

Caldwell County Schools
Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan
Effective 2016-2019

Approved by local Board of Education on: 13-JUN-16

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Caldwell County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015). 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 2016-2019. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's board of Education and sent to NC DPI for comment.

For 2016-2019, Caldwell County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Caldwell County Schools Vision for local AIG program: The Caldwell County Schools Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted and Advanced Placement Program works to develop the maximum potential in students. Through rigor, relevance and relationships, we are committed to challenging students to excel to their highest levels of success in order to be prepared for life in the 21st century.

Sources of funding for local AIG program (as of 2016)

| State Funding | Local Funding | Grant Funding | Other Funding |
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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

Articulates and disseminates the procedures for AIG student identification, including screening, referral, and identification processes for all grade levels to school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community-at-large.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program will continue to focus as a team to provide comprehensive and equitable procedures for AIG student identification. The AIG Program will maintain a district website, with screening, referral, and identification processes publicized and described for school personnel, parents and families, and the community at large. An informational brochure will be distributed annually to all schools, describing program availability and contact information. The brochure is also posted on line for interested stakeholders. Elementary and middle school specialists serve all school settings in the district, and they hold annual meetings to review service delivery options, show a PowerPoint about the district and school-level AIG Program, and address parent concerns. Specialists attend school-level meetings, such as PTA meetings, report card release events, and family nights to provide on-going information to stakeholders. They work kindergarten, middle school, and high school registration events. AIG Specialists work at assigned schools to receive student referrals and provide screening and identification services to the schools. They also provide quarterly newsletters and regularly update their own school-based websites. Written information is provided for students without internet access. AIG Specialists also are encouraged to provide an annual refresher update to faculty and staff at faculty meetings. An AIG Specialist is assigned as a consultant/facilitator to serve the five high schools, and that specialist meets students at registration meetings and open houses to provide information tailored for identified students in the high school. The AIG Director is housed at the school district's main office and is a part of Educational Program Services Department. This department provides strategic planning for all curricular programs and brings all grade level planning, including AIG, Exceptional Children Services, and English Language Learning Services together for the district. In addition, the director attends all mid-month principals' meetings and all end-of-month principals' meetings to provide and receive input concerning the AIG Program. All AIG Specialists and the AIG Director are available through email and by telephone to address questions and concerns about screening, referral, and identification of AIG students. The AIG Plan for 2016-2019 will be posted via the website and hard copies will be provided to each specialist. As an added component to ensure consistent documentation, AIG Specialists maintain a notebook of procedures, forms, and pathway identification protocols. An AIG Advisory Board made up of teachers, administrators, specialists, and parents meet twice year to receive updates, data, and information about the AIG Program.

Practice B

States and employs multiple criteria for AIG student identification. These criteria incorporate measures that reveal student aptitude, student achievement, or potential to achieve in order to develop a comprehensive profile for each student. These measures include both non-traditional and

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traditional measures that are based on current theory and research.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program is committed to the tenets of North Carolina Article 9B by employing best practices for screening, referral, and identification of AIG students. The goal of the program is consistency across the district through the use of multiple pathways. The AIG Program will continue to search widely for potential students through input from regular educators, administrators, and AIG Specialists. Data is gathered from multiple sources, both objective and subjective. The program provides yearly updated resources, which include policies, procedures, and forms, to ensure consistency and fidelity with the county-wide screening, referral, identification, and placement processes. These resources are accessible to AIG Specialists in an online format and through monthly meetings.

The AIG Department utilizes two critical elements to support referral and screening. A Young Scholars' Program for all qualifying students in K-3 provides the opportunity to cultivate and support the gifted potential in all young students. Students who score at, or above, the 95th percentile on assessments used in all core reading classes (DIBELS; TRC), and who are recommended by the classroom teacher are eligible for limited consultative services by the Elementary AIG Specialist assigned to the school. The Young Scholars' Program is the means for all high achievers to receive differentiated support services while the gifted specialist is gathering multiple additional data for potential identification and placement. The Elementary AIG Specialist will also provide curricular support for the teachers of students in the Young Scholars' Program to accelerate the academic growth of higher ability students

For the referral and identification procedures, in order to develop and ensure a more comprehensive profile of each student being considered for placement, each AIG Specialist will create a student folder to compile documents for identification consideration. These documents include a parent permission form for testing and/or permission to collect testing data; aptitude and achievement results in math and reading; student observation checklists; AIG Review Team notes; and other forms of academic performance, such as grades. Child Search forms will also be utilized to ensure that underserved populations are included in all search procedures. The Elementary AIG Specialist will also collaborate with the ELL instructors to identify students who may not be readily identified through standard data collection. The Elementary AIG Specialist will collect all information to bring to the AIG Review Team. The AIG Review Team may recommend testing or continued collecting of checklists and other data.

An aptitude assessment, currently the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Form 7, is administered district-wide annually as a universal screener in grades three and six. In addition, the AIG Department maintains access to other testing materials, including the Metropolitan 8 Achievement Test, the Stanford Achievement Test, the Otis-Lennon school Ability Test (OLSAT), the Naglieri NonVerbal Aptitude Test (NNAT), the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI), as well as print copies of the CogAT for all grade levels. All AIG Elementary Specialists have been trained in testing protocols and funding for the individual tests comes through the AIG budget.

For identification and placement in the AIG Program in grades K-2, students recommended may present multiple types of data through three pathways. For a student to place via Pathway I, the student must have a composite aptitude score at, or above, the 98th percentile. This student would be identified as IG—Intellectually Gifted. For a student to place via Pathway II, the student must have both a composite aptitude score at, or above, the 95th percentile and an achievement test at, or

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above, the 95th percentile.

This student will be identified as AI—Academically Intelligent. For a student to place via Pathway III, the student must have two out of three of the following criteria—an aptitude score (composite or sub-test) of at least 95th percentile; an achievement test score in reading and/or math of at least 95th percentile; a minimum of two passing student observation checklists, with one completed by the AIG Specialist at the school. This student would be identified as AG—Academically Gifted, if the student qualifies in both subjects. The student would be identified as AR or AM—Academically Gifted/Reading or Academically Gifted/Math, if the student qualifies in only one subject.

For identification and placement in the AIG Program in grades 3-8, students recommended may present multiple types of data through three pathways. For a student to place via Pathway I, the student must have a composite aptitude score at, or above, the 98th percentile. This student would be identified as IG—Intellectually Gifted. For a student to place via Pathway II, the student must have a composite aptitude score of at least 95th percentile and an achievement test score of at least 95th percentile in reading and/or math. This student would be identified as AI—Academically Intelligent. For a student to place via Pathway III, the student must have three of the following four criteria—an aptitude score of at least 90th percentile on a composite aptitude assessment; and/or an achievement test score of at least 90th percentile in reading and/or math, and/or an "A" in the nominated subject(s), and/or a passing score from a student observation/checklist. One observation/checklist must be completed by the AIG Specialist. This student would be identified as AG—Academically Gifted, if the student qualifies in both subjects. The student would be identified as AR or AM—Academically Gifted/Reading or Academically Gifted/Math, if the student qualifies in only one subject.

For students in grades 9-12, Advanced Placement classes in the high school are self-selected. However, if a student has not been previously identified for program purposes, the student must meet three of the four following criteria for the High School Pathway— a student achievement score of 90th percentile or above, using scores from one of the available assessments, including the ACT Plan, PSAT, SAT or ACT scores if taken; classroom performance scores of "A" in English or Math; class rank in the upper five percent of the class; and/or two passing student observations checklists, with one completed by the High School AIG Specialist.

The AIG Director's Option is an option that may be utilized for K-12 students in the district who are currently being served in the ELL Program or who have exited that program via the ACCESS test. These are students who have shown advanced skills in learning the English language, moving from Level 1 reading to Level 3 reading in less than a school year and have proved to excel in classroom activities while learning the language. Testing materials in the language of the student may not be currently available. These students may be recommended to the program by an administrator, by the ELL teacher, or by the AIG Specialist. Two student observation checklists will be required, along with a passing ACCESS test score and classroom performance of "A". In addition, scores on an aptitude and/or achievement test may be considered without the required percentile performance for the pathways. These recommendations come directly to the AIG Director and any decision for placement will be made at the discretion of the AIG Director.

For all pathways, the student referrals will originate with the AIG Review Team. Once the procedures have shown that a student will place, the forms will be completed by the AIG Specialist and routed to the AIG Director for approval. All AIG identifications from NC LEAs will be honored. Students who

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enroll from outside North Carolina must meet the district's AIG criteria. Only state-approved aptitude and/or achievement tests may be used. AIG Specialists meet monthly to address AIG Review team concerns, referrals, and complete data input for student identification and placement.

Practice C

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program will continue to implement a variety of traditional and nontraditional measures to appropriately and equitably identify students. The AIG Program utilizes multiple criteria for gifted identification. These criteria include at least three pathways for students in kindergarten through eighth grade, potentially using such data as test data, student performance, and student observations/checklists.

The Child Search process is essential in ensuring that students are screened appropriately. During the screening process, the student's name is referred to the AIG Specialist or the AIG Specialist may detect the student during classroom observations. The AIG Specialist begins to gather data on the student. This data may include testing data that is already available. The AIG Specialist may need to administer an available test to secure additional data. At the present time, the CogAT Form 7 is administered at the district level to all third and sixth graders annually as a universal screener. The AIG Program can also administer the CogAT individually, as needed. Non-verbal aptitude assessments, such as the Naglieri and the Test of Nonverbal Aptitude (TONI) are also available. Achievement tests that may be administered by the AIG Specialists include the Metropolitan Achievement Test and/or the Stanford Achievement Test. The AIG Review Team may request an assessment be given to an "at potential" student or to a student who may miss placement due to one testing measure.

The Young Scholars' Program is another tool implemented at the elementary level to support and cultivate gifted potential and search for students who are possible candidates for identification and placement. Students in grades K-3 are supported on a case-by-case basis. The Young Scholars' Program is a fluid and flexible program, with students receiving limited services as long as individual classroom performance remains in good standing. Parent permission is required annually at the elementary level.

