JCPS classroom teachers, including numerous AIG specialists, have already participated in the Youth Mental Health First Aid training, and more will attend in future years.

AIG specialists receive specific training about the social-emotional needs of gifted students through coursework, professional development, and conference attendance. They work directly with students about perseverance, study skills, appropriate social interactions and other topics that can be approached in the classroom setting. They are also trained to recognize when referral to other services is needed (school counselor or Meridian Behavioral Health Services).

At the middle school level, both individual and group counseling become critical, particularly for students experiencing identity and adjustment problems. Small group sessions with gifted students that address their unique needs have proven highly successful. As part of the transition plan for students from K-8 schools to the large comprehensive high school a mentoring program (Mustang Ambassadors) is effective in helping such students develop self-esteem, set higher aspirations, make appropriate secondary course selections, and develop career plans. Similarly, both Jackson County Early College and Blue Ridge Early College provide transition activities including school visits, more time with the school counselor, school advising and team building activities.

The NC Standard Course of Study promotes awareness of social issues such as bullying and good decision making. Fifth grade students participate in D.A.R.E. and middle grade students benefit from the partnership with the Jackson County Health Department and their Wise Guys/Smart Girls program.

At the secondary level adolescent literature materials are used in advanced coursework to meet students where they are emotionally and socially. Career exploration, extra-curricular activities, and community service projects allow for self-discovery and for students to further develop their own identify and set goals for their future. Opportunities for academic planning, career guidance and college preparation are made available for gifted learners. Career and Technical Education teachers, Career Development Coordinator, and school counselors are involved in working with AIG students regarding the development of their four year plans as these students select their career pathways and conduct career and college searches.

Practice G

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

District Response: Jackson County Public Schools is committed to talent development of students of high intellectual/academic potential in grades K-3. Students are identified for talent development

using multiple indicators, including math and reading screening results, systematic observations, portfolio assessments, work samples, and teacher interviews. Talent development is dynamic and flexible and will include students from special populations. One school is currently piloting the Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) curriculum as part of the talent development provided by the AIG specialist. The JCPS AIG Advisory Board will collect feedback about the use of this program during the 2019-2020 school year to decide if the program should be a recommended talent development curriculum for use at other schools.

Differentiation occurs in the classroom by varying content, process, product and environment and is reflected in advanced learning experiences and enrichment opportunities. As part of the district's expectation for reading instruction students should be flexibly grouped based on benchmark and progress monitoring data with advanced level readers working with rigorous text and using compacted NCSCOS standards particularly for comprehension strategies. Similarly, for math instruction students should be given opportunity to work with manipulatives, problem solving activities, and to explore a deeper level of understanding of particular math domains of interest.

Practice H

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

District Response: All teachers who teach gifted students will use differentiated instruction to accommodate the strengths and needs of students identified as AIG. Each AIG specialist will assist general classroom teachers, special education teachers, EL teachers, counselors, and others with ideas for differentiation strategies at the annual DEP meeting and throughout the year as requested. AIG specialists will use formative and summative assessments to monitor student understanding and achievement.

It is the school administration's responsibility to ensure there is development of differentiated curricula and programs. The district expects the use of PLCs in schools to best ensure the use of research-based best practice to meet all student needs. The district provides teachers with the ability of electronic sharing of lessons, units, strategies, and other resources. Many teachers are using Canvas, SchoolNet, Microsoft Office 365, and NCDPI curriculum resources

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: Each AIG specialist develops a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) for every identified student that includes the differentiated curriculum and services. Each year, AIG specialists meet with parents and students to review and revise the DEP at the beginning of the school year. Support and training will be provided to AIG specialists in developing DEPs. An AIG Digital Reference Manual has been developed to assist in the Identification and Placement processes. To ensure consistency of paperwork across the district, the AIG coordinator will spot check folders of

newly placed AIG students. DEP development is discussed at JCPS AIG district level meetings.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: Add additional curriculum links on the AIG webpage and AIG resources on regular curriculum webpages.

