

Mooresville City Schools
Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan
Effective 2019-2022

Approved by local Board of Education on:

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Mooresville City 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, Mooresville City Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Mooresville City Schools Vision for local AIG program: The AIG Program vision is to empower every Academically/Intellectually Gifted student and advanced learner to realize their maximum potential by enhancing the inherent worth of the whole child.

The mission of the AIG Program is to provide an educational environment that fosters strong academic, co-curricular, and interpersonal skills, allowing every child, every day to grow and thrive as an engaged, responsible citizen in a diverse society.

The AIG Program vision and the mission statements are derived from the school district's mission and vision statements.

During the self assessment completed prior to rewriting the 2019-2022 AIG Plan, and assisted by the AIG Advisory Committee, the following overarching goals were developed:

- 1) To utilize the Advisory Committee to monitor, and as needed, give feedback on the Plan implementation and goals. This includes creating and utilizing new surveys and subsequent analysis of any data derived from such. It also includes using the Advisory Committee to explore partnerships that might be developed to support/enhance the AIG Program.
- 2) To improve communication about the AIG Program to stakeholders.
- 3) To develop and implement a K-3 talent development program component, initially at one grade level and based on the Primary Education Thinking Skills curriculum.

4) To develop new staff development focused on general education and AIG staff to better address social-emotional needs of advanced learners.

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

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$321243.00	\$17323.00	\$.00	\$.00

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A

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

District Response: Students are identified at grades K-3 solely as a result of: 1) a student may receive early entrance into kindergarten by following the state-recommended process and meeting those state-prescribed criteria. Students who meet these early entrance criteria are considered gifted; 2) K-3 students who transfer from another school or district in which they were previously identified as gifted might maintain that identification during their K-3 enrollment in Mooresville and participate in talent development programming, and at the end of third grade a new determination made regarding AIG eligibility); and 3) K-3 students may be individually referred by parents or teachers due to unusual ability or academic achievement, and consequently be individually assessed for consideration of available academic programming options.

In grades 4 - 6, both individual and/or group screening and individual assessments are utilized to formally identify students. All third graders are mass screened to determine eligibility for services that begin in fourth grade.. Furthermore, selected students are screened and/or evaluated in grades 4 - 6. Assessment may lead to formal AIG identification for subject-specific services within the intermediate grades.

In grades 7 - 8, AIG students who have previously been identified (in intermediate grades 4-6) are eligible for honors-level courses in specific academic subjects. Those not previously identified students are also considered for enrollment into these subject-specific honors courses due to performance on state testing and/or in-house individual screenings. A rubric is used to determine eligibility, with points awarded for grades, assessment results, etc. Additional students placed in middle school honors classes are not newly identified as AIG, however.

In grades 9 - 12, students previously identified as AIG, as well as students who transfer into the school district beyond intermediate grades, in middle or high school as AIG, maintain their AIG status, although additional students are not sought for identification as AIG. Due to the system philosophy of offering as many course options as possible accessed via open enrollment, identifying new students as AIG would not lead to more or better services. During high school (grades 9 - 12), gifted students/advanced learners have access to a wide range of leveled courses, especially numerous advanced placement courses.

Practice B

Establishes a process and criteria for AIG student identification at all grade levels that provides

multiple opportunities to reveal a student's aptitude, achievement, or potential to achieve. The criteria may include both qualitative and quantitative data in order to develop a comprehensive learner profile.

District Response: The following procedures are utilized to refer, screen and identify students as academically/intellectually gifted:

- 1) Third grade students are administered a group ability test during second semester of each school year;
- 2) Group ability results for third graders are reviewed to establish a "pool" of students to consider for further screening, additional assessment/s, and/or ultimately, potential identification and services as gifted students;
- 3) An achievement test (currently the Iowa Test of Basic Skills or ITBS) is administered to selected students;
- 4) Additional instruments (e.g., the Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test, the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, etc.) are administered to selected students within the pool;
- 5) The Teacher Observation Checklist (TOC) and Environmental Consideration Assessment (ECA) are both completed on referred students, as needed; and
- 6) The district AIG scoring grid is completed and reviewed to determine/finalize eligibility on students who receive these additional assessments.

Some students may also receive a private (parent-paid) evaluation or a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation within the district (for example, evaluation of a twice exceptional student). These results, as with other completed or available assessments, are recorded on the district scoring grid to assist in determining AIG eligibility and placement/service options.

As stated previously, formal AIG identification for new students is not necessary during high school years, yet those previously identified AIG students and those who enroll after formal identification in grades 4-6 continue to be digitally tracked. Open enrollment is available to all students, and high-ability and high-achieving students are counseled, encouraged and/or recommended to take honors, AP and other courses that develop interest and aptitude (such as courses via the virtual public high school). Parent-student meetings are held to explain curricula (offerings) and to answer questions.

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: MGSD utilizes multiple criteria for AIG student identification as the primary (yet not sole) mode for ensuring traditionally underrepresented gifted populations are included when identifying students for AIG services. These criteria include the use of research-based assessments

to measure aptitude and achievement, in addition to ancillary assessment data aimed at identifying the underserved population (e.g., teacher observation and environmental checklists, etc.). Formal aptitude tests include the Cognitive Ability Test or OLSAT (Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test) or similar instrument. Achievement assessments include the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), NC End-of-Grade (EOG) Tests, and the MGSD End-of-Quarter (EOQ) tests or similar assessment. Some parents also choose to use personal resources to obtain evaluations from a qualified/private professional, and these assessments are given full consideration when determining AIG eligibility. Likewise, when English language learners and/or students with disabilities are considered for AIG eligibility (as perhaps twice exceptional students), the district may utilize the formal special education referral process (including completing a comprehensive individual psychoeducational evaluation) to ensure a complete student profile is available to determine AIG eligibility.

MGSD classroom teachers and school-based administrators also have the opportunity to complete the local Teacher Observation Checklist (TOC) and Environmental Consideration Assessment (ECA) as ancillary yet very integral components of selected students' comprehensive profiles. These two instruments are given special attention (in their completion) and special consideration/weight (in view of overall profiles) on students who may not meet specific benchmarks on formal tests, yet are also represent the underserved population.

Non-traditional measures might also be selected and specifically utilized when culturally diverse or underrepresented students are being considered for AIG eligibility. For example, the GATES (Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale), Environmental Consideration Profiles, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, the Leiter International Performance Scale, and/or the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking are some of the assessment possibilities for evaluating students within these groups. These assessments are utilized as additional components when attempting to identify students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, twice exceptional and/or English language learners.

MGSD also adheres to the specific component within Article 9B by "automatically" qualifying students as Highly Intellectually Gifted (HIG) if they obtain scores that are 98%ile NPA (National Percentile by Age) or higher on the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), or similar instrument, and Intellectually Gifted (IG) for students who at 95%ile or higher and who have a 10-point or less discrepancy between verbal and non-verbal scores. Automatically identified AIG students also include those who present assessment data and are eligible for early entry into Kindergarten.

Practice D

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

District Response: The Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education (who also serves as AIG Coordinator) and the district Lead AIG Teacher work closely with relevant district-level and school-based personnel to ensure the Local Education Agency (i.e., school district or LEA) AIG screening, referral and identification processes are followed to fidelity, consistently. This includes working with the district Testing and Accountability Director to implement mass aptitude screening annually. It

further includes ensuring that school staffs receive the same timely communications and that staffs across the district collaborate during the initial and main AIG identification times (first, during spring, and subsequently as needed, during fall of each school year).

One of the methods for ensuring fidelity and consistency of processes is the use of district-wide fillable forms specific to the AIG program and processes. This ensures all staff know and use the same instruments and processes to complete forms and determine eligibility, such as the district AIG scoring grid form. The accompanying use of district-wide form letters and parent permission forms to notify parents and guardians of assessments, results of assessments, AIG eligibility and program service options further ensures clarity and consistency in processes (as well as communication of those processes and procedures). Questions regarding eligibility and services may be escalated to the central office level by either school employees or parents/students so that consistency in processes is maintained and communicated regarding individual circumstances/interpretations. Answers to such questions are communicated to school administrators and AIG teachers when questions render new or different interpretations to processes.

When forms or letters that reflect processes are modified, input and proofreading are sought from AIG staff and school-based administrators to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness of content. Teachers of AIG students coordinate efforts to inform parents (particularly parent placement and DEP meetings) so that they work across district schools contemporaneously during the identification process. AIG student files are identical in both content and format across schools, and these are maintained at each student's current placement site. Finally, the electronic student information management system identifies (labels) students as AIG for tracking purposes, which is of particular importance as students transition to the middle and high school, where programming/service options change and occur via advanced curricular offerings (e.g., honors and AP courses, etc.), rather than elementary/intermediate programming led solely by AIG-certified staff.