The AIG Program also maintains a means for placement by the AIG Director for English language learners who show particular finesse and precociousness in learning the English language. These students may represent languages where testing materials are limited or they may be students who have had limited experience taking standardized English tests. When possible, translated tests are used for assessments. However, this placement option permits the collection of a recommendation from the ELL teacher and classroom observation/checklists. Students may be administered an aptitude and/or achievement test, but they may be identified and placed without the required percentile performance on the aptitude and/or achievement test. An initial passing score on the ELL ACCESS Test and moving from Level 1 to Level 3 in reading skills during the school year, along with exceptional performance on classroom assignments, may supplement the data on an achievement

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test. The AIG Director works closely with the Director of ELL Services to plan for placement and instruction of these students.

For other populations of gifted students, highly gifted learners may be identified and placed using Pathways I or II. Once identified as IG (Intellectually Gifted) or AI (Academically Intelligent) and placed, these students will receive Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs) in order to address their academic potential and their social and emotional needs. Additionally, the AIG Director and the Exceptional Children's Program Director will annually work together to identify, through PowerSchool and Census Files, students who are twice-identified. In this district, these students are frequently receiving services at an elementary school for students with behavioral issues. An AIG Elementary Specialist provides consultative services to that school for the students who are twice-identified.

AIG Specialists provide services to all the elementary and middle schools in the district. These services include direct teaching/pull out services, consultative services, and core curriculum support to regular classroom teachers. All of the elementary and middle schools in the district are Title I schools, with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. AIG students at these sites receive weekly support on a schedule from the AIG Specialists.

Practice D

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program has worked diligently to ensure fidelity and consistency in the implementation of screening, referral, and identification processes within the district. AIG Specialists strive to reach students from traditionally underrepresented populations by implementing research-driven methods such as the Gifted Rating Scale and/or Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS). These tools serve as valid and reliable tools for student observations/checklists. An Alternative Evaluation Form is also available for the AIG Specialist to implement in order to guide the AIG Review Team. This tool allows the team to determine if a student needs an alternative assessment, such as the Test of Nonverbal intelligence (TONI) or the Naglieri (NNAT). These nonverbal assessments are available at the AIG District Office. Forms and procedures for screening, identification, and placement are reviewed twice annually—at the end of the school year and again at the beginning of a new school year. AIG Specialists are re-trained annually in the use of the forms and in the correct protocols for identification and placement. All folders for placement are routed to the AIG Director for review and signature prior to finalizing all placement decisions. The AIG Plan is posted on line and is available to all school personnel and district stakeholders. Copies of Pathways I, II, and III, including descriptions of the multiple ways for identification and placement as IG, AI, AG, AR, and AM are available for use by teachers, counselors, and administrators. AIG Specialists use the same PowerPoint presentation for DEP meetings and the same parent brochure to introduce and describe the AIG Program at open house parent meetings. AIG Specialists maintain a handbook of procedures and forms, and they meet monthly at council meetings to review data, go over paperwork and referrals, and update curricula. The AIG Specialists lead the AIG Review Teams at the individual schools as screening, referral, and placement decisions are examined. A folder is maintained for each student in the Young Scholars' Program. A Census File is created for each student who is identified and placed in the AIG Program. Census Files are subject to district audit at any time. However, all AIG Census Files are internally audited at each transition—

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students moving from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school. In addition, files are exchanged in person at those junctures to ensure sharing of information and differentiated planning for each individual student.

Practice E

Maintains documentation that explains the identification process and service options for individual AIG students, which is reviewed annually with parents/families.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program has continued to implement the policies and procedures of a board-approved document outlining the identification process and service options for AIG students in the district. All required forms, testing data, and parent consent forms are maintained and annually reviewed. Informed consent is required regarding all AIG departmental-administered testing and data collection. Layers of review, starting with the AIG Specialist, to the AIG Review Team at each school, to the district AIG Director, examine identification and placement documentation. For initial AIG placement, the legal parent/guardian/custodian of the student is invited to a conference, and the plan and service options are detailed, along with due process rights information. For an AIG-identified student transferring from within the state of North Carolina, that district's placement is honored. For an AIG-identified student transferring from out of state, the student must meet the local district's AIG multiple criteria, and an attempt will be made to place through one of the local pathways. All assessment data presented for an out of state transfer placement must utilize a state-approved test from the North Carolina Governor's School List of State-Approved Tests.

The Elementary AIG Specialists maintain individual AIG Service Notebooks, which include current records for each school location documenting updated referral lists, Child Search forms, class schedules, Young Scholars' lists, timelines for testing, newsletters and other parent communication documents, telephone and email logs, and other paperwork relevant to screening, identification, and service delivery. Specialists also maintain a listing of available assessments for individual testing. When a student is referred to the Young Scholars' Program, a student file is created and maintained to house all collected data for potential identification and placement in the AIG program. At such time as all necessary identification information is available, an AIG Census File will be created, with all required documentation collected and maintained in the Census File. The Census File is audited by the district AIG Director prior to a parent conference to place the student in the AIG Program. Official evidence, including parent permission to test or evaluate data for placement, district test data, school performance information, student observations/checklists, and results of individual testing (if needed) will be reviewed and approved. Once the Census File audit is complete, the AIG Specialist will meet with the legal parent/guardian/custodian and receive parental consent to place. An initial Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) will be created during the meeting, with service options presented, and consented to, by the parent. Paperwork will be signed by the parent, the AIG Specialist, the AIG Review Team, and the school's administrator. The AIG Director will keep a record of all entries at the district level and ensure that new placements are accurately maintained on PowerSchool.

The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program will maintain student rosters of AIG-identified students at each school. An official state headcount occurs twice a year, once per semester. Midway to each AIG headcount, AIG rosters will be printed from PowerSchool and will be verified with all AIG Specialists

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in order to ensure the accuracy of all information entered into PowerSchool. An AIG Specialist at each school site has access to AIG PowerSchool information. All PowerSchool information is updated annually. In addition, AIG Specialists will send to the district AIG Director a list of all AIG Census Files housed at each school that match the current PowerSchool AIG roster. This will assure that all Census Files are accounted for within the district.

All high school AIG Census Files are housed at the Education Center under the auspices of the High School AIG Specialist. All AIG Census Files are confidential and are maintained only by the assigned AIG Specialist at the individual school. The AIG Director will be the contact person for securing the file of any student who transfers from an in-state district. The AIG Director will then place the student in the AIG Program as appropriate. The AIG Director will also be the contact person for securing the placement file/information of any student who transfers from out of state. The AIG Director will work with the AIG Specialist to either place the transferred student or to arrange the necessary data collection to place the student in the AIG Program.

Students are tested as needed within the AIG Program. All Elementary AIG Specialists have been trained to administer individual aptitude and/or achievement tests. Special needs and accommodations are arranged as requested. Alternative Evaluation Forms are also available to assist the AIG Review Team in determining if non-traditional testing is needed. Non-traditional tests are implemented for students who have extenuating circumstances or those from underrepresented populations. The AIG Director, in collaboration with the AIG Specialist at each site, schedules the testing arrangements. All tests are scored by the AIG Specialist, who then starts the process of placement with the AIG Review Team and the parents. Re-testing may occur if a single data point prevents a student from identification.

The AIG Program supports student due process rights concerning identification and placement in the program. A Student Rights/Due Process Document has been board-approved and is provided at all parent meetings. The Due Process Document is also available on the district AIG website for review by parents, administrators, school personnel, and other stakeholders. The Due Process document states that the Board of Education "believes that students and parents have the right to an orderly, equitable solution to problems, which may arise affecting them and the school system. The student/parent shall start at the school level using established procedures to resolve matters of concern. The Board of Education will not consider any such matter until all administrative remedies have been exhausted. Whenever a student/parent believes that he or she has been adversely affected by a decision of the school-based committee regarding eligibility, placement, service delivery, or other matters related to accessing and/or benefiting from services for gifted children, due process may be requested in accordance with this policy. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that disagreements will be resolved amicably and justly at the lowest possible level." Timelines for appeals and procedures for each level of appeal are outlined in the document that is provided to all parents. The district AIG Director is available to parents at all times for identification and placement questions or concerns.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: - Update the AIG website to make it more comprehensive for the AIG Program, including pathway information, PowerPoint presentations, important AIG documents, and survey questions

- Publish a district AIG newsletter that provides current identification information, promotes AIG

Programs throughout the district, and highlights district-wide AIG events

- Create a new brochure for the Young Scholars' Program
- Create an updated brochure for the AIG Program
- Provide checklists and flowcharts to schools to identify students for the Young Scholars' Program and the AIG Program
- Maintain AIG Census Files for three to five years after graduation
- AIG Specialists will submit revised yearly plans for each of their assigned schools

Sources of Evidence: - Caldwell County Schools' 2016-2019 Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan

- Online AIG Specialists' Handbook of policies/procedures/forms
- Young Scholars' files (maintained throughout K-3)
- AIG K-5 service notebooks with Young Scholars' lists; teacher referral forms; Child Search Forms; newsletters and other communication documents; other relevant paperwork documenting screening, placement, identification and accountable service delivery
- Annual Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs)
- Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs)
- LEA-AIG Individualized or Group Testing Data reports (by AIG Department)
- Student observation/student checklist forms
- Parent Invitation to Conference completed forms
- AIG 5th Grade Student Data Sheet
- PowerSchool AIG student headcount reports (reviewed twice a year)
- AIG parent brochures
- Sign-in sheets/agendas at faculty and/or team meetings in which county AIG information has been provided to staff and/or parents
- Copies of Pathways
- AIG Council Meetings, and trainings (Agendas, sign-in sheets, and handouts)
- AIG/Governor's School Parent Nights (Handouts, PowerPoints and sign-in sheets)

- A Parent Rights/Due Process statement provided at all yearly parent DEP and/or IDEP and initial placement meetings

Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

Practice A

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program will continue to implement a research-based curricula that expands and extends the North Carolina Standard Course of Study in reading and mathematics, particularly for students identified and served in the third through eighth grades. For students in the Young Scholars' Program, AIG Specialists will utilize resources that focus on promoting problem solving and higher order thinking skills across content areas. At all school sites, AIG Specialists will reach out to collaborate with regular classroom teachers to make differentiation the norm and not the exception.