Sources of Evidence: •Teacher evaluations

- Student work samples
- Teacher lesson plans
- Differentiation strategies documented during teacher observation by administrators
- Schedule of professional development
- Individual student DEPs
- List of system-wide resources
- AIG professional "library" for teacher access
- Curriculum Audits
- Participation in extra-curricular activities
- Technology access for AIG students
- Sign-in sheets and agendas for PLCs
- Transition programs
- AIG student record folders

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

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

Practice A

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

District Response: The current district AIG Coordinator is licensed and collaborates with a group of licensed specialist to do the following tasks:

- Guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program, including: overseeing the screening, referral, and identification processes at the district level and ensuring documentation of student identification evidence and services provided are maintained at each school
- Providing leadership for the needs of AIG learners through participation in the JCPS Central Office Leadership Team meetings and District Leadership Team Meetings (which include school principals, directors, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent)
- Monitoring implementation of program services and staff
- Participating in professional development opportunities including regional roundtables and statewide meetings supporting the AIG program.
- Providing professional development and resources to engage AIG specialists in continued adult learning regard gifted and advanced students
- Developing partnerships with families and the community stakeholders through a variety of communication methods to support the AIG program.
- Ensure compliance with state and local regulations, policies, and procedures
- Oversee budget and materials selection
- Coordinate professional development opportunities including state and/or national conference attendance.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the local AIG program with all stakeholders

The JCPS AIG Coordinator provides leadership in the support of AIG learners by:

- Monitoring the implementation of the program, services, and staff; including reminders for AIG screening, referrals and supervision of file transfers
- Maintaining and supervising documentation of student identification evidence and services; including oversight of headcount verification and seeking additional information about identified students who transfer in from outside of the district and lack records for identification.
- Advocated for and leveraging local and federal funding opportunities for AIG specialists to attend seminars and meetings to further develop practices in support of gifted learners, to provide additional specialist to lower the specialist to student ratio, and to provide additional enrichment opportunities for AIG students.

Practice B

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

District Response: AIG specialist serve AIG students in Jackson County in many ways. They directly provide learning opportunities to AIG students that research shows promotes student success and achievement, as well as provide continual support to classroom teachers of gifted students. AIG specialists model and act as experts for differentiation strategies that are effective in the classroom. They also work with families, students, and other school staff to impact AIG students' social and emotional needs.

AIG Specialists in JCPS support gifted learners both directly and indirectly through the following activities:

- Providing curriculum and instructional services directly to AIG students by teaching pull-out classes for gifted learners, providing resource services for gifted learners, and providing consultative services where appropriate.
- Maintaining AIG certification and attending professional development to remain current of the best strategies for working with gifted learners.
- Consulting with regular teachers to provide resources that support gifted learners all day every day in the regular classroom.
- Meeting with parents to update DEP information, and both share and solicit information in an effort to support the academic, social and emotional needs of the students.
- Preparing an annual yearly progress report for each student in program and sharing with parents.
- Consulting and collaborating with counselors as students are identified so that they will be able to identify members of this special population.
- Facilitating the referral, identification and monitoring process for identifying AIG students according to the current AIG plan.
- Meeting in person and electronically with local AIG specialists for the purpose of collaboration and support.
- Attending statewide or regional conferences that strengthen instruction, curriculum, and support for gifted learners.
- Providing input in the data evaluation processes of local school PLCs.
- Providing informational sessions to teachers, parents and stakeholders on the special needs of gifted students, including intellectual, emotional and academic.
- Subscribing to a variety of electronic resources in support of gifted students. (Byrdseed Gifted, NAGC, etc.)

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: Differentiation training has been developed and offered to general education teachers based on survey results of teacher need. However, stakeholders would like to see some type of professional development requirements for secondary teachers of honors courses. It is the responsibility of the AIG specialists, administrators and guidance counselors to provide the necessary requirements for the implementation of a successful AIG program. Jackson County Public Schools, along with colleges/universities, and professional development providers such as WRESA, work together to support professional development opportunities for the gifted programs.

AIG specialist are required to maintain or be seeking AIG certification for their North Carolina teaching license through coursework and professional development (to maintain).

Differentiation professional development will continue to be offered to any interested teacher, counselor or school administrator.

AIG specialists work with their school to provide annual professional development of recognizing key characteristics of AIG students and strategies for differentiating for AIG students.

The AIG Coordinator participates in all JCPS New Employee Orientations and provides overview information about the program and sets forth the expectation of differentiation for identified students and adherence to the DEP. The AIG Coordinator also meets with new principals to outline the expectations of the AIG program, AIG specialist, regular education teachers, and others in the school building as outlined in the JCPS AIG Local Plan.

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: Stakeholders have identified the need to address more intentional placement of students with teachers who have AIG add-on licensure.

The AIG Coordinator will work with HR to identify general education teachers holding AIG add-on licensure and collaborate with principals in scheduling students with teachers holding AIG add-on licensure.