Practice E

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

District Response: Relative to communication of AIG procedures, multiple modes for dissemination exist, including a hyperlink to the district-approved plan and an accompanying flowchart summarizing the above process within the Academics tab, AIG section of the school district website. In addition, the AIG identification process is reviewed with key stakeholders in the early spring of each academic school year. This is accomplished by completing several steps and processes:

- 1) Third grade parents are notified of the administration of the group ability test;
- 2) Teachers through grade six are apprised of the screening and referral process, as well as their role in referral and assessment;
- 3) Parents of students with scores sufficient for inclusion in the pool of potentially AIG-eligible students are notified of the request to screen (assess) their children formally, and permission signatures are also obtained;
- 4) Students within the pool are given further consideration either by immediate identification in one or

more subject areas, or are further assessed via administration of additional tests if mass screening results indicate eligibility is possible though not yet certain;

5) After all assessments necessary are complete, including teacher observation checklists and environmental rating scales, remaining students have all assessment data placed on the district scoring grid to determine eligibility of the final strata of students screened/assessed, including those whose scores were below the minimal pool criterion, yet who received a teacher referral (and were therefore assessed);

6) Parents of assessed students receive either letters of regret (those not eligible), or letters of invitation to a parent meeting to discuss AIG eligibility, program and services. These meetings include obtaining parent permission (signatures on forms) to receive AIG services via a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP); and finally,

7) To more fully meet the requirement within this practice to disseminate information regarding the screening, referral and identification processes, a newly developed brochure regarding the AIG program and components has been developed and is being disseminated district-wide. This brochure, and the AIG scoring grid, are also new components to the web pages for the AIG program.

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: First, test results for students administered mass aptitude screening are on file/maintained in the Testing and Accountability Director's office and/or Central Office. Students who score at the district-established percentile level are included in a pool of potentially AIG-eligible students. This list of students at each intermediate grade school is the first formal documentation during the identification/ eligibility process. These lists are maintained at the school level by AIG staff.

Next, individual student files are developed as students within the initial pool are either immediately identified based on meeting the most stringent criteria, or letters to obtain permission to screen/assess are sent home on students who miss the criteria for immediate eligibility and require further assessment via various forms. Additional assessments (e.g., ability, teacher observation, environmental consideration, etc.) are employed and these data are eventually placed on a scoring grid (another form that documents the process followed and the data gathered). This and all other forms completed on students being considered for AIG identification/services are maintained in student files.

Finally, letters of regret for assessed but non-eligible students, or invitations to parent meetings for eligible students, are sent to parents. During parent meetings students being identified have service options explained and the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) developed. DEPs are also maintained as documentation of the process as well as the service option being implemented. Individual student files containing all these forms, letters and student data are maintained at the student's current school and passed on as the student progresses through the grades. The district AIG process flowchart summarizing the identification process was revised in 2017 for clarity and comprehensiveness. It is

available on the district website or in print, upon request.

Schools send home results of state achievement testing on all AIG students quarterly and annually. Likewise, parents of students who are placed in the pool of potentially-eligible students are notified each spring and receive follow-up communication as the process evolves. DEP (AIG placement) meetings are used to explain AIG service options each year, as do letters to parents of students who are eligible in one subject area and annually considered by reassessing the second area of potential eligibility/placement. Again, these forms and all others completed during the identification process are maintained in files at the school level.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Communication is being strengthened by recent development of an AIG brochure. Forms have also been updated and the scoring grid form will be added to the district AIG web pages to enhance clarity and strengthen communication of eligibility criteria. Identification "at all grade levels" is enhanced by implementation of the PETS curriculum, which necessitates informally identifying at-promise students within primary grades as a new talent development component.

Sources of Evidence: AIG brochure
PETS materials and training
District AIG Program forms, particularly the scoring grid
District web site (AIG sections)

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: Programs/services for advanced learners and AIG students are available across the entire K-12 spectrum; however, placement or service continuum options exist at varying degrees and in a variety of forms, depending on the grade level/s being described. The following details describe programs and services currently available.

Students may be admitted to Kindergarten prior to the age 5, state-established date, based on meeting the state-defined early admission criteria. These and selected other students in grades K through 3 have various program options available, although actual formal AIG programs based on (mass) formal identification are not established. Students who require additional challenge beyond typical general education instruction are considered for the following in K-3:

- 1) in-class flexible grouping based on skill (ability) level;
- 2) academic enrichment based on interest and ability per student (e.g., learning packets and/or other independent study/learning as necessary);
- 3) subject skipping (going to another grade level for instruction a specific subject);
- 4) grade skipping; and
- 5) talent development programming based on the Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) curriculum implemented during scheduled enrichment time (termed enrichment/intervention, or E/I time). This is a new component within the AIG program (and this AIG Plan) aimed at more fully meeting the Standard/s and Practice/s language and providing comprehensive programming for high ability students across grade levels. This new program is also to support and develop the talents and abilities of the underserved populations.

Since formal AIG identification begins at the end of grade 3, above options 1 through 4 also exist for identified students in grades 4-11 (with the exception of early admission). In addition, students may also receive specific instruction from an AIG-licensed teacher in the areas of English-language arts and/or mathematics via a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). These classes replace (rather than enrich or supplement) general education classes in these subject areas. Students in this age/grade level have social-emotional needs partially met through being placed and instructed with similar ability/skill students for a dedicated time daily, and by spending dedicated time with teachers who are trained in recognizing their needs (AIG characteristics).

In middle school grades (7 - 8) AIG students retain a DEP and AIG identification, yet are served through advanced/accelerated learning classes, often called honors classes. These courses are available in the areas of English (language arts) and math, as they were in the intermediate grades. Honors Spanish is also offered for high school credit. However, teachers may not have completed AIG certification in all instances. Other programming/service options such as grade skipping, independent study, etc. continue to be available, as they are in grades K-6. These service delivery options are decided on a per-student basis, depending on need and ability/skills presented. Students in middle school, as with intermediate school AIG students, have social-emotional needs partially met by being educated with similar-ability/skill peers daily. However, these students are also availed extracurricular activities that more fully address social and emotional needs and interests of those in this age group. (Specifics regarding social-emotional development for AIG students are detailed more fully within Standard 3.)

Finally, in high school, students of high ability and/or with advanced academic skills are availed a vast array of honors and advanced placement courses through the district philosophy of open enrollment, coupled with focused counseling and guidance. AIG/high achieving/ability students also have options such as independent study, virtual public high school courses, and other interest-based, on-campus offerings to meet their interests and challenge them intellectually/academically. Social-emotional needs for this group are met by being with similar-ability peers during dedicated times, but even moreso by the expanded extra and co-curricular diverse options available to them. Credit by demonstrated mastery is also an option for advanced learners.

AIG students are identified for an academic-skills-based program due to the primary goal (mission statement) of developing the academic potential of gifted students. The program primarily addresses basic subject areas of reading and math. Therefore, students are served in reading (English-language arts) and math. This is most directly/clearly observable, and therefore most aligned, in grades 4 through 8, where formal AIG identification has occurred and school subject names (courses/classes) are a 1:1 match with the AIG identification areas. The main resource for the program and goals at these grade levels is employment of and direct instruction by AIG-licensed teachers, coupled, of course, with the technology and digital resources necessary to teach and learn within a digital environment (school district).

At other grade levels the goal for AIG programs/services is also to develop or maximize the academic potential of identified students. However, at grades K-3, the alignment of the goal with identification and resources is much more individualized. As described in the Practice A for this Standard, services for K-3 are per child and based on presented needs (for example, students who are eligible for and receive early admission to K). Therefore, resources are also individualized, such as when a student attends another (higher) grade level for instruction in a specific subject. Even with grade skipping in the primary grades, the general education teacher is the primary resource to develop the child's potential and thereby meet the program goal. Ancillary instructional materials, if necessary to meet the individual student's needs, are requested and become available as an AIG resource. The Primary Education Thinking Skills curriculum is being implemented as a talent development focus during the 2019-2022 AIG Plan.

In high school, resources are largely, again, through instructors of courses in which students are enrolled, whether these are AP-certified teachers, or simply state-licensed teachers in honors classes or virtual public high school classes. Likewise, technology and digital resources are immediately in

place, in addition to supporting instructional materials needed for individual students, which could be sought and approved.

Generally speaking, MGSD instructional personnel works with teachers K-12 to adapt the NC Standard Course of Study to meet the needs of AIG students. Within recent years, MGSD has increased the number of AIG personnel and also the number of AP courses available to students in high school. Taking coursework via the virtual public high school is now also prevalent. Teachers of these students also frequently receive professional development, whether through the district annual Summer Institute, or AIG-licensed teachers attending the state conference, job-alike meetings or participating in a PLC activity.