The AIG team evaluates and updates the AIG service delivery options annually. These service delivery options include opportunities for enrichment, acceleration, and extension of the core curriculum and twenty-first century skills. Chromebooks are supplied for each AIG class in all elementary and middle school sites. All middle school AIG math classes have been equipped with TI-84 graphing calculators. These devices enable teachers to accelerate the instruction and give students a technological boost. All elementary schools are encouraged to cluster group AIG students in order to best provide direct services by the regular grade level teachers and pull-out services by the AIG Specialist. Other service delivery options include subject grouping, resource support/consultative services, flexible grouping options, and individualized instruction. In the high school, Advanced Placement courses are self-selected; however, high school students also have dual enrollment classes available through the local community college. In addition, the district offers two Cooperative Innovative High Schools—Caldwell Early College High School and Caldwell Middle College High School. Both offer students access to advanced college classes. Both of these high schools are on the campus of the local community college. Middle school and high school students may participate in NCVPS—North Carolina Virtual Public Schools classes—online offerings that allow them to complete high school classes early. Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is also available for potential middle school and high school students.

Identified AIG students are afforded many enrichment opportunities throughout the district, including Google Gravity Games; the Optimist Oratorical Contest; Battle of Books teams; Model United Nations classes; Science Fair; Spelling and Geography Bees; MathCounts teams; the Blue Ridge Electric Science Extravaganza; the Duke Talent Identification Program; and SAT/ACT Refresher Classes. Rising seniors may be selected for nomination to the Governor's School. Content modifications made available to AIG students include, but are not limited to, specific learning centers, menu choice boards, and independent studies, differentiated units, tiered assignments, Socratic Seminars, learning contracts, Junior Great Books, and Science Olympiad.

The Caldwell County School District also has a grade acceleration policy, with guidelines for grade acceleration and for early admission to school. For grade acceleration, the Iowa Acceleration Scale is the recommended instrument for grade acceleration purposes. The scale evaluates the total child—academically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally. The AIG Program ensures that the appropriate testing is provided if a parent requests grade acceleration. The AIG Specialist, the AIG Review Team, the district AIG Director, and the school administrator meet to make the final suggestions for the student, based on the needs of the individual student. The current LEA School Board Policy allows the school administrator the final decision concerning grade acceleration. In addition, Policy 4100 allows for early admission to school of a student who has turned the age of four on or before April 16 of the upcoming school year. The school administrator, based on information supplied by the parent, may determine that the child is gifted and has the maturity to justify admission to school. However, the Board of Education regards the admission of a four year old to be an extraordinary measure that should not be used merely because a child is developmentally advanced. The school administrator collaborates with the Elementary AIG Specialist and the AIG Director prior to making any early admission decision. Early admission to school allows the AIG Program to place the student on a Child Search form in order to secure additional data for potential screening, identification, and placement in the AIG Program.

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 Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program provides both direct and indirect services district-wide to students in grades K-12. The program is integral to the core curricula, as it utilizes and supports instructional practices that enrich, extend, and accelerate the curricula. The AIG Program in grades K-5 provides indirect consultant services and/or direct services through pull-out delivery to AIG identified students and to students selected for the Young Scholars' Program. Specialists focus on twenty-first century skills, problem-solving models, and extensive integration of current technology supplementing the reading and math curricula. Elementary AIG Specialists provide indirect services through consultation with regular classroom educators, serving gifted students and other high ability learners with menu choice boards, tiered assignments, and independent student units for use by the classroom educators. They also provide and guide Battle of the Books teams, Science Fair teams, and robotics teams. At the middle school level, many of the AIG Specialists provide direct instruction of advanced classes in language arts and math. They provide leadership for the schools in supporting differentiation activities throughout the entire grade level spectrum. At the high school level, the High School AIG Specialist provides instructional support to Advanced Placement classes and helps secure resources for high ability learners to accelerate their program of study. The High School AIG Specialist also meets with instructors during their planning period meetings to provide instruction in differentiation and to help in supporting and understanding the gifted learner. A Lending Library is available at the AIG District Office for all the district schools with a variety of research-based resources that both regular educators and AIG Specialists may utilize to expand and extend the curricula. Differentiation support sessions are provided throughout the school year as AIG Specialists lead workshops and trainings for individual schools, for new teacher orientation, and for designated professional development days in the district.

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AIG Specialists are provided opportunities during the school year to collaborate and participate in monthly meetings to strengthen their expertise in gifted programming and to plan for continued outreach for AIG services in the district.

Practice C

Selects and uses a variety of research-based supplemental resources that augment curriculum and instruction.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program will continue to build a best-practice AIG Lending Library that will be available to all district educators and schools. These resources can be the catalyst for supplementing individual class activities for gifted students, but they may also provide direction for Professional Learning Communities at the school level to collaborate and grow in understanding the needs of the high ability learner. The AIG Specialists will continue to coordinate, connect, and support regular educators and administrators with materials from the Lending Library. The AIG Program has continuously maintained materials from the College of William and Mary and other vendors that focus on the best research-driven strategies for connecting gifted education with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Junior Great Books materials are purchased as requested for elementary and middle school classes. The AIG Program covers the cost for all AIG Specialists to belong to the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented and access to the materials from that organization. The AIG Program also provides access for all AIG Specialists to Ian Byrd activities and materials on line. All AIG Specialists have classroom sets of Chromebooks to use for extended problem-solving and critical thinking activities, both in the regular classes and in the pull out programs. To support the application of hands on technology skills, robotics materials have been purchased for the AIG Elementary Specialists, allowing for an infusion of science and engineering skills in the reading and math programs. To support the growth in technology integration, the Caldwell County AIG Program promotes twenty-first century learning for regular educators and AIG Specialists by providing training at the district level on Chromebooks and Google Classroom. The training may be facilitated by an AIG Specialist and/or other AIG-licensed district personnel. In addition, educators who provide instruction in Advanced Placement classes are afforded multiple opportunities annually to attend refresher training during the summer to update and supplement the high school programming for high ability learners.

Practice D

Fosters the development of 21st century content and skills an advanced level.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program will continue to promote and support the connections between the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, twenty-first century skills, and best practices for gifted students. During the school year, AIG Specialists attend numerous professional development opportunities that integrate these three areas. During these sessions, the focus is on critical thinking, problem solving, high level communication, and collaboration. The AIG Specialists also participate in Professional Learning Communities at their school sites and at the district level that focus on twenty-first century skills. AIG Specialists and students are encouraged to participate in the local Science Fair and Spontaneous Science Team competitions, the Blue Ridge Electric Science Extravaganza, and the Google Gravity Games. These are opportunities to infuse

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technology, engineering, and hands on problem solving through STEM activities in the school and community. AIG students are also encouraged to participate in other content-rich opportunities which focus on leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, productivity, and responsibility. Some of these enrichment opportunities include Student Council, Junior and Senior Beta Clubs, the Reality Store, Soil and Water Speech Contests, and the Million Word Reader Project through the Accelerated Reading Program. AIG Specialists support students in these activities and frequently sponsor these programs for students.

During monthly council meetings, AIG Specialists collaborate on projects for district dissemination that focus on the "4 C's"—communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. AIG Specialists extensively utilize Chromebooks in classroom instruction and have taught students to blog and use websites responsibly. Robotics and coding are emerging as classroom activities with the purchase of robotics kits such as Dash and Dot. Three AIG Specialists will receive Google I certification training through Northwest RESA during summer, 2016.

The AIG Director is a member of county-level committees and work groups that support the district instructional programs, including the Educational Program Services team. The AIG Director also attends all administrative mid-month meetings with principals and end-of-month meetings with principals to advocate for gifted programming services.

The AIG team at both the school level and the district level value collaboration as an imperative twenty-first century skill. Collaboration among AIG personnel and other professional staff, including exceptional children's personnel and ELL personnel is critical to meeting the needs of all at potential AIG populations. The AIG Review Team is a key at the school site in ensuring that educational programs and differentiated plans for gifted students are provided with fidelity. AIG Specialists work with the AIG Review Teams, the Multi-Tiered System of Support Teams (MTSS), and the School Improvement Teams to address and support the instructional needs of gifted students.

The AIG Program also promotes twenty-first century learning for regular classroom educators through differentiation workshops and training provided throughout the year. The AIG High School Specialist, in particular, works weekly in all the high schools to promote and support differentiated instruction. The goal within the district is to ensure that gifted programming is seamless and infused in all areas to the benefit of all high ability learners.

Practice E

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program promotes and supports differentiated instructional strategies and planning, including alternative assessments and flexible grouping for focused instruction. Following the Fisher and Frey "Framework for Intentional and Targeted Teaching," or "FIT" model, AIG Specialists serve as guides for framing intentional lessons targeting academic needs or gaps gifted students may have in the core curricula and targeting specific interests and abilities gifted students may exhibit. AIG Specialists work with regular educators to create rubrics for instruction, formative assessments, tiered assignments, menu choice boards, and

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authentic summative assessments that are collaborative and project-based. AIG Specialists are available for both training educators in these areas and for providing the resources for teachers to utilize in day to day instruction. The AIG Specialists provide guidance in ensuring that program components are deliberately chosen to support the high ability learner.

Curriculum acceleration and compacting is encouraged, as core curricula teachers are urged to pre-assess formatively prior to beginning units of study. At the middle school level, gifted students may choose to take NCVPS online classes in World History and Physical Science, to complete high school classes prior to entering high school. Algebra I is also taught at the eighth grade level at the large middle school sites. At the high school level, Advanced Placement classes are self-selected. The High School AIG Specialist meets with AIG students to ensure that their programs of study are aligned with their interests and academic abilities. High school students are encouraged to participate in the dual enrollment classes through the Career and College Promise Program offered at each traditional high school in coordination with the local community college. The district also offers two innovative high schools—Caldwell Early College and Caldwell Middle College—to provide unique educational opportunities, flexible groupings, and schedules for students. Both are small high schools on the community college campus. Caldwell Early College allows students to attend five years and earn both a high school diploma and a two-year degree from the community college. Caldwell Middle College is a four-year high school that specializes in applied technology training, including computer programming and coding and medical technologies.