K-8 programming:

All AIG specialists in K-8 are AIG certified.

However, in most schools the AIG specialist is the only teacher in the school who is fully AIG certified. When possible based on school size AIG students should be cluster grouped to provide for more collaboration between the regular education teachers and the AIG specialist.

A Canvas course will be developed for local AIG certification for regular education teachers of gifted students to complete beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

9-13 programming:

There currently is no requirement for secondary teachers of Honors or AP classes to hold such certification. However, there are five AIG certified teachers at Smoky Mountain High School, and one at Jackson County Early College.

Teachers providing Honors and Advanced Placement level courses are asked to participate in an advanced level PLC that is cross curricular and is co-facilitated by an AIG specialist. This PLC focuses on best practices for differentiation of content and standards for Honors and AP level, providing learning opportunities that are "deeper rather than wider", and exploring standards-based grading.

Practice E

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

District Response: System-wide professional development planning ensures inclusion of intentional instruction on the needs of AIG, EC, and EL students.

Jackson County Public Schools conducts a yearly comprehensive needs assessment that encompasses many data, including demographic, geographic, survey, attendance, graduation, and disaggregated formative and summative assessments. As part of this needs assessment, individual subgroup data are analyzed for trends. The results from the comprehensive needs assessment are used to guide the development of the district improvement plan and professional development plan. All district initiatives and district provided professional development include instruction on the needs of the gifted, exceptional children, and students for whom English is a second language. Additionally, the AIG Coordinator is a member of the planning committee for the annual regional professional development event CREW. The AIG Coordinator ensures that sessions are available which focus on best practices for working with gifted and advanced learners.

Practice F

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

District Response: The AIG Coordinator will facilitate the development of district level meetings for AIG specialists.

At least four meetings per year will be scheduled at the district office for data analysis, reflection on professional practice, and planning future steps. The use of technology will allow collaboration between meetings to continue.

AIG specialist participate in PLCs at their school level. AIG specialist participate in math and/or reading PLCs for grades four through eight and are available to provide support to all grade level PLCs particularly about talent development, differentiation strategies, and social-emotional needs of gifted students.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: •More collaborative planning with classroom teachers.

- More focus on addressing social and emotional needs of students.
- Increased communication with school counselors.
- Develop local professional development requirements for honors and advanced placement teachers

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(especially in math and language arts).

- Budget for all AIG specialist who wish to attend, NCAGT or National conference when in close proximity.
- School scheduling evaluation to focus in interventions and enrichment.

Sources of Evidence: •AIG specialist job description and duties

- AIG coordinator job description and duties
- Agendas from professional development activities, including district AIG PLCs
- Professional development needs survey results
- AIG student schedules and assignments of classes

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: Provisions are made for regular parent participation in the development of the annual Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) and the Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP). AIG specialists meet annually with parents of each student enrolled in the AIG Program to discuss the DEP and/or IDEP. Each school maintains an AIG Needs Determination Team that meets as needed to review student information and make determinations concerning placement and services. The AIG Advisory Board meets annually to serve in an advisory capacity and ensure the implementation and annual review of the local AIG Plan. The district maintains an AIG website, sharing information about the AIG program with parents and the community, including, screening, referral and identification procedures, the local AIG plan, and opportunities for students. News from classrooms and student accomplishments are submitted to the local newspaper, and an AIG brochure and letter is sent home to the family of each student prior to the mass screening explaining the AIG program. Additionally, AIG specialists are active during curriculum fair activities at each school and communicate with their families throughout the entire school year. At the district level, parent sessions are offered about supporting and recognizing the needs of gifted students for parents.

Practice B

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

District Response: The district maintains an AIG website where information about the AIG program is shared with parents and the community, including, screening, referral and identification procedures, the local AIG plan, and opportunities for students. News from classrooms and student accomplishments are submitted to the local newspaper for printing. An AIG brochure and letter is sent home to the family of each student prior to screening. AIG specialists maintain email lists to send parents of currently identified students information about the AIG program at their school and district level information as needed. AIG specialist often present at parent and community meetings such as PTA committee meetings, Title I parent and family engagement activities and School Improvement Team meetings.