Practice B

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

District Response: MGSD has implemented a Digital Conversion whereby all students in grades K-12 have a digital device, such as a laptop or tablet. Teachers and students likewise have access to an abundance of digital resources (textbooks are digital, yet numerous other software programs are in place and utilized). These resources are used to personalize instruction for all students, and this is not different for AIG students. In other words, the alignment of digital teaching and learning is across all grade levels and completely integrated into existent special programs and courses, such as AIG, AP, honors, special and vocational education, etc.

Previously, MGSD instructional leaders developed CORE Curriculum and Instructional Guides that provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum across grades, subjects and academic levels. The Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator, along with the lead AIG Teacher works closely with AIG teachers to ensure resources are used appropriately to augment the district curriculum for this group.

As mentioned elsewhere in this document, the MGSD M-Powerment Strategies were also developed and designed by the MGSD Administrators, School Library Media Coordinators and Instructional Technology Facilitators to demonstrate the core tenets of the MGSD philosophy of a student-centered, technology rich classroom with purposeful instruction designed for achievement. The MGSD M-Powerment Strategies were adapted from various instructional and technology frameworks including: the Houston Independent School District Effective Practices, Discovery Education's SOS Strategies, the 5E Model, SAMR, TIM Framework, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Partnership for 21st Century Skills' 4Cs Framework, Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategies, and Marzano's High Yield Instructional Strategies. Rather than list the categories again, it is noteworthy only to say that these strategies are part of the total instruction program and therefore also used as AIG programs/services are delivered.

In addition, all schools grades K - 6 have specific times during the instructional day where students are involved in Enrichment/Intervention time. During this time, students are involved in specific

enrichment/intervention instruction based on recent formative assessment data. For many students, this dedicated instructional time involves remediation of a skill, skill set, or concept/s. However, this is typically a time in which AIG students and other advanced learners receive academic enrichment or their instruction is enhanced by broadening and deepening the learning, since their data often reveals proficiency of the skill or concept. Again, this example demonstrates the integration of a district instructional model that is integrated such that it is also utilized for AIG/advanced learners (in addition to the lower level or struggling students).

Practice C

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

District Response: MGSD has developed and consistently implements a dedicated flexible grouping time daily within grades K - 6 at all schools. This time is minimally 45 minutes each day and based on ongoing/formative assessment data. The time is known as Enrichment/Intervention (EI) time and groups are flexible and change frequently, based on skills needed for those requiring remediation (intervention), and area/skill identified (sometimes based on interest) for those (AIG and other advanced) students who are proficient so that knowledge or concepts are broadened, deepened or enriched.

Beyond EI time, deliberate flexible grouping also occurs in elementary and intermediate grades in reading (at least, but often in other subjects such as math or written language) to effectively instruct and support growth for all students, developed initially to assist struggling readers. Groups that include the AIG students are typically allowed much more independent (interest-based) reading/writing time, while other lower level students are being seen in small group by the general education teacher (and teacher assistant, where available).

Flexible grouping also occurs within ninety-minute instructional blocks in middle and high school in core academic areas, again, based on ongoing/formative assessment data. And, to repeat, AIG students are encouraged and permitted via independent work (often interest-based projects or assignments) to progress beyond required or assessed minimal proficiency levels during times when other groups are being offered remediation. Intentional flexible grouping is somewhat less likely to occur in high school (yet it does) due to schedule constraints; therefore, growth and interests are supported via actual course/class selection and extracurricular offerings and choices, such as enrollment in a virtual high school course of interest in lieu of a limited interest on-campus offering.

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 MGSD AIG Plan is publicized on the MGSD website. The Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator works closely with administrators to ensure AIG services are delivered according to the AIG plan and also MGSD expectations. Lead AIG teachers at each intermediate school, along with the school-based administrators, take responsibility for communicating AIG processes, programs (including service delivery and differentiation), and procedures to each school's staff. For example, during the eligibility determination process, AIG staff communicate with general educators to ensure they are aware of the characteristics and behaviors of potentially gifted learners, so that appropriate referrals are made.

Currently, curriculum and instruction updates are also sent to staff members monthly. Strategies for developing the potential of young learners are included in the updates. The AIG identification process is reviewed with staff shared during second semester of each school year. Finally, district forms utilized for AIG identification and services are digital and available via Google docs, an additional way in which timely, accurate information is ensured and made consistent across all schools/staff.

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: The Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education & Technology holds the primary responsibility for ensuring smooth transitions and that services for AIG students are continued effectively across all grade levels. School administrators, the lead AIG teacher, and AIG teachers are key staff in assisting and effecting both communication and services continuation during transition times and periods.

The typical transition "places" in MGSD are due to and reflect grade configurations. The district has primary or K-3 grades schools, intermediate or 4-6 grades schools, middle schools with grades 7-8, and a high school with the remaining grades 9-12. Therefore, key transition points are from grade 3 to 4, 6 to 7, and 8 to 9, and this implicates general education students as well as students with special needs (including AIG students).

Formal transition meetings are held annually to assist with smooth transition of students from one grade configuration to the next. Paper and digital student files are in place and formally transferred (typically with the knowledge and assistance of school counselors and AIG staff) at the end of each school year, during summer and/or whenever a student moves from one grade level/school to the next (although rare, this might necessarily include students who skip a grade due to high ability/achievement). Vertical alignment meetings, which occur regularly across the district at all levels, also assist with easing transitions of students to ensure skills are comprehensively addressed

and no gaps are created.

AIG staff hold parent meetings and complete formal communication with staffs at schools to which students matriculate due to normal transition points. Again, files are maintained that contain documents revealing the timelines, processes and services for these students; these files aid the transition process and ensure continuation of services. AIG staff also communicate with general education teachers and school administrators so that everyone is aware of the number of AIG students who are transitioning as well as their identified needs (services documented on DEPs). Finally, and although this has been stated in another part of this Plan, AIG teachers (across grades and schools) themselves meet and communicate regularly to ensure consistency of services and procedures for students at all grade levels and service delivery (continuum) alternatives.

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: AIG and general education (teachers and administration) work collaboratively to implement the program, which inherently includes meeting gifted learners' social and emotional needs. This is particularly apparent during the process of determining eligibility and during transition times/points. Also, the service model of dedicated instructional time for AIG-identified students is partially aimed at meeting their social-emotional needs. Whatever service or service model is utilized requires the collaboration of relevant staff, perhaps more apparent at the K-3 grade level where direct services are individually implemented than with a course or class. For example, if a first grade student could benefit from attending third grade (just) for reading, collaboration of both general education teachers and the school administrators is necessary, but this service has typically been put in place after consultation with an AIG teacher. And although this looks most like meeting an academic need on a spurious level, it actually meets social-emotional needs of a child who otherwise might be bored, become unmotivated, misbehave or develop poor work habits from not being challenged.

Previously, system AIG teachers in grades 4-6 have participated in professional development focused on meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. This PLC is using content from The Critical Issues in Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education Series by Joyce VanTassel-Baska Ed.D., Tracy L. Cross Ph.D., and F. Richard Olenchak Ph.D. Additionally, MGSD guidance counselors, who meet regularly for professional development, will participate in professional development in meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Follow up PD on this topic will continue during the plan years. School-based administrators will be provided with information on supporting school personnel in these efforts. The state-provided Booster Shots material has been reviewed and selections uploaded to the district learning management system to utilize and as a focus for (some) staff development.

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: AIG (and other high ability or high achieving) students have a variety of opportunities and venues for acceleration of academic content (by subject/course and grade). Two primary venues for acceleration are the Early Admission to Kindergarten and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery processes, which are honored as outlined and recommended by the state agency. Both these processes are publicized annually by the district; however, the early entrance criteria are given to parents on a case-by-case basis (typically parents inquire about early entry during or shortly after the Kindergarten registration time period), while Credit by Demonstrated Mastery procedures and criteria are more formally publicized in early fall of each school year via a parent meeting. This meeting is facilitated by the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary/Vocational Education in cooperation with high school administrative and counseling staff.

Two more central opportunities exist for students who benefit or desire content acceleration. The first of these is grade skipping, which is rare but available to students/parents upon request (by a parent or teacher) if a student's unusual achievement or ability is noted. Grade skipping requires a comprehensive look at ability, academic achievement and social-emotional factors, in addition to environmental considerations such as grade level and support from parent/s and the school community. The school principal, in communication with central office staff, generally handles requests or needs for grade skipping. The Iowa Acceleration Scale might be one tool used during the determination to grade skip a student.