Practice F

Creates affective curricular and instructional practices which support the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program recognizes the need to utilize curricular and instructional resources that support the social and emotional needs of AIG students. These needs are especially important for students identified as highly intellectual (Pathway I and II), but all AIG students benefit from a strong framework that advocates for, and supports, their social and emotional development.

The AIG Program has components in place to support gifted students, starting with the annual meeting with parents. During the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) meeting, the AIG Specialist and parent, along with other members of the school-based AIG Review Team, will not only discuss academic needs of the student but also any social supports needed for the students. If needed, an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) may be created to offer an extended outline in narrative form to describe the specific social/emotional needs of the AIG student that need to be addressed. This optional IDEP is in addition to the standard DEP and focuses on the strengths of the student, provides a rationale for additional differentiation of services, instructional objectives, social/emotional objectives, and details a description of services to be provided with a timeline for assessing progress.

The AIG Review Team is in place at each school site to assist with collaborating with all stakeholders, including counselors, ELL teachers, regular educators, exceptional children's teachers, technology providers, and administrators. This team ensures that gifted students are known and supported

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completely, particular if a student has social or emotional issues that need attention.

The AIG Program also offers parent meetings in the district. The AIG Specialist at each school site holds an annual meeting for parents to go over information about the local program. Parent meetings have also been sponsored district-wide with outside AIG consultants and experts, who bring the latest ideas, research, and activities for parents of gifted students. An annual parent meeting is held at the district's Education Center for parents of students nominated for Governor's School. This meeting draws a large crowd and features students who attended Governor's School sharing their experiences. It also allows for the district to answer questions and provide input on completing the Governor's School application process.

A yearly AIG Census File exchange is held annually on the last work day for educators. AIG Specialists and the AIG Director work through to transition files from the Elementary AIG Specialists to the Middle School AIG Specialists and from the Middle School Specialists to the High School Specialist. These critical face to face conversations allow for addressing the needs of individual gifted students, both academically and emotionally. Transitioning from fifth grade to sixth grade and from eighth grade to ninth grade is a challenge for all students, including gifted students, and these conversations are essential to provide the best possible adjustment to a new school setting. These conversations are confidential but instructive in supporting successful program decisions for high ability learners.

Elementary AIG Specialists have worked over the past two years to create and implement a unit of study utilizing the novel *Ungifted* with fifth grade gifted students across the district. This unit allows students who are relatively new to the AIG Program to learn what it means to be gifted. They complete activities online and utilize a blog for the AIG fifth grade students across the district, so they learn with their peers from all the elementary schools in the district. This helps to build a strong sense of community and support with these early learners. In addition, this link among AIG fifth graders provides a strong foundation for transitioning these students to middle school AIG programs.

Practice G

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program provides the opportunity for high achieving young students in grades K-3 to be supported and nurtured in reading and math. Students may be nominated by an administrator or classroom teacher to participate in the Young Scholars' Program. The AIG Elementary Specialist serving at each school site will receive these recommendations and begin the process of collecting data and information about the recommended student. A young student may be recommended for screening for the Young Scholars' Program with an earned score at or above the 95th percentile on a DIBELS assessment, with an earned score at or above the 95th percentile on a TRC assessment, or an earned score at or above the 95th percentile on the Beginning of Grade (BOG) state reading assessment. Classroom observations/checklists will also be completed by the classroom teacher and the AIG Specialist. Students who are selected for the program may receive individualized units and advanced resources created by the AIG Specialists for use in the core classroom. Some cluster grouping and pull-out options for opportunities to practice higher order thinking skills using Primary Education Thinking Skills materials (PETS) may be utilized. The Young Scholars' Program is fluid and flexible and works with a combination of direct and indirect

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consultative services to support the young learner; if a student fails to continue to perform in the AIG setting and/or the regular classes, that student may be returned to the regular classroom setting. Students in the Young Scholars' Program, who have additional data that may allow for placement via one of the pathways, may be identified and placed in the AIG Program for grades K-3 and will receive more direct services, including a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP.) The curricula chosen for students at the K-3 level is supplemental to the core curricula and is highly focused on problem-solving and higher order thinking skills. Technology is infused through STEM activities integrating reading, math, and science. Data indicates that approximately ninety percent of the students identified for gifted services at the elementary level in the district have been identified, nurtured, and supported through the Young Scholars' Program. Parental permission is required for both the Young Scholars' Program and for placement in the AIG Program.

Practice H

Collaborates with AIG personnel and other professional staff, including regular education teachers, special education teachers, other instructional staff, and administrators, to develop and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program embraces collaboration as an effective and integral means to addressing and meeting the instructional needs of the gifted and higher ability students. Collaboration is consistently supported nationwide as a twenty-first century skill for teachers to model and students to practice. Collaboration among AIG personnel and other professional staff, including general education teachers, exceptional children's teachers, ELL instructors, counselors, and administrators is strongly correlated with the success of gifted programming. In particular, for gifted students and higher ability students who are twice-exceptional, a team approach will best serve the overlapping needs of the students. Thus, it is important that all stakeholders involved in the educational decisions of the gifted student be involved in planning and service delivery.

Additional resources and other stakeholders may be utilized during annual parent meetings. These meetings will ensure that the appropriate options for service delivery are available for the student, especially if the student is served under multiple programs. At school-based AIG Review Team meetings, additional staff may be included in placement and instructional decisions, in order to advocate for the benefit of the student.

At the district level, the High School AIG Specialist works in tandem with the district High School Director to support Advanced Placement curricular support and conduct Advanced Placement testing. The AIG Director collaborates with other professionals to ensure appropriate district support and response to AIG issues and to ensure that AIG student needs are included in all academic decisions. The AIG Director serves on several district level committees and teams and is part of the Educational Program Services Department, alongside grade level directors, the Exceptional Children's Director, and the ELL Director. This creates avenues for continuous improvement and seamless planning for instruction for gifted and higher ability students. The AIG Program is housed at the district's Education Central Office, enabling district resources to be accessed effectively. The AIG Director, along with designated AIG Specialists, attends regional meetings and state level AIG meetings.

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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: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program will continue to emphasize the importance of documenting and articulating instructional delivery options that reflect thoughtful planning and fidelity in serving the needs of the gifted and higher ability learner. The district's AIG service delivery options are examined annually for the K-12 spectrum. Appropriate student services will be ensured through annual DEP meetings at each school site and at AIG Review Team meetings at the school sites. During transition years (fifth to sixth grade; eighth to ninth grade), AIG Specialists meet to formally transfer student Census Files and to share vital information about students and their learning styles and interests. Forms for Census File exchanges are completed and filed at the AIG District Office. All AIG high school Census Files are housed at the AIG District Office. An AIG High School Specialist serves all five high schools and ensures compliance with educational planning for gifted students at the 9-13 levels.

AIG Specialists also serve as information links concerning the Duke Talent Identification Program, for the NCVPS online classes at the middle school and high school, and for the Governor's School Selection Program at the high school. The specialists help students and parents complete the paperwork and navigate the procedures for these extension programs.

An annual Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) is reviewed by all parents in grades K-8 and must receive parent consent at the annual meeting. The high school DEP is created at the end of eighth grade and is on file with the High School AIG Specialist. The High School AIG Specialist is on hand at all high school registration events and on dates when schedules are released to students to answer questions and help students understand their schedules. This is particularly important in working with the Freshman Academy at each traditional high school to ensure that gifted students new to the high school setting select the appropriate sequence of honors/accelerated classes. An annual Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) is also created annually, as needed for students. The IDEP outlines specific program needs of the gifted learner in a narrative format.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: - Develop and provide curriculum guides/maps for gifted learners.

- Utilize student interest for courses, enrichment activities, and/or independent projects.
- Create and host an AIG summer camp, run by AIG Specialists for elementary and/or middle grades.
- Create an online training on differentiation for regular education teachers.
- Create a quarterly schedule and calendar for all specialists to go into, and provide support for, high poverty schools that typically evidence an underrepresented AIG population.

- The AIG Director will create a bi-weekly blog to provide program updates, events, and support for AIG Specialists.

Sources of Evidence: - 2016-2019 Caldwell County Schools' AIG Plan

- AIG Core Curriculum resources inventory
- AIG requisitions and purchase orders (from vendors that provide resources for gifted and high achieving students)
- Service delivery options on DEP and/or IDEP (Confidential student AIG Census Files)
- DEP and/or IDEP meeting evidences which outline service delivery options and content modifications
- AIG newsletters and/or updated websites that demonstrate evidences of connections between North Carolina Standard Course of Study and gifted services
- Differentiated training sessions agendas and/or sign-in sheets that connect North Carolina Standard Course of Study to differentiated instruction/gifted education
- The AIG Specialists are provided with opportunities for book studies on the topics of creativity, differentiation support, 21st century skills and/or best strategies for gifted education
- Inventory of AIG district Lending Library materials and differentiated units/lessons
- Governor's School Parent Evening Event presentation handouts, agenda and/or sign-in
- Samples of Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEPs)
- AIG Review Team (AIGRT) notes
- Communication logs with parents and school stakeholders
- Census File exchange sign-in and/or Census File exchange documentation (transfer of files)
- Reimbursement paperwork from regular educators who are pursuing licensure through a state approved and accredited institution of higher education
- Professional Development handouts, sign-in sheets and/or agendas
- Logs for Patterson Science Center (Science Fair)

Standard 3: 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 Caldwell County School District employs an AIG-licensed educator as the AIG Director to guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG Program. The AIG Director maintains current AIG licensure and also maintains licensure in educational administration and supervision in order to adequately supervise and coordinate the assignments of teaching specialists. The AIG Director is housed at the district's Education Center and works along with other program directors to provide support and guidance related to curricular issues that affect AIG students. The AIG Director oversees the AIG budget; hires, schedules, and assigns AIG teaching specialists to the district's twenty-six school sites; selects materials for use in AIG classes; guides AIG Program development; and conducts meetings and trainings for the AIG teaching specialists. The AIG Director serves as the coordinator of the local Governor's School selection process and assists the district High School Director with the Advanced Placement Program and the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery Initiative. The AIG Director monitors all records and paperwork related to AIG programming, audits placement files and rosters, and verifies the twice-yearly AIG headcount on PowerSchool. In addition, the AIG Director reports directly to the Associate Superintendent for Educational Program Services, the local Superintendent, and the Board of Education about the AIG Program and serves to coordinate AIG due process appeals and to address the concerns of AIG parents and stakeholders.