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 JCPS AIG Advisory Board provides opportunities for the overall involvement of school community, parents, and local community in the ongoing implementation of the local AIG plan, monitoring of meeting plan goals, and the integration of education services for gifted students. The AIG Advisory Board shall include the AIG Coordinator, other JCPS Curriculum Directors (Elementary Education, Secondary Education, CTE, EC, EL, and Testing and Accountability), district leadership (superintendent, assistant superintendent, or school board member), all AIG specialist, regular education teachers, parents, students, and community partners. The AIG Coordinator shall act as the organizer of the annual meetings and ensure that representation from all groups above are included. No specific roles will be assigned to AIG Advisory Board members and meetings will be open to any participants. The AIG Coordinator will try to ensure that a consistent group of parents and community members attend over multiple years to provide ongoing vision and understanding of progress toward goals of the JCPS AIG program. As one of the ongoing goals of the AIG Advisory Board and program is to increase identification of under-represented populations it is important to seek representatives from these subgroups to participate as parents and students. The annual review meeting may lead to amendments as needed to ensure progress is made toward the following goals: increase identification in under-represented populations, increase awareness and participation in extracurricular enrichment opportunities, continue to advocate for financial resources to improve the program quality, and continue to provide awareness of the social-emotional needs of gifted students.

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: Parents and community members are regularly informed about the education of gifted students in the school district through Jackson County Public Schools AIG brochure, AIG link on the system website, and annual meetings of the AIG Advisory Board. Translators from the EL Program and community at large are provided for meetings as needed. Written translations of information and forms are available. All JCPS schools use a call and text service to provide information about school events and opportunities for all students.

Additionally:

- Information regarding AIG opportunities can be sent to parents electronically, AIG specialists will maintain up-to-date parent email list.
- Information about enrichment opportunities provided by the school and organizations that JCPS partners with (e.g. WCU, DukeTIP, etc.) are shared via school newsletters, emails, calls, and text services

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: Jackson County Public Schools enjoys excellent working relationships with local institutions of higher education, businesses and industry, and the community-at-large. These relationships offer multiple opportunities for gifted students and their families to be involved in the learning process. JCPS has partnered with Western Carolina University to share resources. WCU offers a wide variety of resources such as teacher training opportunities, student teachers/interns, and enrichment activities and camps designed specifically for gifted students. WCU also provides opportunities for teachers to receive grants for their classrooms and guest speakers on various topics. JCPS has an articulation agreement with Southwestern Community College that provides students with advanced learning opportunities to ensure college and career preparedness. JCPS has contracted the services of Meridian Behavioral Health Services to help children with emotional and behavioral challenges to develop and maintain positive attitudes and age appropriate behavior during the school year. Jackson County Early College and Blue Ridge Early College partner with Southwestern community College to provide options for some gifted students. The Jackson County Early College is located on the campus of Southwestern Community College and Blue Ridge Early College located in Cashiers, primarily serves students in the southernmost portion of Jackson County. School counselors provide information about these programs to gifted students. Duke TIP representatives are invited annually to speak to stakeholders regarding programs and services for qualified students.

Additional partnerships include:

- North Carolina School of Science and Math provides both on campus and online access for students to participate in accelerated courses
- Harris Regional Hospital and at times other business provide internship opportunities for students.
- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians- Indian Parent Committee and partnerships both with Cherokee Central Schools for common professional development and grant work and with the Chief's office for community planning.
- Cherokee Preservation Foundation- provides an annual grant to facilitate STEM related student clubs which benefit many AIG students

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard:

- Include opportunities for camps, etc. on JCPS AIG website.
- Add information about the AIG Advisory Board to the JCPS AIG brochure.
- Continue to seek student representation on the AIG Advisory Board.

Sources of Evidence:

- AIG Parent survey results
- AIG brochure
- AIG website
- AIG Advisory Board agendas and sign-in sheets
- Emails

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: : An AIG plan is completed with input from the AIG Advisory Board and submitted to the local Board of Education for approval.

The development of the AIG Plan is a cyclical process. All improvement begin with examining current status. This is done through a needs assessment. The AIG Advisory Board examines survey data, plan review/comments from DPI, and assessment data. Using the information from the needs assessment, committees complete the Self-Assessment and determine areas of improvement or change and strategies for impacting those practices. The local board of education approves the plan and it is submitted to DPI for review. As the plan is implemented, and annual review is conducted to determine if goals are still appropriate or need to be adjusted.

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: Each year, the AIG Coordinator, AIG specialists, and other stakeholders participating in the Advisory Board, meet for the purpose of reviewing program fidelity in alignment to the approved plan. At the annual meeting, goal progress is reviewed, updated, celebrated, and modified if necessary. Updates from this review are shared with district and school leadership to commend or recommend improvement for fidelity of the implementation of the AIG program outlined in the AIG plan.

