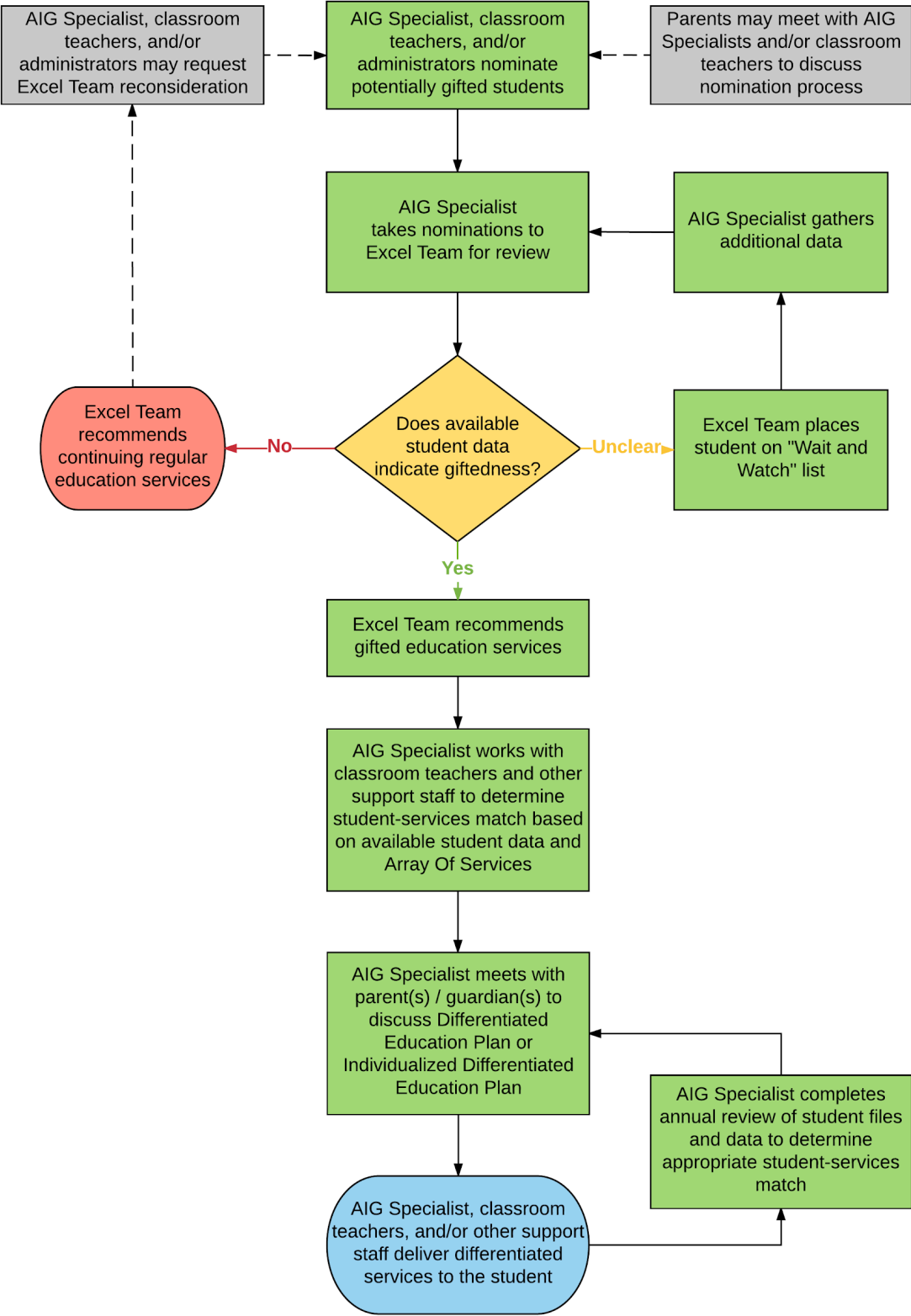


Watauga County Schools AIG Plan 2025-2028

Appendix A: Identification Flowchart and Criteria

Watauga County Schools AIG Identification Flowchart¹

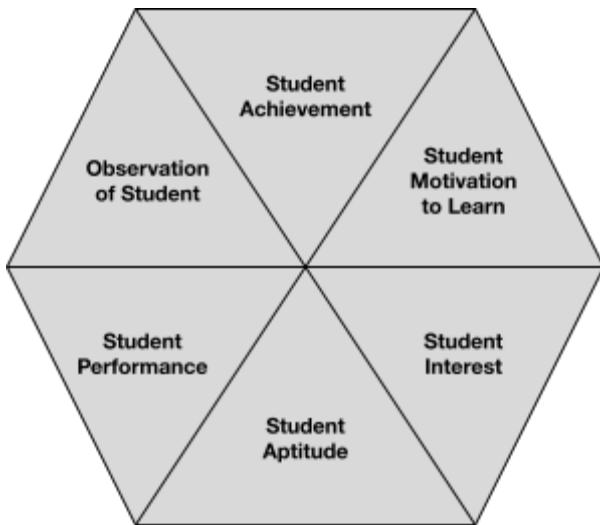


¹ For a more detailed description of the screening, referral, and identification process, see Standard 1, Practices A and B of the WCS AIG Plan.