Practice B

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program strongly supports the premise that "academically and/or intellectually gifted students require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program." The AIG Program employs AIG-licensed specialists to serve at all K-8 settings, with specialists providing both direct and indirect supplemental academic services on a weekly basis. Reading and/or math curricular support is thoughtfully and deliberately chosen for each class and each individual identified student. AIG-licensed specialists also serve at all four middle school sites, with specialists currently providing direct core curricular instruction in reading and/or math at two of the four middle schools. The specialists assigned to the other middle schools serve in a consultative capacity and provide pull out and co-teaching support for AIG students as needed. One AIG-licensed specialist serves as the AIG High School Specialist for the five high schools and provides academic support and advice for AIG students and their instructors. AIG Specialists sponsor activities and mentor students in events that

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extend and expand the academic and intellectual opportunities from the general education program, including Google Gravity Games, Battle of the Books, Math Counts, the local Science Fair and the Science Spontaneous Competitions, Science Olympiad, and Soil and Water Speech Competitions.

The AIG team will continue to provide research-supported resources and develop problem solving/higher order thinking skill units to classroom teachers. Lending Library resources are updated annually and supplied to AIG Specialists and regular educators. The AIG teams maintain communication with parents, teachers, and other stakeholders about the AIG Program and other extended opportunities such as the Duke Talent Identification Program and the Governor's School Program. Frequent AIG Council meetings provide for elementary, middle, and high school specialists to meet and exchange ideas and/or participate in professional development opportunities on subjects related to the needs of gifted students. In particular, the infusion of STEM activities and training will be a continued focus for curricular integration in all AIG classes.

Identification and placement of students will require continuous assessment of the AIG Program's delivery options. Program delivery options will be based on assessment of a student's academic and affective needs. The process will be structured to match diverse student needs with multiple program options. The emphasis for placement will be to match students with particular services and program options that appropriately differentiate both content level and instructional strategies so that students may succeed at their highest potential. This differentiated educational approach involves extended thinking, applied thinking, and conceptual thinking, all building upon the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. AIG Specialists will serve to match the placement of students with the appropriate learning environment, content modification, and differentiated instructional strategies, all determined by the student's demonstrated abilities and/or performance, as well as by academic needs and expressed student interests and social needs. The AIG Program recognizes that there is a direct relationship between general education and program options for students identified as gifted, with gifted programming providing the necessary foundation for academic success for higher ability learners.

Practice C

Establishes specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, special education teachers, counselors, and school administrators.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program participates in, and supports, all professional development days offered throughout the district. In particular, AIG Specialists serve as the providers of staff development training in differentiation for elementary workshops, middle school workshops, and high school period meetings. Classroom teachers and counselors are often required by their specific schools or departments to attend these workshops in order to better serve gifted and higher ability students. AIG Specialists also train instructional assistants at the elementary schools in strategies to support the Multi-Tiered System of Support interventions/extensions for higher ability students. The AIG Director provides refresher instruction annually for administrators in gifted characteristics and the administration of the CogAT as a universal screener. AIG Specialists are required to attend professional development training offered in the district related to reading and math. This allows specialists to better understand the core curriculum and to support the extension of that curriculum in their programs. AIG Specialists are also required to attend AIG Program technology

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training in Chromebook use, Google Classroom, Google Applications, and Coding in order to promote the use of technology throughout the integrated curricula. AIG Specialists serving grades K-5 and K-8 school sites routinely participate in a Professional Learning Community with a common reading of a professional text. These texts relate to learning theory, twenty-first century skills, gifted child development, and gifted education issues. AIG Council meetings focus on shared inquiry related to articles of note about gifted education. The AIG Program sponsors training in Junior Great Books for AIG Specialists and any teachers participating in AIG licensure classes offered in the state. This promotes the use of these supplemental texts that integrate higher order thinking skills with deep comprehension strategies related to thematic units.

The AIG Program will also continue to communicate all known opportunities for AIG licensure to schools and school personnel. The AIG Program realizes the importance of supporting regular educators who are working toward this endorsement and will continue to reimburse regular educators who are seeking AIG licensure through a state accredited institution, with local requirements for payment receipts and proof of class completion and performance of A or B in the class.

The AIG Lending Library will continue to be updated annually and will serve as a resource for the AIG Specialists, for schools, and school administrators and teachers.

Practice D

Places AIG students in general education classrooms with teachers who have earned an AIG add-on license from an Institute of Higher Education (IHE) or who have met the LEA's professional development requirements for that position.

District Response: The Caldwell County School District employs AIG Specialists through the AIG budget who are licensed from accredited institutes of higher education. These employed AIG Specialists serve in some capacity at each of the twenty-six schools in the district, either providing consultant services or other direct and/or indirect delivery options to identified AIG Students. In addition, at the larger middle schools, a significant number of teachers of reading and math are AIG licensed and students are assigned to those advanced core subject classes. Middle schools that traditionally form teams of teachers for each grade level generally have identified AIG teams. The AIG Program aggressively supports teachers who enroll in AIG licensing programs at institutes of higher education by reimbursing the tuition costs upon their successful completion of the program, along with receipt of a copy of the AIG licensure. AIG licenses are kept on file in the AIG District Office. The AIG Program has identified a current cadre of educators in thirty percent of the schools that are not employed through the AIG budget but who are available to their current school administrator to teach AIG students assigned in their regular education classes. Some of these educators with AIG licensure are serving the district as Instructional Facilitators; others are serving as school building administrators. The AIG Program maintains a list of all educational personnel who are certified and utilize these educators to provide support for AIG students in their schools, whatever their professional capacity. The AIG Program encourages these AIG licensed educators to serve on individual AIG Review Teams and also invite them to participate in AIG workshops and training as needed in order to keep them up to date on current research, procedures, and local plans.

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Practice E

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program serves as an integral part of academic program planning in the district. The AIG Program falls under the auspices of the Educational Program Services Department at the district's Education Center and the AIG Director answers to the Associate Superintendent of Educational Program Services for all decisions and plans. Professional development opportunities for the district are planned, developed, and implemented by this department. The AIG Program aligns professional development for AIG Specialists to support local initiatives such as I Ready and Imagine Learning. AIG Specialists are also provided with opportunities to pioneer professional development to introduce into the district, such as the newly emerging Google I Certified Training. Junior Great Books training is provided as needed to accompany the purchase of grade level Junior Great Books materials to AIG Specialists and grade level teachers. Additional training in gifted education specialties, including Power School training in AIG data input, CogAT administration strategies, differentiation refresher courses, and computer coding for the Dash and Dot robotic implements, is ongoing and required to maintain current gifted initiatives in the district. The AIG Program will continue to expand the professional opportunities for regular educators who are in need of differentiation support training at any of the K-12 levels. The AIG Program also financially supports Advanced Placement teachers who attend the summer Advanced Placement workshops. Stakeholders will be provided the opportunity to suggest ideas for on-going professional development opportunities. In addition, the AIG Program will continue to financially cover the cost of attendance at the NCAGT Conference for all AIG Specialists, where new program ideas and initiatives for gifted education are introduced and shared. AIG Specialists are also encouraged to attend the Middle School Conference, the NC TIES Conference, the NC Math Conference, and the NC Science Conference. These resources serve as enriched professional development experiences and provide for continuous collaboration with regular educators and AIG Specialists.

Practice F

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program strongly supports opportunities for AIG Specialists to plan, implement, and refine professional development information and learning. All AIG Specialists that serve multiple schools meet at the end of each month to review their instructional program and to plan for the next month's activities. AIG Council meetings are planned bimonthly and allow for vertical curricular planning and professional development concerning gifted issues and twenty-first century skills. The discussion across the grade levels from elementary to middle to high school is seamless and allows for continuous refinement of AIG goals and expectations. All AIG Specialists have class sets of Chromebooks, so each meeting allows for technology sharing and training. AIG schedules at each school site are protected so that adequate time is available at each site for collaboration with regular educators; other specialty educators, such as exceptional children's teachers and ELL teachers; and counselors. At the beginning of each school year, AIG Specialists are required to meet to verify rosters and files, to complete the transfer of files for students who have

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moved over the summer, and to plan for the year's meetings. At the end of each school year, AIG Specialists meet to transition files for students moving to another school site and to make plans for the next year's reading as a Professional Learning Community. During the summer, AIG Specialists meet to revise the parent brochures for their parent meetings, to update the district website, and to create lessons for shared teaching units.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: - AIG Specialists will meet monthly as a PLC (professional Learning Community) to promote systematic development and implementation of program services and 21 century skills.

- AIG specialists will provide district training in differentiation tools and resources for district wide professional development days.
- Continue to offer tuition reimbursement for teachers who complete the AIG licensure program.
- Create online courses and lessons to provide support for gifted learners.
- AIG Specialists will create an online district training in differentiated instruction that can be used by individual teachers of school faculties/staff members for professional development.