Every three years, the AIG plan/program as a whole is evaluated and necessary revisions to the plan [this document] are made. The revisions are then submitted to the Board of Education for approval, after which the revised plan is forwarded to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for further review and response if necessary.

Stakeholders can find the approved plan on the JCPS AIG website.

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: In order to maximize student services, the local board is committed to ensure at

least a half –time AIG specialist at each school. All AIG state funds are used only for AIG staffing and programming needs. The majority of state AIG funds are used for salaries and benefits. Local and federal money is also used to supplement as needed.

Jackson County Public Schools serve a total population of 3,636* students, of which 363* are currently identified and served as Academically and Intellectually Gifted. The allotment the Board of Education receives for PRC 034 is used to pay the salary and related benefits of 2.62 AIG specialists, reimbursement for teachers seeking AIG Add-on Licensure, and supplies and materials, including testing supplies. The specialists paid with these funds teach students who are identified pursuant to the plan required by G.S. 115C-150.7. In addition, the Board of Education funds 1.38 positions from additional state allocated positions (not specifically earmarked for AIG), and 60% of a specialist position from Federal Title IV funds under the "Well-rounded" categorized funding.

*The numbers indicating JCPS student population and AIG headcount are current as of November 21, 2018.

Practice D

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

District Response: When annual student achievement, student growth, and drop-out information is provided by the state, the AIG Coordinator will disaggregate the data to show trend information. This information will be discussed with school administrators, AIG specialists, school counselors, and the AIG Advisory Board. Discussion of disaggregated performance and drop-out data is part of the monitoring of the local AIG program and plan.

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: Screening of all third grade students is accomplished each spring using the Naglieri Non-verbal Ability Test version 3 (NNAT3). This test was selected because of its culture-fair format, allowing for reliable and valid evaluation of the ability of students from many backgrounds. Referrals for AIG evaluation are addressed during two testing windows each year (spring and fall). Referrals can be made by parents, teachers, and students, allowing for diversity in placement decisions. AIG specialist provide training to regular education about the signs of giftedness to encourage further identification of under-represented populations.

The AIG Coordinator will maintain data regarding referral and identification trends based on student demographics. This statistical information will be shared annually with district and school level leadership, AIG specialists, and the AIG Advisory Board.

Students are never removed from the JCPS AIG program unless a parent formerly requests we do so. AIG specialist monitor student performance annually for all identified students in their school. In Jackson County Public Schools we notice a trend of students from under-represented populations not continuing on the path of advanced course-work (honors and AP classes) throughout the completion

of high school. Retention in advanced coursework is addressed most frequently at the high school level through course and career counseling from school counselors, Career and Technical Education Staff, and AIG specialists.

Practice F

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

District Response: The AIG Coordinator will review with the Personnel Director the credentials of all AIG Specialists at the beginning of each academic year. A list of regular classroom teachers with AIG certification will be kept annually.

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: To elicit feedback from our stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the JCPS AIG program the following steps will be taken:

- Distribute a stakeholder survey every other year that can be completed on either a paper form or on-line.
- AIG Specialists will have students complete an exit survey whenever they leave the AIG program, except in the case of graduation.
- Evaluate how surveys are distributed to ensure maximum results
- Stakeholders will review former survey questions and determine their appropriateness. Other questions will be developed if needed.
- Utilize Google Forms to host surveys
- Notify stakeholders of upcoming survey through posts on website, ConnectED, and written notices home, to ensure large response
- Include the exit survey in the AIG specialist digital notebook and provide direction during yearly training on the use of the survey.

Practice H

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

District Response: Meetings of the AIG Advisory Group are held at least once per year to allow for review of the program. Meetings are held at a time to allow for stakeholder involvement. Data sources for review include stakeholder surveys, summative assessments, referral and placement statistics in AIG program, DEPs, and graduation and drop-out rates for AIG students. The JCPS plan is revised as needed to ensure continuous improvement.

Practice I

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

District Response: The AIG website will be used to disseminate plan evaluation information and data. Information will also be sent via emails, ConnectED calls, school newsletters, etc.