The other main option for acceleration is curriculum compacting, which is much more prevalent than early K entrance, credit by demonstrated mastery, or grade skipping. Curriculum compacting occurs within AIG classes within grades 4 - 6, and also at the middle school level in the area of math, so that students can be successful at Algebra in eighth grade. There is also a Spanish I course available in middle school, for high school credit, which might be a service for AIG students. And, students (often AIG) are supported to take virtual public school courses to accelerate coursework when they have completed prerequisites successfully. Other infrequently used, but available, options for content/academic acceleration are subject skipping and individual programming (IDEPs, for example), which would likely occur in grades K-6, but also are possible in grades 4 - 8. Finally, content acceleration might occur on a per-student basis via the general education teacher in consultation with AIG-licensed teachers/staff.

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: In the past, MGSD offered limited service delivery options. Beginning with this plan year, AIG students will be provided with service options that best meet their academic and social/emotional needs.

Service options in grades 4 - 6 include:

AIG Classroom: AIG students at the intermediate grades have been placed on 2- or 3-teacher teams in which they received all core instruction during the last 2 school years. The benefit to the under-represented AIG population in this model is that the student does not experience any potential negative effect that is possible when teachers unfamiliar with the student's potential teach the student in a non-AIG specific subject. The AIG teacher has the same high expectations and supports available across subjects in this type setting.

Pull Out: This is a service delivery option available for twice exceptional students, as well as students who have exceptionally large gaps in performance in math and reading. With this option, students are pulled into an AIG classroom for core subject and stay with a regular homeroom classroom the majority of the day. This model benefits the under-represented AIG students by providing dedicated instructional time with like peers as well as the benefits of having an AIG-licensed teacher who understands their characteristics and needs.

Push In: This service delivery option is available for twice exceptional students, as well as students who have significant gaps in performance in math and reading. With this option, students are sent out to a regular classroom setting for one core subject but remain with AIG homeroom the majority of the remainder of the school day. This model is also available for ESL students who are also AIG placed or identified. The model has the benefits of meeting the specific needs of twice exceptional and ESL students for both high ability as well as addressing any concurrent deficits they might demonstrate.

Consultative: This service option is available for students who are identified, yet are not served in one of the service options above. The team, including parents/families, makes the decision to receive this service option, which addresses needs of the underrepresented students whose difficulties are not as great in domains such as academic gaps or cultural differences.

The district also "places" some students in AIG and honors classes, although these students do not meet strict eligibility criteria for identification as AIG and therefore would not otherwise be enrolled in an honors course. Placed students represent all populations with special consideration for minorities, economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse students, such as ELLs. Placed students often require additional assessments with significantly more emphasis/weight placed on scores or results from assessments such as environmental rating scales and teacher observations.

Practice I

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

District Response: MGSD provides several extra curricular activities that address the

needs/interests of all students (and meet needs of are encouraged for AIG students), beginning in 4th grade, yet less so in grades K - 3. These opportunities include but are not limited to robotics clubs in the intermediate and middle schools, media/technology clubs across the same grade levels, Career Bridge seminars at the high school level, second/foreign language clubs, chess club, math and science competitions, spelling bee, etc. Additionally, MGSD has added summer programming opportunities to meet the needs of AIG students. The district also facilitates and promotes participation in the Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP). Beginning with the 2019 - 20 school year, MGSD has created and is utilizing an AIG Advisory Committee to develop additional ideas for extra-curricular activities and/or special events as part of its function. Additionally, the MGSD AIG Quarterly will be used to communicate these and other opportunities to all AIG students and their parents/families.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: The Primary Education Thinking Skills curriculum is being purchased and implemented with instructional coaches and facilitators leading this effort. This fulfills a longstanding need at the K-3 level regarding programming for higher ability/advanced students in the absence of formal AIG identification/AIG classes within the primary grades. This addresses identified weaknesses in Practices A, C, and H, in particular.

New professional development activities are also being planned and implemented during the 3 years of this AIG Plan to address social-emotional needs of gifted and high achieving students.

Sources of Evidence: PETS curriculum materials and action plans for implementation.

Rotation schedules that reflect the PETS talent development component's implementation into the enrichment/enhancement sessions.

Staff development plan/s reflecting PD aimed at social-emotional needs programming.

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: MGSD works with teachers K-12 to adapt the NC Standard Course of Study to meet the needs of AIG students through a variety of service options as well as curriculum differentiation methods and strategies. During recent school years, MGSD began ensuring that AIG teachers are represented and participate in the NCAAGT Conference to assist them in learning new and honing existing differentiation strategies for the AIG and advanced learners populations.

The district utilizes technology (both hardware and digital content) as an overall tool for teaching and learning, partially to engage 21st century learners with modes that complement and reflect their lives, but also to easily and effectively ensure customization of learning, i.e., differentiation -- in terms of both struggling students and those who are proficient and might be enriched or accelerated via differentiation. Additionally, grades K - 6 in all schools have specific times during the instructional day during which students are involved in Enrichment/Intervention (E/I). During these E/I times, students are engaged in specific enrichment/intervention instruction based on their most recent formative assessment data. This is a wonderful and effective way of enhancing the skills/content of AIG/advanced learners who are already proficient in taught content. Additionally, curriculum compacting, cross-age grouping and in-class flexible grouping are a few examples of modes that are utilized for differentiating and meeting the needs of AIG students and other advanced learners.

Each summer, the district conducts a 2-day teacher professional development institute primarily aimed at advancing skills in teaching and learning using technology. The main feature of this institute is consistently focused on customization of curriculum and instruction (i.e., differentiation) to advance the learning of both struggling and advanced learners (including, inherently, AIG students and advanced learners).

Advanced placement and honors courses at middle and high schools are designed to promote curriculum/content acceleration. Also, in grades 6 and 7, purposeful curriculum compacting is in place to ensure that high achieving (AIG) students are successful in Math I in eighth grade. Spanish I is also offered in grade 8 for high school credit.

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: The school district has designed and utilizes a set of strategies called the M-Powerment Strategies, which are aimed at this very practice -- addressing diverse learners and needs across grade levels. These strategies were developed by district administrators, Media Coordinators and Instructional Technology Facilitators and demonstrate the core tenets of the MGSD philosophy of a student-centered, technology enriched classrooms, with purposeful instruction designed for advancing student achievement. These M-Powerment Strategies were adapted from various instructional and technology frameworks including: the Houston Independent School District Effective Practices, Discovery Education's SOS Strategies, the 5E Model, SAMR, TIM Framework, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Partnership for 21st Century Skills' 4Cs Framework, Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategies, and Marzano's High Yield Instructional Strategies.

The M-Powerment Strategies include instructional foci and skills in the following areas:

- * Collaborative Culture of Caring
- * High Expectations
- * Standards-Aligned Lessons
- * Data-Driven Instruction
- * Differentiation and Personalization
- * Maximize Instructional Time and Resources
- * Acquire and Demonstrate Knowledge
- * Research and Inquiry Based Thinking
- * Students Skilled for Success (4Cs)
- * Student Engagement

While this set of strategies is not specific to the AIG population, it encompasses the philosophy of advancing or developing the potential of every child, every day and therefore inherently and purposefully includes advanced learners. The set of strategies, as can be noted by the subtitles or categories, is comprehensive in that it addresses needs and strengths, as well as interests, abilities and readiness levels. Also, as has been previously described, the E/I (enrichment/intervention) dedicated time daily in grades K-6 is aimed at remediation or enhancement of skills based on readiness, ability and learning profiles, and is very effective at addressing a broad range of needs/proficiency levels, including advanced and struggling learners.

The previous M-Powerment Strategies and dedicated daily E/I time, coupled with the digital learning environment (digital content and instruction within a digital learning management system) render both diversity and effectiveness in instructional practices that are flexible and comprehensive when addressing a broad range of learning needs, interests and abilities.

Practice C

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

District Response: Based on current research regarding engagement and effective methodology for effectively addressing 21st century learners, MGSD has implemented a Digital Conversion through which all students (and staff) in grades K-12 utilize digital tools (such as computers, tablets and smart boards) along with digital content (curriculum), as well as an abundance of digital resources (such as remediation and enrichment software programs), implemented within a learning management system (LMS). These tools and resources are used to personalize instruction for all students. MGSD instructional leaders have developed CORE Curriculum and Instructional Guides that provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum. The Assistant Superintendent/AIG Coordinator along with the lead AIG teacher, Curriculum Coordinator, Math Coach and Instructional Specialists work closely with AIG teachers to ensure resources are used appropriately to augment and expand the MGSD curriculum.