Sources of Evidence: - 2016-2019 Caldwell County Schools AIG Plan

- Inventory of research-driven curriculum materials that align with the current North Carolina Curriculum.
- Lending Library
- Samples of newsletter and/or websites
- Lists of Duke TIP Candidates
- AIG schedules
- Annual stakeholder surveys and/or questionnaires
- Program brochures
- Differentiation support with regular educators/artifacts
- Agendas/sign-in sheets/handouts of documented professional development participation
- Contracts from professional development providers
- Attendance at NC Gifted and Talented Conference
- Attendance at locally-supported professional trainings and workshops appropriate for AIG

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Specialists, including LEA trainings and NWRESA trainings/workshops.

- AIG licensure applications and reimbursement artifacts
- O34 funds used to reimburse AIG licensure
- LEA list of state licensed AIG personnel filed in the AIG Director's office
- Samples of Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) and/or Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Stakeholder input (surveys, questionnaires, needs assessment, post-professional development)
- North Carolina Association of Gifted and Talented conference artifacts/website information
- Membership for AIG Specialists in NCAGT
- Byrdseed Newsletter/Byrdseed TV provided as online resources.
- Council meeting agendas, notes, handouts, and/or sign-in sheets
- Documentation of AP opportunities for high school teachers.

Standard 4: 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 AIG programs and services which are comprehensive of the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners across all classroom environments, grade levels, and settings.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program focuses on continuous improvement in order to evaluate and update AIG service delivery options that are comprehensive and responsive to the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners. AIG Specialists are assigned to work all twenty-six schools, either in providing indirect/consultative services or direct services to students. The AIG Specialists also adapt to a variety of school configurations in the district, serving eleven K-5 elementary schools; four K-8 schools; four large middle schools with grades 6-8; three traditional high schools; two innovative high schools; and two behavior-based alternative schools, one for students in grades K-6 and one for students in grades 7-12. The AIG team implements research-driven strategies and adapts research-driven resources to tailor instruction for students at the different school settings, extending the North Carolina Standard Course of Study at the K-8 levels. Traditional elementary schools receive a combination of consultative services and/or direct pull out services. The four K-8 schools are smaller and in the rural parts of the district; services at those schools may include a combination of consultative services and/or co-teaching services, with AIG Specialists going into classes to reach out to gifted students and other higher ability learners. At the larger middle schools, AIG Specialists may provide direct instruction in advanced language arts and math classes, in addition to consultative and indirect pull out services. At the high school level, the AIG High School Specialist works with gifted learners to ensure challenging courses of study are available and scheduled. In addition, the AIG High School Specialist provides consultative services to AP and regular classroom teachers to help plan differentiated activities and instruction for higher ability learners. Finally, at the two alternative schools, the AIG Specialists provide academic planning for the behavior support team, along with strong social and emotional support to gifted students assigned to those schools. This ensures that academic programming is paired with the behavioral interventions.

A Lending Library is available to the AIG Specialists and other district educators from the AIG District Office, with informational books and hands-on materials updated annually. These resources provide support and ensure consistency throughout the district, with materials utilized for gifted students and other higher ability students. In addition to the AIG Specialists, the Lending Library will continue to be a catalyst to disseminate resource materials to regular educators. These resources connect and support the North Carolina curricula to all daily classroom strategies and activities. These items may be requested from any AIG Specialist or from the AIG Director.

Frequent AIG Council meetings are scheduled periodically throughout the school year to provide time for AIG Specialists to meet, exchange ideas, participate in professional development, and refine plans for programming. AIG Specialists team together to develop specialized units of study, such as cross-

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district novel units, science fair/electric extravaganza events, and robotics classes. These cross-district events are for all gifted classes; however, some events, such as the electric extravaganza, are for all students in a selected grade level across the district. AIG Specialists also participate in professional development to reinforce their own expertise, including Google Classroom, Chromebook 101, and Junior Great Books workshops.

The AIG team will continue to create and/or update annual Differentiated Education Plans (DEP) and/or Individualized Differentiated Education Plans (IDEP.) The AIG Review Team at each school will also ensure that AIG students are neither entered nor exited from the AIG Program without the legal parent or guardian permission and the permission of the AIG Director. A legal parent or guardian signature is also required on updated Differentiated Education Plans. The goal of the AIG Program is for consistent communication throughout the school year via quarterly newsletters, e-mails, and/or updated webpages. The AIG Director will oversee all official paperwork, with an audit of all referrals and Census Files. This oversight will provide necessary compliance to placement and identification expectations. The AIG Director also maintains access to PowerSchool records and access to AIG PowerSchool information at each school site.

Annual reviews monitor student progress on a yearly basis, especially in analyzing testing data and graduation data for AIG students. In particular, annual reviews at the end of fifth grade and the end of eighth grade provide for transition planning and recommendations for placement in advanced classes in the middle school and honors/AP classes at the high school level.

The AIG Review Team at each school site notes referral discussions and documents the involvement of all stakeholders within the school in meeting the academic and social needs of each gifted student. The AIG Specialist assigned to the school serves as the chair of the AIG Review Team. As the chair, the AIG Specialist maintains a report of each meeting and records the attendance of appropriate stakeholders. These reports are dated, signed, and filed. The DEP is updated annually in all grades K-8 and at the ninth grade level, and copies are provided for parents and other team members. The IDEP is updated as needed. The IDEP specifically addresses the gifted student's social/emotional needs, in addition to any specific intellectual needs not addressed by the DEP. An IDEP is required for any student entering the AIG Program as an "IG" or "Intellectually Gifted," or an "AI" or "Academically Intelligent."

Practice B

Aligns AIG programs and services with each area of AIG identification, goals of the program, and resources of the LEA.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program follows closely the mandates of NC Article 9B, including "different types of services provided in a variety of settings to meet the diversity of identified academically or intellectually gifted students." As the needs of high achieving, gifted, and highly gifted students vary widely, the program service delivery options are considered thoughtfully and carefully for each student, reflecting the need to not only differentiate for these students in regular classroom settings but also in gifted service settings. Program service delivery options will apply for the vast majority of academically and/or intellectually gifted students and will be selected and annually examined on the Differentiated Education Plans (DEP) for each identified student. Students who are identified for a specific subject area—reading or mathematics—will receive delivery options

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and support for that particular subject. If a student is identified for both subjects, the student will receive delivery options and services in both curricular areas. All AIG students will participate in strategies that reinforce higher order thinking skills, problem-based learning, and collaboration. STEM activities, utilizing engineering, teamwork, and technology, will also be a high priority at all grade levels. Where needed, students will be supported with individualized contracts and independent study options. AIG Specialists are assigned to all twenty- six schools and they provide the day to day expertise to support each school site in addressing the needs of high ability learners.

The AIG Program at the district level falls under the Educational Program Services Department (EPS), with the AIG Program an integral part of all district curricular programming. The AIG Director attends Multi-Tiered System of Support trainings, Accelerated Reading workshops, mid-month and end-of-month principals' meetings to provide input and to advocate for alignment of gifted student needs with school planning. Weekly EPS meetings provide opportunities for the AIG Director to collaborate with Curriculum Directors, the ELL Director, the CTE Director, and the Exceptional Children's Director in addressing the needs of higher ability students and twice-exceptional students. The AIG Director also serves on the district AdvancedED Planning Committee to ensure that the AIG Program aligns with district accreditation goals and the school district's Strategic Plan.

Practice C

Delivers AIG programs and services that are integral and connected to the total instructional program of the LEA in policy and practice.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program maintains a goal of seamless service to identified gifted and higher ability students from kindergarten through grade twelve. AIG Specialists are assigned to each school site, with programming selected and provided specifically tailored to the needs of each student and each school site. The district maintains eleven K-5 elementary schools, four K-8 rural outlying schools, four large middle schools, three traditional high schools, two innovative high schools on the community college campus, and two alternative schools for students needing behavior interventions. Throughout the year, every school site has identified students on campus. AIG Specialists serve every school, providing a combination of consultative and/or direct services. The current AIG budget provides for twelve positions, including five elementary AIG Specialists, five middle school AIG Specialists, one AIG High School Specialist, and one district AIG Director. Assignment of AIG Specialists and delivery options available may vary, based on the number of gifted students at the particular school and the grade level of those students. Elementary students receive consultative and direct pull out services, based on the subject of placement (reading and/or math.) Students in K-8 receive primarily consultative services, but they may also receive direct services through co-teaching or pull out classes. Students in middle school may receive direct instruction in advanced academic classes in reading and/or math, along with consultative services. In high school, AIG students may self-select honors classes and Advanced Placement classes. The AIG High School Specialist works with AIG students to counsel and advise students in crafting a schedule of classes that are challenging and meet their academic needs. The AIG High School Specialist also works with the two innovative high schools and the community college staff to ensure that identified AIG students have a program of study at the community college that best meets their needs and interests. Finally, for the two alternative schools, AIG Specialists work with the behavior interventionists at these school sites to ensure that higher ability students receive academic support and planning along with social and emotional behavior interventions.

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Since the needs of high achieving/advanced students, identified gifted students, and highly gifted students vary widely, the program service delivery options may be adjusted and flexed to meet the diversity of academic need. Most will be provided through the annually-created Differentiated Education Plan (DEP.) For students with more specific needs, including more closely aligned social and emotional support, the IDEP may be developed and provide guidance. Students who are identified and placed as IG—Intellectually Gifted, and those that are identified and placed as AI—Academically Intellectual, will have an IDEP created for their service delivery.