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: Informed consent is necessary for identification and placement into the AIG program. Students who place into the AIG program while enrolled as a JCPS student will not be removed from the headcount based on academic performance changes unless requested by parent. Students in grades 4-8 wishing to remain in the AIG program but receive services in the general education classroom will request a meeting of the AIG Needs Determination Team (NDT) at their school. The AIG NDT will review all student data, including any information provided by the student, and consider the request. If the request is granted, an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) will be developed for the student to be implemented within the general education class. Students who transfer to JCPS from another school in North Carolina with documented AIG placement criteria will be added to the JCPS headcount and the AIG NDT will evaluate the student and determine services. Transfer students without documented AIG placement criteria and transfer students from out of state may be evaluated during the off-grade level windows in the spring and fall of each school year. When the Needs Determination Team does not recommend placement into the AIG program, teachers, parents, and students may request once per year that the student and their updated data be reviewed by the AIG NDT for reconsideration of placement. Newly enrolled children of military families will abide by local board policy 4155 and will continue to be served by AIG.

JACKSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Procedure to Disagree

LEVEL I – School Site Grievance Procedure

When the parents or any person, organization, or agency acting on the behalf of a child fails to agree on the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or educational services of a child, a written complaint should be submitted to the Grievance Committee of the school in which the child is enrolled. The school Grievance Committee will be composed of the AIG Needs Determination Team, the Coordinator of AIG Services, parent(s), and the principal of the school who will chair the committee.

Step 1 – A written grievance should be submitted at least 48 hours before the regularly scheduled AIG Needs Determination Team meeting is scheduled.

Step 2 – If no regular meeting is scheduled, there should be a called meeting within the next five

school days.

Step 3 – If the grievance is not resolved, the written complaint and the minutes from the local grievance committee should be submitted to the Jackson County Administrative Grievance Committee for further action.

LEVEL II – Jackson County Administrative Grievance Review

If the disagreement is not resolved at the school site, the parent may appeal in writing to the Coordinator of Academically and Intellectually Gifted Services who will convene the Jackson County Administrative Committee composed of the superintendent or assistant superintendent, a school board member, and a school administrator not involved in the dispute. The Coordinator of Academically and Intellectually Gifted Services will serve as an ex-officio member. They will review the case and respond to the parents and principal in writing within ten days of receipt of the appeal. Representatives from the child's school, such as the AIG teacher, school administrators, guidance counselor, member of local grievance committee, and/or classroom teachers, may choose to attend the meeting and present information or answer questions. The party bringing the grievance may come to the meeting to present clarification of the written grievance and answer questions the committee may have.

The Jackson County Grievance Committee will meet on an as-needed basis. The chairman of the committee will respond in writing to the complainant within five days of the meeting.

LEVEL III – Appeal to Board of Education

If agreement is not reached through the Jackson County Grievance Committee, the parents(s) may appeal in writing to the Jackson County Board of Education who will hear the complaint in closed session at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

LEVEL IV - Mediation

If agreement cannot be reached administratively, the school system will arrange for mediation with an impartial facilitator within ten days.

LEVEL V – Administrative Law Hearing

If the Board's decision fails to resolve the disagreement satisfactorily and mediation fails, the parents may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The scope of the hearing will be limited to consideration of whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an AIG student, or whether the local plan of services for the student has been implemented appropriately.

Following the hearing, the administrative law judge will make a decision based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law. The decision of the administrative law judge is final, binding on all parties, and is not subject to further review under Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. Attorney's fees are not available to parents in the event they prevail in a due process hearing.

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The Jackson County Board of Education affirms the principle that every student-regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, cultural or economic background, or disability-should be given an equal educational opportunity for educational development. Further, no student, on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood, will be excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity conducted by the district. The school district will treat its students without discrimination in regard to course offerings, athletics,

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counseling, employment assistance and extracurricular activities.

Any student, parent, or guardian who feels that this policy has been misinterpreted, misapplied, or violated may file a grievance in accordance with Board Policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure.

The Title IX Coordinator is:

Dr. Kevin Bailey, Personnel Director
Jackson County Public Schools
398 Hospital Road
Sylva, NC 28779
(828) 586-2311

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: •Continue to seek non-parents to participate in the Advisory Group as community members.

- Continue to improve survey questions and how the data is reviewed.
- Create AIG specific JCPS social media accounts
- Actively support under-represented populations to remain active in the AIG program throughout high school.
- Continue to encourage honors and AP teachers to seek AIG certification.
- Continue to offer local professional development on differentiation for all teachers.

Sources of Evidence: •AIG Advisory Board agendas and sign-in sheets

- AIG Survey results
- Disaggregate EOG/EOC data
- Dropout data
- Budget spreadsheets and purchase orders from PRC 034 and PRC 108
- JCPS AIG website

Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

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