When new teaching and learning software is considered, a sample of teachers from representative grades, subjects and levels listen to vendor presentations or examine materials to provide feedback to system administration prior to purchase. One of the primary criteria for selection of a program or resource is that available/presented empirical data indicate effectiveness of the material/s. The previous district LMS was also selected by this method.

Practice D

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

District Response: The district utilizes a learning management system to implement digital content via computer-driven teaching and learning, the combination of which are the primary components of developing the skills and potential of 21st century students. These digital content, resources and delivery are flexible and effective at delivering and developing skills at advanced levels (while simultaneously excellent for addressing struggling or deficient-skills students). Twenty-first century skills (such as collaboration, creativity, communication and digital literacy) are effectively facilitated and developed by teaching and learning within a digital learning environment, such as when learning is demonstrated via project-based learning (a common method/practice within the school district), which incorporates several 21st century skills (e.g., research, creativity, communication, collaboration, etc.). The MGSD M-Powerment Strategies discussed in Practice B also provide a significant means of addressing 21st century skills for district students. It is also noteworthy that the school district has showcased its use of technology for teaching and learning -- and the methods inherent within that model, such as project-based learning -- during summer institutes in which in and out of state school districts paid to attend and learn about this 21st century model. The institute was in place for over 8 years and districts across the entire country filled the institute to capacity each time.

Practice E

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

District Response: MGSD student achievement reflects advanced development and use of formative and summative assessments to meet the constantly changing needs of students. District-wide formative assessments have been in place since the late 1990's, developed as a component of the district's previous intense engagement in year-round instruction as a student-parent option (a program developed from a large grant from a private company). Extensive training on developing and using formative assessments was previously conducted via contracts with assessment experts. As the year-round calendar option was integrated into a more traditional / collegiate calendar, the common quarterly (formative) assessments remained and evolved. They now complement the additional formative assessments that have been developed and are utilized across the district at virtually all grade levels.

Data from formative assessments are constantly analyzed and instruction is modified to continuously ensure that students perform well on summative assessments. Throughout the last several years, district student performance has been consistently within the top 10 districts in the state due to the longstanding focus on ongoing assessment coupled with adapting instruction to meet all learner needs (such as through in-class, flexible grouping). Of course, MGSD utilizes its common formative assessments and quarterly assessments in conjunction with state summative assessments such as NC Final Exams and End-of-Grade/Course assessments. Data are analyzed at the individual teacher level, same-subject collaborative teams, schools, and district level to determine adjustments to curriculum and instruction. Additionally, students are taught and expected to set personal goals based upon data analysis, while also collaborating with their teachers to identify strategies to meet their learning goals.

Practice F

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

District Response: As described elsewhere in this Plan, the district program of providing dedicated time for AIG students to be instructed solely with like-ability peers is also aimed at meeting social-emotional development needs. Furthermore, using AIG-licensed staff only for instruction in the intermediate grades also complements social-emotional development since these staff are trained in characteristics of gifted learners as well as how to meet their academic needs.

During the prior school years, district AIG teachers in grades 4-6 participated in a professional development session with a focus on meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Content from *The Critical Issues in Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education* by Joyce VanTassel-Baska

Ed.D., Tracy L. Cross Ph.D., F. Richard Olenchak Ph.D. is used for this professional learning activity. Additionally, district guidance counselors participated in professional development in meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners.

Selected content from the state-provided Booster Shots is being uploaded to the district learning management system to facilitate use of relevant portions that address, in this instance, social-emotional needs. These are targeted for use by school counselors and general education staff. For the current AIG Plan, a new component of bibliotherapy using specifically selected book titles standardized across the district is being developed to be used with students upon initial identification as AIG.

Practice G

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

District Response: Within the K-3 grade configuration, all schools utilize a school-wide flexible grouping structure to address advancement of all levels of student skills. This includes having not only remediation groups but enrichment grouping as well (previously identified in this document as enrichment/intervention or E/I time). To effectively cultivate and develop the potential of young (K-3) students, MGSD utilizes the following strategies whenever possible: project-based learning, classroom differentiation using various curriculum resources, and vertical enrichment. Vertical enrichment includes content acceleration at the next grade level, including classroom instruction at the student's instructional level. Of course within this grade span, students with exceptional ability can skip a grade or subject(s), although grade skipping is infrequent. Teachers use a wide range of strategies in choosing materials that engage students' interests to enrich and deepen student thinking. Students have the opportunity to participate in in-depth concept development experiences, which are effective means of enrichment for gifted students (e.g., studies of cultures, scientific topics, or current issues, etc.). The Primary Education Thinking Skills curriculum is being implemented as a talent development component for K-3 students. In addition, all K-6 schools have implemented STEM curriculum as an enhancement class rotation, and several schools have created maker-spaces.

Practice H

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

District Response: There are numerous methods and venues for collaboration of instructional staff to effectively develop and implement curriculum and deliver instruction. The first and perhaps

foremost method of collaboration is via the engagement in a digital learning environment (digital content effected through a learning management system) that is effective and efficient at sharing products (such as formative assessments) as well as collaboration of staff to obtain input during modification of products. Shared digital resources (for example, iXL, a math remediation software product) are easily delivered in a customized form to individual students (or groups).

Another method of collaboration is the use of professional learning communities that are standard practice within the district. Curriculum and instruction are addressed in this venue. For example, it is quite common for instructional staff within PLCs at a school or schools to complete a book study that involves implementing the methods within a selected book and engaging in group reflection and sharing of effectiveness of the read methods, how the methods might be customized for specific students, etc. These PLCs, prevalent across the district, include general and special educators as well as AIG staff.

MGSD holds a summer institute for district staff in which teachers and other staff attend professional development sessions aimed at developing and enhancing the praxis (philosophy combined with actual practice) of instructional staff. This institute has been in place for several years and over 90% of district teachers attend. A portion of this professional development is a collaborative planning time for processing and planning how to implement the content/methods/practices learned during the institute. As stated earlier, due to the district philosophy and focus on every child, every day (the motto that reflects the mission), differentiation is inherent in the entire effort of the institute and its final day of collaborative planning.

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: MGSD has developed and continues to update and revise a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) for AIG students in grades 4-6 and 7-8. This DEP is completed on all students who formally meet eligibility guidelines for AIG services in the intermediate grades, yet this form is no longer utilized for those students who do not meet formal eligibility guidelines but are placed in the program for talent development. It is also completed on students formally identified in 7-8, yet also no longer utilized for "placed" students (i.e., those in the same classes or courses who are do not meet strict AIG eligibility criteria). The district DEP defines service options available at grades K-8, as well as the option/s chosen for each DEP student. The DEP indicates the students' area or areas of eligibility as well as the service option (placement). Recently, the district DEP has been modified/amended to enhance its ability to more clearly and comprehensively communicate annual review information.

Once AIG students have completed their eighth grade year, DEPs are no longer in place. However, high school counselors work closely with middle school teams and school counselors to ensure the

individual needs of AIG students are met as those students in grades 9 - 12 are enrolled and take honors and AP courses, as well as independent or virtual high school courses as additional ways to take courses otherwise unavailable in the traditional high school campus setting.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Practice I is being strengthened by revision of the district DEP in terms of both content and deliberate dissemination/communication of the DEP. Also, as stated in Standards 1 and 2, the PETS curriculum is being implemented as an intentional option within the primary grades during enrichment/intervention (E/I) time for talent development, and specifically addresses Practice G, yet also enhances or addresses several other Practices within this Standard.

Sources of Evidence: Revised DEP
PETS curriculum materials

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 Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Instruction and Technology maintains oversight for AIG programs and services. The individual currently in this role is not AIG-licensed, yet has a doctorate in curriculum and instruction, as well as being licensed in instructional technology and educational leadership. MGSD maintains an AIG Program lead teacher who is AIG-licensed and who collaborates very closely with the assistant superintendent and AIG teachers, to ensure the AIG program is monitored during implementation of the plan. The lead AIG teacher also serves as a primary contact to help guide, revise and develop the Plan revision each three years, in conjunction with and as a member of the AIG Advisory Committee.

Practice B

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

District Response: MGSD employs AIG licensed staff in AIG teaching positions. AIG teachers who are not licensed are required to obtain AIG add-on license. AIG teachers in grades 4-6 only instruct AIG students (or those who do not meet strict eligibility criteria but are placed in AIG classes for talent development) in content-specific classes. This model addresses many of the social and emotional needs of gifted learners in that they have dedicated instructional time when they are with peers of similar ability and skills, and also since they have dedicated instructional time with (AIG licensed) teachers who are trained to recognize characteristics and needs and address them. These students also have the opportunity to have a homeroom with their AIG identified and AIG served peers.