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 Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program provides opportunities for presentation of vital information about gifted services, regulations, and implementation of the local plan to educational personnel, including classroom teachers, school administrators, and support staff. AIG Specialists assigned to each school are encouraged to provide information annually to their respective staffs during faculty meetings and parent open house events. AIG Specialists are also included as representatives to the district Faculty Council, where each representative shares information about their school programs. In turn, each representative takes back district-supplied information about district programs and initiatives, including the AIG Program. Annual surveys are distributed to a random number of parents, teachers, and school administrators to provide feedback on AIG programming. Survey information is confidential and is used to adapt and inform academic planning for the AIG Program. The AIG Director attends all mid-month principals' meetings and all end-of-month principals' meetings and receives program input and advocates for AIG programs and students. The AIG Program is part of the Educational Program Services Department at the district Education Center and is able to participate in all curricular planning with grade level directors, the Exceptional Children's Director, the CTE Director, and the ELL Director. AIG Specialists chair each school site's AIG Review Team, and keep participants on that team, including administrators and teachers, informed of the referral process, identification procedures, and AIG regulations and requirements. The AIG Specialists work with each school's data entry personnel to ensure that Power School information concerning AIG students is up to date and accurate, especially when students enroll or exit for another district and during twice yearly headcounts. The AIG Director also participates in district retreats and School Board Meetings to provide required information about AIG student services and regulations to school administrators, district department administrators, and school board members. Finally, the AIG website is posted on the school district's website and provides program information, identifies personnel and schools served, and highlights current AIG initiatives and events. It also provides access to the current AIG plan, pathways, and protocol.

Practice E

Communicates among and between teachers and schools to ensure an effective continuation of K-12 services, especially at key transition points.

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District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program continuously seeks input from schools and teaching personnel to provide seamless services to gifted and higher ability students. As part of on-going communication and collaboration among teachers and schools, an AIG Specialist is assigned to every school as the person committed to answering questions, handling AIG testing and paperwork, and creating service delivery options that best support the needs of identified gifted and higher ability students. Regular educators, school counselors, and school administrators are involved in the AIG Review Team and are part of the planning for the development of Differentiated Education Plans. The AIG Review Team ensures that there is a school-wide understanding of, and commitment to, services for AIG students. AIG Specialists work weekly in their assigned schools to address classroom teacher concerns and help support regular classroom instruction of gifted students. At the elementary K-5 level, curriculum resources are provided to supplement the core curricula. At both the elementary and middle school levels, Chromebooks have been provided to the AIG Programs for use in both AIG classes and by AIG students in regular classes. At the K-12 level, service delivery options are in place to ensure that each gifted student has opportunities available, and support provided for, participating in an enriched academic program. At key transition times—elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school—an annual file exchange is held at the district AIG office to transfer files and give AIG teachers an opportunity to share information and make informed decisions about potential programming for AIG students entering middle school and entering high school. The AIG High School Specialist also provides services on high registration nights and during the summer when high school class schedules are distributed to ensure that gifted students have chosen and have been assigned to honors and Advanced Placement classes as needed.

Practice F

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program provides an AIG Specialist to each school site, with the expectation that the AIG Specialist will be the catalyst for securing and supporting collaboration from classroom teachers, counselors, and other support staff to address the unique needs of AIG students. The AIG Specialist is the first level advocate for the identified student and serves as the informational link for helping educators understand the characteristics and learning needs of higher ability students. In addition, the AIG Specialist provides leadership in helping all educators address the social and emotional needs of higher ability students. Facilitating these services will include ensuring that clustering of students is a priority in the elementary school classes. Clustering may provide support for higher ability students from similar ability peers and may open opportunities for counseling for students who may receive unwanted attention, teasing, or bullying from classroom peers based on their unique traits and abilities. In the high school, the AIG High School Specialist will collaborate with the school counselors to support AIG students as they register for classes and create schedules that are challenging but flexible to meet individual needs and interests. The AIG High School Specialist will also support higher ability students in applying for scholarships and college applications. Finally, AIG Specialists will be assigned on rotation to serve the two alternative schools in the district that provide behavior interventions to students who may not be adjusted to the regular classroom settings. These specialists will ensure that academic needs will be meshed with social and emotional supports to permit AIG students assigned to those school to

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progress and advance at a pace commensurate with their abilities.

Practice G

Articulates and implements opportunities for acceleration, including compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, subject and/or grade acceleration when an appropriate body-of-evidence indicates the need.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program has established a goal to provide opportunities for academic acceleration for higher ability students. A board-adopted policy is in place in the district, Policy 4100, that provides guidance to the individual school administrator in allowing grade acceleration. The Iowa Acceleration Scale is the recommended instrument for grade acceleration, and the AIG Program maintains documents and a protocol for the use of this instrument. The AIG Specialist at the school site and the AIG Director may make recommendations to the school administrator and to the AIG Review Team concerning grade acceleration, but the ultimate decision will rest with the school administrator per North Carolina policy. Acceleration in subjects may be recommended for higher performing students, based on classroom performance and test scores. These recommendations will become part of the Differentiated Education Plan developed for the student. These recommendations for grade/subject acceleration will be made on a case by case basis reflecting student need and interest. Eighth grade students at the large middle schools are provided Algebra I classes that may enable students to complete that graduation requirement prior to high school. In addition, students in middle school may also take virtual classes through NCVPS for high school credit, including Physical Science, Environmental Earth Science, and World History. Higher performing gifted students in elementary school may be flexibly scheduled to move to higher grade level reading and/or math classes, as appropriate. Students in middle school and high school may complete district-designated classes through the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery Program. The district has created a timeline for application, participation, and demonstration of "mastery" protocol that is distributed annually. With Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, students may "test out" of a designated class and accelerate their high school coursework. In the local high schools, honors and Advanced Placement Classes are self-selected. In addition, higher ability students may participate in dual enrollment in classes at the local community college that allows for acceleration through high school and into college programs of study. The Caldwell County School District has also established two innovative cooperative high schools—Caldwell Early College and Caldwell Middle College. Both of these schools are housed on the campus of the local community college and provide access to community college classes for students. These schools are available to all students in the school district on an application and selection basis. Students selected to attend the Caldwell Early College attend high school/community college combined for five years and may earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree from the community college. This allows them to accelerate their college program and transfer to a larger college or university with a two-year degree.

Practice H

Provides intentional programming for traditionally under-represented AIG populations, including culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.

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District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program provides services to all students identified through the referral and placement process. All of the elementary and middle schools in the district are Title 1 schools, indicating that each school educates a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students. Students in these school are served in the AIG Program, and, in addition, AIG Specialists go into the schools where the poverty percentage is high and the AIG placement rate is low to deliberately provide support to the classroom settings. The AIG Specialists also provide extra training to the educators at the high poverty schools in differentiation and in promoting higher order thinking skills practice for all students. Students who may be culturally diverse and/or part of the ELL Program may be recommended to the AIG Review Team and to the AIG Director for consideration for placement if they show a particular facility in learning the English language, have excellent classroom credentials, and have passed the initial ACCESS test given to ELL students annually. The AIG Review Team may recommend placement to the AIG Director and the AIG Director may decide to place the student into the program, based on evidence provided that the AIG Program will meet an academic need for the student. Students who are identified highly gifted (Intellectually Gifted or IG; Academically Intelligent or AI) will not only have a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) but also an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP), which will describe in narrative form the academic, social, and emotional needs of the student and how a specialized program of study will address those needs. A specialized program may include grade acceleration, curriculum compacting, menu choice boards, subject contracts, and on-line programming. Finally, for students who are identified as twice-exceptional, AIG Specialists will collaborate with Exceptional Children's teachers and/or the Exceptional Children's Director to create a program that allow for acceleration and intervention, thus addressing any academic gaps while at the same time providing enriched content for the student.

Practice I

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program serves as an integral part of the extracurricular program provided for students in the district. Gifted and higher ability students participate in numerous Science/Technology/Engineering/Math events, including Google Gravity games, Caldwell County Science Fair, Caldwell County Spontaneous Science Team Competitions, Blue Ridge Electric Science Extravaganza, Robotics competitions, and Math Counts. Students also have an opportunity to refine and develop leadership skills in the Optimist Oratorical Contest, the Shakespeare Recitation Contest, and the Middle School Poetry Recitation Contest. Students earn recognition at the Million Word Reader event, Battle of the Books Contests, and at Model UN Competitions. In elementary and high school, gifted and higher ability students may participate in the Duke Talent Identification Program, and in high school, gifted and higher ability students may be eligible to apply for recommendation to the Governor's School Program. AIG students are also gifted athletes, musicians, artists, and performers in plays and musicals, and they have many opportunities to develop their interests and skills in all these areas. The school district hosts an annual performance event, Kaleidoscope, where elementary, middle, and high school students perform in a talent venue for the community. To select students for Kaleidoscope, every school presents a Showcase Night or talent event, where students may perform for their local school community. Instrumental and choral music students may participate in numerous all-county, district, and regional competitions. Middle

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school students and high school students may qualify for membership in Beta Club, where students learn the value of service to the community. Finally, opportunities for enrichment continue into the summer, as the school district offers science enrichment camps for elementary through high school age students at the district's Patterson Science Center. In addition, Project Lead the Way STEM Camps are available during the summer for middle school students in the district.