Best Search Practices

- Gifted students are a diverse group with varying expressions of talent; identification should reflect this diversity rather than adhere to narrow definitions.
- The identification process should emphasize equity and inclusion, particularly for students from historically underrepresented populations (e.g., culturally and linguistically diverse students, economically disadvantaged, twice-exceptional students).
- Multiple criteria and data sources should be used in the identification process to ensure a holistic view of each student (Matthews & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2018).
- Both quantitative (e.g., standardized test scores) and qualitative data (e.g., teacher observations, portfolios) should be collected and interpreted in context.
- Teams making identification decisions should include educators trained in gifted education as well as individuals knowledgeable about the student's cultural, linguistic, and developmental background (Peters, Matthews, McBee, & McCoach, 2020).
- Screening should begin early and be repeated over time to capture late bloomers and those whose giftedness may emerge under different conditions.
- Special consideration should be given to the cultural and contextual manifestations of gifted behavior (Ford & Grantham, 2020).
- Data collected should directly inform service planning and instructional decisions, not just serve as gatekeeping tools.

Multiple Indicators of Giftedness



Giftedness reflects a student's advanced capacity to learn, think, and perform beyond the expectations of age-level peers. It can manifest in many ways—through exceptional academic performance, creative problem-solving, leadership, artistic talent, or non-traditional ways of knowing. Identification is not limited to test scores; it may emerge through observation, performance-based assessments, and evidence gathered in authentic learning settings.

Watauga County Schools recognizes that gifted potential exists across all demographic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic groups. However, barriers such as limited access to learning opportunities, language differences, trauma, or twice-exceptionality may obscure a student's abilities. The district is committed to equity by actively seeking and supporting students from historically underrepresented populations, including those who are culturally and linguistically diverse), economically disadvantaged, and twice-exceptional (2e).

Identification is approached holistically. No single data point is used to exclude a student from consideration. Instead, multiple indicators—quantitative and qualitative—are considered to create a full picture of a learner's needs. Each indicator should relate meaningfully to potential services. In some cases, specific indicators may be prioritized for certain decisions (e.g., math achievement data for advanced math placement).

This approach reflects current best practices in equitable gifted education, as supported by recent research from the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), the Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program, and experts such as Peters, Matthews, & Rambo-Hernandez (2022).

Indicators of Giftedness

Student Achievement	Indicator of a student’s knowledge. This may be shown, for example, through a standardized test score or an End-of-Grade/End-of-Course test score.
Student Motivation to Learn	Indicator of a student’s commitment to pursue learning experiences. This may be shown through school and/or outside of school activities. With some students, this area may be muted by unfavorable environmental or experiential circumstances. For these students, who have often been called “underachievers,” an individual case study may be important to reflect the student’s specific areas of need.
Student Interest	Indicator of a student’s focus areas and/or curiosity. This may be shown through a formal interest inventory/survey, informal interview, and/or documentation of a student’s particular passion(s). Interest may also be demonstrated through a student’s participation in extracurricular activities.
Student Aptitude	Indicator of a student’s capacity for learning. This involves reasoning, problem solving, memory, etc. Aptitude may be shown through a standardized assessment score signifying demonstrated abilities.
Student Performance	Indicator of a student’s demonstrated mastery. This may be shown through work samples, portfolios, grades, or other authentic assessment strategies. In some cases, performance may be demonstrated outside the school arena.
Observation of Student	<p>Indicator of a student’s need for differentiation based on his/her observable behavior as documented through gifted rating scales and teacher narratives. This may be shown through the student’s abilities in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication – Highly expressive and effective use of words, numbers, and symbols • Humor – Conveys and picks up on humor • Imagination/Creativity – Produces many ideas, highly original • Inquiry – Questions, experiments, explores • Insight – Quickly grasps new concepts and makes connections, senses deeper meanings • Interests – Intense (sometimes unusual) interests • Memory – Large storehouse of information on school or non-school topics • Motivation – Evidence of desire to learn • Problem Solving – Effective, often inventive, strategies for recognizing and solving problems • Reasoning – Logical approaches to figuring out solutions

WCS AIG Program Identification Criteria

This document summarizes the WCS AIG Program identification criteria as specified in Standard 1, Article B of the WCS AIG Plan. Excel Teams base their identification of gifted students at any grade level on these criteria. AIG Specialists and Excel Team members should be mindful of underachieving and historically underrepresented gifted populations and the need to give full consideration to individual strengths and needs. Excel Teams can recommend further evaluation at the school or district level for students who do not achieve the recommended criteria as stated in this document.