MGSD has previously developed action plans to work closely with guidance counselors and other staff to specifically address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners. Additionally, during the currently ending AIG Plan, MGSD put a greater emphasis on academic growth for AIG students as measured by the NC EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System). District staff has also developed action plans to continue to address "growing" AIG students by increasing academic rigor.

MGSD recognizes the need to identify and implement specific best practices in order to support the social and emotional needs of AIG students. All MGSD AIG teachers in grades 4-6 have previously participated in professional development sessions that focus on meeting the social/emotional needs of Gifted Learners during the currently ending AIG Plan. Content from The Critical Issues in Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education Series by Joyce VanTassel-Baska Ed.D., Tracy L. Cross Ph.D., F. Richard Olenchak Ph.D. was utilized. Also, a book that focused on differentiating curriculum and instruction for AIG students was studied via PLCs. The title of this book is Rigor for Gifted Learners: Modifying Curriculum with Intellectual Integrity by Bertie Kingmore. Additionally, instructional coaches, the elementary curriculum coordinator and the math coach for the district will next address extended learning opportunities for advanced learners, some of to be these incorporated into district curriculum guides.

Guidance Counselors, as stated previously, participated in professional development aimed at meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Follow up regarding this PD topic continues during the years of this AIG Plan. School-based administrators will be provided with information on supporting school personnel in these efforts. There has also been district-wide school-level training regarding providing emotional support for advanced learners and other groups.

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: In general terms, MGSD adheres to North Carolina Professional Development and Licensure requirements. The district also has its own (more stringent) local requirements that must be met to receive continuing education units (CEU) credit, modeled primarily after the definition of high quality professional development. This includes meeting the standards that professional development activities attended must be 10 hours or more and based on evidence-based research. Staff development must be requested and evaluated based on how it relates to teaching and learning (i.e., actual practice). Evaluation of all staff development activities is required prior to CEU credit be awarded/posted.

Additionally, MGSD provides ongoing professional development through in-house Summer Institutes (over 94% of certified teachers recently attended) and on student early-release days. MGSD AIG teacher representatives may attend the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented Conference at least every other year. Additionally, MGSD has developed specific action plans to address professional development needs for certified staff members working with AIG students and other advanced learners. New staff development, some of which is based on prompts from the state-provided Booster Shots material, is planned for implementation during the next three years.

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: AIG students in grades 4-6 are either placed in "self-contained" classrooms (1, 2, or 3-person teams) or in "resource" classes taught by AIG specialists who have completed AIG add-on licensure or have a NC Provisional License and are in the process of completing coursework to add AIG to their license. AIG students in grades 7-8 receive instruction primarily through honors (academically accelerated, compacted and enriched) classes. MGSD attempts to ensure teachers of these classes are AIG certified; however, other criteria are also considered and may take precedence when assigning teachers for AIG students. At the high school level, MGSD utilizes open enrollment, which allows students and families choice in registering for classes while still meeting the needs of high ability learners. Numerous options exist for advanced students for these students; however, the two primary choices are honors and AP courses. Therefore, AIG students are not necessarily placed with AIG-certified teachers, yet AP courses (which are a frequent and appropriate choice for AIG students) are instructed by AP-certified staff only.

Practice E

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

District Response: MGSD maintains a professional development activities plan/calendar that is updated annually, and based, in part, on the district annual staff development survey. Professional development planning also reflects review and analysis of summative assessments obtained at the end of each school year. Yet professional development activities are modified and new ones created based on needs identified throughout each school year (including analysis of formative assessment data) as well.

Longer term goals resulting in professional development activities are based on the district strategic plan, and again, these might evolve or be modified based on current or changing data. In that regard, the AIG program goals and staff development are aligned with the district's overall professional development, initiatives and goals. The AIG program is an integral instructional component of the total program, along with general and special education, and planned/integrated accordingly. Professional development consistently is consistently enhanced by the use of digital tools and resources for teaching and learning, and again, AIG program activities are subsumed within this overarching district focus and system initiative.

Practice F

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

District Response: All MGSD staff members are given opportunities to provide input regarding professional development needs and activities. Feedback is solicited specifically during planning of the staff development summer institute in which most teachers participate. Each school offers opportunities for teachers to refine applications of their professional learning, primarily through use of professional learning communities (PLCs) as well as ongoing department and grade level collaboration (such as regular grade-level planning and work on district formative assessments).

AIG staff are included in these input sessions or modes, as well as PLCs and peer teacher collaboratives. Additionally, district AIG teachers meet at least once during the school year to discuss and plan for professional development needs based on Plan goals, school improvement plan goals, and data from assessments and surveys. AIG teachers also informally meet and communicate regularly to ensure consistency in program implementation and curricular alignment. Finally, the district also structures and encourages vertical and horizontal alignment via periodic meetings each school year. Again, AIG staff are an integral part of those sessions and that work.

MGSD recognizes the need to identify and implement specific best practices in order to support the social and emotional needs of AIG students. During the currently ending AIG Plan, all MGSD AIG teachers in grades 4-6 have participated in a professional development session with focus on meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Content for this PD activity came from: The Critical Issues in Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education Series. The following year teachers will complete a book study on differentiation for AIG students.

Previously, MGSD guidance counselors participated in a professional development session on meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Follow up PD on this topic will continue during the plan years and will be based on the NC-provided Booster Shots. To ensure success of these goals and activities, school-based administrators will be provided with information on supporting school personnel in these efforts.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: New professional development content and activities are being planned/implemented to strengthen this Standard, specifically Practice F.

Sources of Evidence: Local (school) professional development plans (which may be a component/s within school improvement plan/s)

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: MGSD enjoys very active and engaged parent and community stakeholders. Significant parent and community engagement are evident in the large number of parent volunteers across schools, consistently well attended and supported school district arts and sporting events, and attendance at special events such as academic awards ceremonies or special events such as district parent training efforts (for example, numerous parent education efforts, some ongoing, have been effected regarding the use of technology for teaching and learning).

Specific to the AIG Program, the school district has an established AIG Advisory Committee that consists of AIG parents, the AIG lead teacher and Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator, district administrators and a Board of Education representative. Other AIG teachers or general education staff are welcome to attend, yet typically only would do so due to a request to respond or due the specific topic being addressed during the regular meeting. The district intends to intentionally utilize the AIG Advisory Committee to provide a deeper and more regular and frequent level of involvement in the planning, development, implementation, and monitoring of the MGSD AIG Program.

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 school district website displays the AIG Plan, along with a flow chart that shows the identification process and some other details relative to the AIG program. AIG teachers also disseminate and discuss referral and identification process information to/with general education teachers in grades 3 - 6, annually. In addition, the lead AIG teacher disseminates a newsletter regularly. Parents are provided letters and forms that describe the process at certain points, and simultaneously request permission to screen/assess students, as well notification of parent rights during the identification process. Additional forms provided to parents describe the

identification/testing process followed, as well as program eligibility criteria via the local scoring grid, along with whether or not their child has been identified, and the specific area of eligibility and the program/services being offered or implemented. MGSD plans to strengthen these practices by disseminating quarterly newsletters to provide pertinent information for AIG students and their families on the district website. Parents of non-eligible students, those disagreeing with identification procedures/criteria, or those who disagree with placement are given a document detailing the dispute resolution process and timelines to be followed during dispute resolution.

An AIG brochure containing general information and highlighting program features has been developed for dissemination district/community-wide during 2019. This brochure will also be available via the district website. The AIG scoring grid will also be made available to parents and placed on the AIG webpages. The AIG Plan is approved by the local Board of Education at a meeting which is open to the public and summary information about this product and process is contained within Board minutes on the district website, and available upon request in printed format. Finally, Board policies that address student programming, achievement and behavior (that might also integrate with AIG students/advanced learners and their families) are public domain on the web and also available in print upon request.

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 school district has an established AIG advisory group that consists of AIG parents/families, an AIG lead teacher and Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator. Other AIG teachers or general education staff are welcome to attend, yet typically only do so due to a request to respond or due the specific topic being addressed during the regular meeting.

MGSD has revived the Advisory Committee and now utilizes it to provide a deeper and more regular/frequent level of involvement in the planning, development, implementation, and monitoring of the MGSD AIG Program. Currently, there are no AIG student members on the Committee, which can be addressed during the duration of the 2019-22 AIG Plan. However, the Advisory Committee has assisted in completing the program self assessment and by providing input and feedback for (assisting in rewriting) the 2019-2022 AIG Plan. Specific tasks for the Committee have been identified and detailed within the Plan (e.g. Practice E below) to enhance and support the local AIG Program.

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 of AIG students are informed about the program (service delivery options) as students are identified for the program. However, this is most significant in the intermediate grades (4-6), and to a slightly lesser degree, in the middle school grades (7-8). The Duke TIP program, summer camps and specific district summer opportunities aimed at high ability or high achieving students are also publicized to parents annually by flyers or other documents being sent home. As with (for) all district students, AIG-specific forms and other printed information are/is able to be translated as needed for any student/family. The district employs a translator who is available to attend conferences or meetings to translate for parents who speak Spanish, most prevalent second language in the district. Translations (verbal or in print) are available in other languages, as necessary, via a contract with an agency in a Charlotte NC.

MGSD's lead AIG teacher sends quarterly newsletters to parents/families of AIG students. The newsletter may include information regarding opportunities available to AIG students in the community. Although a communique such as this would typically be available to parents in Spanish (the most prevalent second language in the district), it is presently in English only. Realizing that parents might present a need for information in a second language that is not a student need, the district relies somewhat on students to indicate the (parent) need so that a translation might be effected.

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: MGSD has minimal partnerships with community organizations to enhance and gain support that is/are specific to school district AIG programs and services. Developing relationships and establishing partnerships with community or business organizations is one focus for the AIG Advisory Committee during Plan implementation 2019-2022.

During the 3 years of this Plan (2019-2022), the school district AIG Advisory Committee will convene as necessary to develop ideas regarding partnerships that might be established or nurtured to enhance and support the local AIG program and services. A first step toward developing ideas for partnerships is to identify needs of the AIG program that might be met through partnerships. A component of idea development could also include an informal survey of other school districts about their partnerships (what partnerships they have and the ways in which these partnerships enhance their local AIG Program). Ideas will be vetted and developed by the Advisory Committee, and subsequently, partnerships will be pursued by either Committee members or assigned district staff. Follow-up reports to the Committee should compare the list of program needs initially identified to

effects being observed or documented as a result of the newly formed partnership/s.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: This Standard is one recognized as minimally addressed during the self assessment prior to rewriting the AIG Plan. The school district has recently created and begun to utilize an advisory committee to support the AIG Program . The AIG Advisory Committee assisted with current AIG Program assessment and Plan revision. During the next 3 years, the Advisory Committee will serve as an oversight group during Plan implementation, and also focus on exploring options regarding Practice E (as well as other areas such as stakeholder feedback via survey data).

Sources of Evidence: Action Plan/s stemming from Advisory Committee meetings and work.
List of partnerships explored/developed.

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: Prior feedback from the state agency in 2016 indicated a need to revise a substantial portion of the previously submitted Plan, which was therefore significantly modified after receiving both state technical assistance and additional feedback from district staff (particularly AIG teachers and the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education). The revised AIG Plan was submitted to the local Board for approval in March 2017, and immediately submitted to the state agency during the same month. The revised Plan was developed to meet and be commensurate with state statutes (Article 9B) as well as feedback and technical assistance from NCDPI. The revised Plan included a much more comprehensive and clear representation of and response to state standards, practices and statutes.

MGSD has now developed a newly written AIG plan that fully describes the local AIG program and all its components/processes. The Plan was submitted to the local Board of Education in May 2019, (potentially) approved in June 2019, and submitted to the state subsequently. The current Plan was completely revisioned with input and guidance from a newly formed AIG Advisory Committee representing stakeholders from the district and community. The 2019 local Plan comprehensively addresses the components of Article 9B along with the state Standards and Practices. Many changes to the Plan are a result of the assessment of the program completed by the Advisory Committee members and district administration/staff.

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: Due to the relatively smaller size of the district (there are eight schools total), faithful implementation of the AIG Plan is easily ensured. District directors are engaged with all schools almost daily, which supports program consistency and Plan implementation. AIG teachers also communicate regularly and frequently, which ensures consistency and fidelity in Plan/program

implementation. Site administrators, AIG teachers and other stakeholders (including parents) can quickly and easily access central administration to locate information or ask questions about AIG Plan components (such as eligibility criteria) when any issues regarding program interpretation potentially affecting fidelity occur. District-wide forms and parent letters specific to the AIG process and services are utilized to implement the program, which, along with strong communication between and among all stakeholders, also support program fidelity.

Soliciting feedback from our stakeholders will be conducted on an ongoing basis through surveys and/or focus group sessions. We will continue to emphasize the importance of demonstrating growth with our AIG populations. Our district employs local formative assessments aligned with state standards. Local assessments serve as a component of evaluation of the effectiveness of AIG program. Year-to-year and longitudinal data on state EOG tests are analyzed to assess group and individual growth and to develop goals that ensure program alignment at all sites and at all levels.

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: MGSD uses and monitors all state funds allotted for the local AIG program according to state policy. Virtually all state-allotted funds are used to pay AIG teachers' salaries and benefits. No state-allotted AIG funds are used for AIG program administration. Also, AIG state funding does not adequately cover the cost of the district AIG program staff, materials, professional development, etc. Therefore, an additional \$17,323 is currently allotted for program implementation from local funding sources. Monitoring occurs via collaboration with the AIG program overseer (Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education) and the school district finance officer. In addition, comprehensive outside financial auditing is completed annually as per state law and best practice dictate.

Practice D

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

District Response: MGSD is an intensely data-driven district. Therefore, data are frequently and consistently analyzed and shared regarding student achievement and other relevant domains (such as drop-out data), in order to guide and improve instructional and decision-making processes.

There are numerous ways in which student achievement data are analyzed and shared. First, ongoing (formative) assessments, often developed by teacher teams, grade levels and/or

departments, are used to obtain frequent data and guide student instruction, both as (flexible) groups and individuals. Often, these data are obtained or readily available from digital resources (academic/instructional software programs) that are student-performance centered and driven. This allows for individual students to be aware of, understand and become accountable for their own learning, which is of particular benefit for AIG students.

District-wide common benchmark assessments that render very useful student data are also used to drive instruction. Based on the results of these assessments, but also including other data, regular data meetings are held across all schools to analyze, disaggregate and report data, including those data for advanced learners. School-based data meetings are held at all district schools, which are led by teacher leaders and school administrators, and attended by central office directors and supervisors.

Finally, end-of-year student data are reviewed, analyzed and shared during summer and the beginning of the next school year. These data serve as a way to reflect on the prior year's progress and challenges, and to develop and/or refine goals for the coming year. Again, these data include a look at all typically reported subgroups overall, and this includes a current emphasis on growth of students who score at the highest level on state assessments. These data are presented to the entire staff at the back-to-school convocation, as well as provided to school leadership teams to assist development and modification of school improvement plans.

During previous school years, AIG student achievement data were disaggregated and reveal a lack of what the district considers ideal growth for this subgroup. Therefore, instructional coaching and professional development are aimed at improving scores for this student group. Specifics on professional development are contained in other Practices within this Plan as well as School Improvement Plans. During the current Plan, new emphasis will be placed on specifically disaggregating AIG student data.

Practice E

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

District Response: The Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education and Technology provides an annual report in May or June to the MGSD Board of Education, which includes data on the demographics of students who comprise the district AIG headcount along with student achievement data. At certain points, there has been dedicated and very focused attention placed on improving the representation of underserved populations, particularly ethnically and culturally diverse, and economically disadvantaged, in the AIG program. Along with that, grades and achievement data of those students in the AIG program have also received much attention, which implies a focus on their academic performance and retention in the program. Currently, district administration and instructional personnel are working to develop the process and method/s for addressing the newly state-mandated need to serve Level 5 students in advanced programs. Regular data meetings are

held at all schools within the district every year (typically, these are held quarterly). Subgroup data are disaggregated, analyzed and ideas for improvement included in these data meetings. Advanced learner and AIG student data are reported during these meetings as a typical subgroup.

Practice F

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

District Response: The Human Resources Department collects and maintains data regarding the credentials of all instructional and administrative staff. HR also reports and holds accountable all staff for maintaining credentials/licensure, including professional development or course requirements. The Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator works closely with the Human Resources Department to annually monitor the credentials of AIG personnel. The district also requires all teachers of AIG students in specific AIG classes to hold or obtain AIG licensure. Teachers who do not meet and maintain required license requirements are eventually deemed unemployable.

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: Intermittently during prior years, MGSD conducted surveys with AIG teachers and parents/families of AIG students to obtain feedback about program/services quality and satisfaction. This information was used to make adjustments and changes to the AIG Plan and program. During the 2016 Plan Year, MGSD improved this practice by choosing to conduct surveys with all AIG students. The information collected from teachers, students, and parents/families was utilized to develop the current plan. The district plans to continue this practice on an annual basis during the 2019-22 Plan, potentially utilizing the Advisory Committee to develop, implement and analyze the survey and its data.