To complement these criteria, Excel Teams may be further informed by other qualitative data, including observations, recommendations, and/or work samples indicating high student interest, motivation, and ability to work with course content beyond factual recall (e.g. to creatively synthesize knowledge from disparate sources, to independently apply learned content in new contexts). This data may come from an EC or ML teacher in situations where the student might be twice-exceptional. These informal data sources are intended to highlight a student’s potential to achieve. Ultimately, the WCS AIG identification criteria are intended to focus on multiple ways to see a student’s strengths, rather than create barriers for identification.

At no point will Excel Teams use a single data point in and of itself as a reason to exclude a student from gifted identification. Yet, in very rare cases, any single criterion, if superior, *may* indicate a need for gifted identification and services. Again, Excel Teams look at the complete learner profile when making a determination for gifted identification.

Grades K-2 Identification Criteria

In grades K-2, students are typically not formally identified as gifted out of considerations for young students’ rapidly changing academic, intellectual, and social-emotional development. Instead, the talent development process in these grades (described in detail in Standard 2, Practice A and Standard 3, Practice G) provides AIG Specialists a regular opportunity to directly interact with all K-2 students and their teachers in order to observe potential gifted characteristics. However, students in this grade span may be formally identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) when a combination of the criteria below indicate a compelling need for advanced differentiation. These criteria are based on those for AI identification in grades 3 and above but differ slightly due to the data sources available in these grades.

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI) in grades K-2	
Aptitude	<input type="checkbox"/> 98th percentile or greater quantitative, verbal, nonverbal, and/or composite individual aptitude assessment scores ²
Achievement & Performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Score at least three years above grade level expectations on a standardized individual achievement test in all areas for grade acceleration, or two years above grade level in the subject to be accelerated <input type="checkbox"/> Portfolio of work samples demonstrating exceptional, consistent ability to work with course content beyond factual recall (e.g. to creatively synthesize knowledge from disparate sources, to independently apply learned content in new contexts)
Observation & Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> Gifted Behavior Scale scores of 187 points or greater from the classroom teacher and AIG Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> AIG Specialist, classroom teacher, and principal recommendations documenting anecdotal evidence of social-emotional and academic levels as well as exceptional student interest

Grades 3-12 Identification Criteria

	Academically Gifted in Math (AM), Reading (AR), or both (AG)	Intellectually Gifted (IG)	Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI)
Aptitude	<input type="checkbox"/> 90th percentile or greater quantitative (for AM), verbal (for AR), or both (for AG) aptitude assessment score ²	<input type="checkbox"/> 98th percentile or greater quantitative, verbal, nonverbal, and/or composite scores on both group and individual aptitude assessments ³	<input type="checkbox"/> 98th percentile or greater quantitative, verbal, nonverbal, and/or composite individual aptitude assessment scores ²
Achievement & Performance	<input type="checkbox"/> 93rd percentile or greater rank on the relevant subject-area North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) or End-of-Course (EOC) tests or PreACT/ACT subtests ⁴ <input type="checkbox"/> Course grades in the relevant subject area of 92% or greater	<input type="checkbox"/> Average or below-average EOG/EOC or PreACT/ACT scores <input type="checkbox"/> Average or below-average course grades in the context of exceptional aptitude	<input type="checkbox"/> 98th percentile or greater rank on the relevant subject-area North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) or End-of-Course (EOC) tests or PreACT/ACT subtests ³ <input type="checkbox"/> Course grades in the relevant subject area of 95% or greater
Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Gifted Behavior Scale (GBS) rating of at least 159 points	<input type="checkbox"/> GBS rating of at least 159 points	<input type="checkbox"/> GBS rating of at least 187 points

² Depending on how scores are reported for the assessment used, a corresponding index or subscore composite accurately depicting aptitude in Math or Reading may be used in this area.

³ Depending on how scores are reported for the assessment used, a corresponding index or subscore composite may be used in this area.

⁴ The PreACT/ACT composite score is not used in this area.