Practice H

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

District Response: Data sources used to review and revise the MGSD AIG Program Plan include student achievement data, implementation data (administrative classroom walkthroughs), survey

data, and demographic data. Since student achievement is inherent within the district mission and vision, disaggregated student achievement data is the main component of program evaluation, though staff quantity and quality, instructional content and materials, etc. are also important ancillary components. Analysis of these data points is used for a comprehensive program evaluation and corresponding action plan/goals toward program evolution and improvement. During the implementation of the 2019-2022 local Plan, the newly formed AIG Advisory Committee will support Plan monitoring and revision based on analysis and review of specific data points associated with Program goals and new Plan components and foci. These might be in conjunction with surveying stakeholders and survey data analysis. Ultimately, the AIG Program is evaluated by review of the Program goals articulated herein, along with evidences of their completion and outcomes (e.g., action and staff development plans, assessment data, staff development evaluations, program component implementation evidence such as PETs, etc.)

Practice I

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

District Response: MGSD shares program evaluation data with the public primarily through monthly Board of Education meetings. For example, the AIG Plan is shared with the Board (and Plan approval obtained), and the attending public will also hear that the Plan has been rewritten to improve or clarify and improve several Standards and Practices, which in itself serves as a form or component of program evaluation. For example, Practices that are minimally evident are pointed out to the Board and public based on Advisory Committee feedback on the Plan and changes noted to them relative to the impending Plan revision. The AIG Advisory Committee supports AIG program evaluation and reporting.

The school district also develops and widely disseminates to stakeholders and interested parties an Annual Report, which includes specific program information. Another form of program evaluation that is reported in various ways is student achievement and headcount data, both which are presented to district stakeholders such as school leadership teams, school administrators, as well as publicized on the district website and in local news media. Individual schools also have and update at least annually a one-page score/data sheet of pertinent data on school, student and staff demographics, achievement and other relevant scorecard information.

Finally, the school district strategic plan is posted on the district website, yet serves as a living document for guiding goal (and therefore program) evaluation. The strategic plan is intermittently revisited by the central administrative team to assess progress on goals and objectives, which further assists in providing Board updates, the public venue for reporting program evaluation. (Board minutes become a primary source for stakeholders who are not staff to receive information about district goals/objectives updates, which are considered an integral part of program evaluation.) There are also three district advisory groups (parent, student and teacher) that receive information regarding programs and data.

Practice J

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

District Response: MGSD safeguards the rights of all AIG students and their parents/families through the following written policies, procedures, and practices.

Parent Rights: Academically and intellectually gifted students (as well as advanced learners, in general) are provided a free appropriate public education. This means that differentiated services are provided for the academically and intellectually gifted student (1) at no expense to the parent, (2) according to guidelines of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the district's Academically and Intellectually Gifted Program, and (3) according to the student's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). **Referral:** When any person believes that a child is academically or intellectually gifted and may need differentiated educational services, that person should inform school personnel in writing the reason(s) for referring the child and complete the appropriate student checklist. The referral should include information about the student's characteristics and strengths that require differentiated services. A student must be enrolled in public school, and the referral should be given to the student's teacher or a school administrator.

Screening and Evaluation: After a child has been referred and in order to determine his/her need for differentiated services in the academically and intellectually gifted program, a screening process must be followed:

1. The parent must give written permission before (any) individual screening may be done.
2. A school-site team must review all referrals and make a recommendation for further evaluation.
3. Student eligibility for differentiated services will be determined by a school-site team trained to make appropriate recommendations for the individual student. Parent permission for placement is obtained on the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP).

If the parent disagrees with the system's decision concerning eligibility, he/she has the right to obtain and submit results of an independent educational and/or intellectual evaluation. This evaluation must be given by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the education agency responsible for the student's education. Measures of intellectual aptitude and achievement are two of the criteria used in determining eligibility, and additional measures do not necessarily guarantee placement in the academically gifted program, although those results are considered. The school system is not responsible for paying for independent evaluations to determine student eligibility. The parent has the right to ask to meet with the school-site team to review the committee decision. For students identified as academically and intellectually gifted, a differentiated education plan or program is written. Such a plan will include student strengths and the options considered by the school-site team as appropriate to the student's educational needs. The school system must ensure that placement is based on multiple indicators of giftedness and that options chosen are based on the needs of the student. Placement is the end result of referral, evaluation, consideration of all criteria involved in giftedness, and the development of the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). Parent permission for

placement (for the child to receive services in the local AIG Program) is obtained via the parent signature on the DEP. The DEP is uploaded on this site as an appendix, within the set of fillable (pdf) forms.

The following procedures are contained within the Parent Rights document; these are specific to addressing the resolution of disagreements regarding referral, identification, or services:

1. The parent may request, in writing, a conference with the AIG School Review Team.
2. If the parent still disagrees with the committee decision, he/she may appeal the decision by making a written request to the Executive Director of Elementary Education within 30 days of the conference with the AIG School Review Team. The Executive Director of Elementary Education will review the decision of the team and grant a conference within ten (10) school days of the parental request and respond in writing within five (5) days of that conference.
3. If the disagreement is not resolved with the Executive Director of Elementary Education's decision, the parent may request to have the decision reviewed by mediation. The parent may ask the school system to contact the Department of Public Instruction for a mediator, a person knowledgeable about the area of gifted education. The mediator selected will review the decision made by the school system and will render a decision within 30 days.
4. If mediation fails to resolve the disagreement satisfactorily, the parent may file a petition for a contested case hearing under the NC General Statutes. The hearing will be limited to consideration of (1) whether the local school unit improperly failed to identify the student as an academically gifted student and (2) whether the local plan 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 becomes final, is binding on all parties, and is not subject to further review under the NC General Statutes. Attorney fees are the responsibility of the parent.

Transfer Students: Students who transfer into the school district and are identified as AIG (or similar label or academic/instructional program) upon enrollment are placed into the program upon verification of documentation from the prior school district or school. Students sometimes do not meet local criteria necessary for AIG services or it is not obtainable from the previous district/school. Yet because the district AIG program serves both strictly eligible and not eligible but placed students in the AIG program, the transfer student is put into the program until more data are available (either sent from their prior district, or obtained by individually assessing the student after he or she arrives). Additional assessment may be completed at the end of the year when mass screening and identification typically occur. However, if the student transfers to MGSD at or near the beginning of a school year -- and especially if the student appears overly challenged by the program content and/or pace -- individual assessment may occur as soon as parent permission to complete the testing can be obtained. Transfer students are of course afforded and made aware of the same rights during the process and/or due to a disagreement with the process as those previously or currently in-district students who are already enrolled or placed.

Reassessment of Students: Students who do not meet eligibility criteria for the AIG Program are reassessed multiple times and for multiple reasons. This includes students who meet eligibility criteria in one area (Reading or Math) and not the other, as well as students who do not meet identification criteria in either area, but are in the pool of potentially-eligible students due to mass screening scores, and finally, those students who do not meet eligibility criteria yet are still placed (referred to as placed, not eligible) in the program for actual instructional services.

The student who has been receiving AIG services yet only eligible in one area may be screened in the other area near the end of each school year and the same process followed for permission to evaluate and place (signatures obtained for both) each time. Students who are placed in the pool of students due to potential AIG-eligibility are reassessed if they do not meet the criteria for identification and are within a few points of eligibility. Students are also reassessed if a teacher or the parent requests it. Students who do not meet eligibility criteria but are within the pool of potentially eligible students at the end of third grade are also reassessed at the end of fourth, fifth and sixth grades. Again, during those times...and if parent or teacher recommends/requests reassessment in between these times, students are reassessed. Finally, teachers within the AIG Program maintain a list of students that may not fall into either/any of the categories described herein yet are considered to be potentially academically and/or intellectually gifted though have not been determined eligible or even placed, yet will be reassessed.

It should be noted that reassessment might include administration of an additional ability or achievement test or tests, or both, or might simply consist of reviewing newly available standardized test data, and/or completion of the observation checklist and/or environmental consideration checklist. The same due process procedures are followed and signatures are obtained during reassessment of students as with initial identification and placement.

Ideas to Strengthen the Standard: Practices within this Standard are historically strong. However, to strengthen this domain further, new actions are being implemented regarding Practices D, G and I. Again, the Advisory Committee might also be utilized for this effort, especially in regards to surveys/survey data, and as an oversight group responsible for assessing completion and success of Program goals (articulated within the Program Information page of this set of narratives).

Sources of Evidence: Board presentations, website documents, newsletters, and action and staff development plans and their related documents showing the items were resolved or completed. Surveys and survey data.

Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

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