Practice J

Utilizes intentional, flexible grouping practices to facilitate effective instruction and support the growth of AIG students.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program encourages schools to utilize intentional and flexible practices in grouping gifted and higher ability students. Elementary schools are encouraged to cluster group students in the elementary grade levels so that AIG Specialists may provide consultant support to grade level teachers together and/or provide direct instruction through pull out programming. In addition, deliberate grouping enables the AIG Specialists to support the Multi-Tiered System of Support schedule so that gifted students may receive enrichment and acceleration during intervention/enrichment times. AIG Specialists also work with classroom teachers to flexibly schedule for vertical subject acceleration for students who need enriched lessons in reading and/or math. In the large middle schools, AIG students are assigned to homerooms together in each grade level, thus allowing for direct core instruction in advanced reading and/or math. In high school, honors classes and Advanced Placement classes are self-selected; however, student interest allows for the AIG student to be with peers of like ability to be together for academic instruction and accelerated content.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: - Create K-2 resource units to provide differentiated support for Young Scholars' students and regular classroom teachers

- Develop DEPs to provide programming and services for other core subject areas, such as science and social studies
- Create opportunities for AIG students to job shadow or work with a mentor in areas of student interest or special talent

Sources of Evidence: - 2016-2019 Caldwell County AIG Plan

- The Lending Library Inventory
- Inventory of all research-based core curriculum resources: These resources are currently being implemented to directly align with the NC Curricula.
- Census File Exchange Documentation

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- AIG Review Team (AIGRT) Notes
- Samples of the Individualized Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs)
- Samples of AIG newsletters and/or copies of AIG webpages
- Agendas, notes and sign-in sheets for all county-level AIG Council meetings
- NC State 034 funds matched to AIG services
- Notes/Agendas from district-level meetings
- District Professional Development Training
- Agendas/minutes from district-level collaborative planning meetings
- Notes from AIG Advisory Board meetings
- District and/or school-wide websites
- Parent Rights/Due Process
- Parent Evening Event: Handouts and/or sign-in sheet
- Documentation of Credit by Demonstrated Mastery information/meeting procedures

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 and the community that are intentional and meaningful to support the following needs of AIG students:

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program partners with parents, families, and other community stakeholders throughout all educational levels in the district. At the school level, AIG Specialists meet with parents annually to complete the Differentiated Education Plan for each student. AIG Specialists also meet parents and community members at school open houses; individual school festivals, performances, and presentations; and at academic and cultural events such as science fairs and speech contests. AIG Specialists also collaborate with local community partners in academic events such as the Blue Ridge Electric Extravaganza and the Google Gravity Games Soap Box Race. Also at the school level, an AIG Review Team comprised of classroom teachers, the school counselor, a school administrator, and the AIG Specialist is available to address parent concerns and meet with AIG parents as needed. The AIG High School Specialist works with all high school counselors and administrators and meets with AIG parents at registration events and on days when student schedules are released. The AIG High School Specialist also meets with parents of students selected to apply to the Governor's School Program to help parents and students navigate the application process. The AIG High School Specialist also partners with the local community college in ensuring that AIG students taking community college classes have appropriate schedules and course options. At the district level, an AIG Advisory Board is selected annually, with parents, administrators, curriculum directors, regular classroom educators, AIG Specialists, and the AIG Director serving to assist in evaluating the operations and procedures of the AIG Program. The AIG Advisory Board, in collaboration with the AIG Task Force and the AIG Specialists, maintain the monitoring of the AIG Plan to assure that AIG services are comprehensive and appropriate for all identified students. These service delivery options and opportunities afforded to AIG students should include those which will strengthen students academically, intellectually, socially, and/or emotionally.

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 Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program works toward a goal of consistent and frequent communication throughout the school year. AIG Specialists are encouraged to publish and distribute quarterly newsletters and to maintain updated webpages. Parent brochures for the Young Scholars' Program and the Caldwell County AIG Program are updated annually and given to parents at parent meetings and are also posted on the AIG District website. AIG Specialists, along

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with the AIG Review Team at each school, update the Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) and/or the Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs) and share the information at parent meetings. A district-created PowerPoint information presentation is shared with parents at the DEP meetings; a district-created PowerPoint presentation is also shared with parents at the Governor's School information meeting. The AIG Director provides an annual update and refresher training in gifted education procedures and requirements at the summer retreat for all local district administrators. AIG Advisory Board meetings are on-going and also provide venues for sharing assessment data, AIG enrollment numbers, and procedural and personnel changes. Other stakeholder opportunities include local Board of Education meetings, district meetings, administrator mid-month and end-of-month meetings, and other curricular events such as AdvancEd accreditation presentations.

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 Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program is served by an AIG Advisory Board that is created annually to ensure the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG Program and plan. The AIG Advisory Board includes AIG parents, school administrators, community representatives, AIG Specialists, district curricular directors, and the AIG District Director. The AIG website and the district website allow for continuous updates to the program and a means to communicate consistently throughout the district as needed. Minutes to the AIG Advisory Board meetings are maintained at the district AIG office and the AIG website is updated regularly. AIG Specialists also send out quarterly newsletters to parents and interested community partners.

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: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program believes communication is critical and that all AIG parents deserve to receive consistent, on-going information. AIG Specialists utilize quarterly newsletters, individual websites, and e-mail to promote academic opportunities for AIG students and to help parents monitor deadlines for participation and application for extracurricular events. The AIG district website also promotes district-wide opportunities for AIG students and highlights the extraordinary accomplishments of AIG students in the district. The AIG Program collaborates with the ELL Director to ensure that translations for forms, tests, and other documents are available as needed and to secure interpreters for parent meetings and presentations.

Practice E

Forms partnerships with institutions of higher education, local business and industry, and other

stakeholders within the community to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program continually strives to advocate for the needs of gifted and higher ability learners. Community outreach is critical to ensuring that all parts of the community understand the academic needs of these students, but that they also get to share in the extraordinary accomplishments and successes of these students. Annual parent meetings bring parents and community stakeholders together to learn about the academic service delivery options and about the AIG Plan in the district. The annual high school parent meeting(s) for those selected to apply for Governor's School are well received and draw large crowds of interested parents. The district brings in Gifted Consultants/Trainers, subject to the local AIG budget and availability of presenters, to serve as an outside source of information about the unique academic, intellectual, and social/emotional challenges faced by AIG students and parents. AIG Specialists and the AIG Director are present, as well, to answer questions and/or serve as a local source of information and support for parents, students, educators, and other interested stakeholders. The AIG Elementary Specialists partner with Blue Ridge Electric, the local electric power provider, to present an "Electric Extravaganza" for all the fourth grade students in the district. AIG Specialists at middle school partner with Project Lead the Way Classes, with the local technology company Google, and Appalachian State University to present the Google Gravity Games. The AIG High School Specialist works with all the high schools, including the two innovative high schools located on the community college campus. At those sites, the AIG Specialist collaborates with high school personnel and with community college instructors to ensure that courses offered to AIG students are appropriate, challenging, and differentiated.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: - Create a district AIG parent list serve to provide electronic communication, such as newsletters and program information.

- Hold AIG advisory meetings each semester.
- Create quarterly district wide newsletters.

Sources of Evidence: - 2016-2019 Caldwell County Schools AIG Plan

- 2016-2019 service delivery options for K-12
- Parent brochures
- Agendas from annual Parent Meetings/Governor's School Evening Meetings
- Agendas/minutes/presentations from AIG Advisory Board meetings
- Agendas/minutes/presentations from AIG Council meetings
- Samples of newsletters and/or websites
- Copies of students' DEPs/IDEPs

- AIG Review Team notes
- Parent meeting flyers/invitations

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 LEA's school board and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program has a written and electronically submitted 2016-2019 AIG Plan in accordance to state legislation, guidelines, and policy. The AIG Plan has been developed with stakeholder input and describes the local AIG Program and outlines plans for ensuring accountability, uniformity, and consistency across the district for identified gifted and higher ability learners in grades K-12. The AIG Plan presented and approved in 2013-2016 has been maintained over the last three years with fidelity, with annual re-visioning and updates. The new plan will serve as a monitoring instrument and a guiding document in delivering differentiated academic services to the AIG students in Caldwell County Schools. The AIG local plan shall be approved by the local school board and subsequently sent to the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education for review and comment.

Practice B

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program will utilize the components of the 2016-2019 AIG Plan to monitor implementation of the program standards with respect to strengthening student identification procedures; maintaining differentiated curriculum and instruction; supporting AIG-licensed personnel and promoting AIG-aligned professional development; enhancing comprehensive curricular and extracurricular program options for higher ability learners; forming partnerships with parents, local colleges, and community businesses to promote opportunities for student support; and creating systems of program accountability for the local plan. North Carolina Article 9B provides the state definition for Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) students and requires local education agencies to develop three-year plans with these specified components and to submit a newly revised AIG Program Plan on a three-year cycle. The local plan is to be updated annually. The local Board of Education is charged with adopting the local plan and ensuring that monitoring and evaluation occurs throughout the three-year cycle.

Practice C

Uses and monitors state funds allotted for the local AIG program according to state policy.

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District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program maintains a budget based on state allotment of funds for the local AIG Program. Funding is four percent of the ADM—Average Daily Membership—of the school district. The percentage is utilized throughout the state for all local AIG Programs. The local AIG Program does not receive federal or local money for the AIG Program. The AIG Program budget allocations vary from year to year in order to support program goals and objectives. The primary budget expense is the cost of personnel. The current budget covers the cost of twelve positions for the district. Budget allocations also support student identification procedures, including testing materials and printing costs; differentiated curriculum and instruction, including supplementary texts and technological resources; personnel and professional development, including employment of personnel and workshop and training expenses; comprehensive programming, including allocations of materials for extracurricular opportunities and support of extracurricular programs; communication tools for informing stakeholders throughout the community of AIG services; and supporting program accountability through scheduled meetings with AIG Specialists, AIG Review Teams, and AIG Advisory Board.

Practice D

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program has benefitted from the addition of AIG student information to PowerSchool. The use of PowerSchool allows for easy submission of enrollment and AIG identification status for students. It also permits roster alignment and helps the district monitor students for headcount purposes. The AIG Director works with the Testing Coordinator for the district to provide universal screening tests at the third and sixth grade levels. Student performance on these grade level tests is printed and distributed to parents, with interpretive information provided as needed. This data supports and informs instructional planning at the elementary and middle schools schools and provides data that may be used for student placement in AIG programs. In addition, the Testing Coordinator provides in depth EOG and EOC information annually to address AIG student growth and performance as a recognized subgroup for the district. AIG Specialists use this provided data to assess academic growth and plan activities for the following school year. The data is shared with the Educational Program Services Team at the School District Office in order to coordinate programs across the district and to plan for professional development. The testing data for the district is also shared with the local Board of Education, the AdvancEd Accreditation Agency, and the local news media. Individual schools also release report cards that disseminate the testing growth and performance data by subgroups. Parents receive copies of the report cards and receive updated assessment performance information after annual testing protocols and at Title I parents meetings. Individual schools utilize all testing data for Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) meetings and administrators receive testing information and share strategies and planning for improvement at mid-month and end-of- month meetings. The AIG Director attends all administrative meetings and provides input for AIG planning and support for student growth. AIG Specialists also serve on the district Faculty Council, and monthly Faculty Council meetings also receive student growth and assessment data and share ideas for school improvement planning. Each school is required to complete an annual School Improvement Plan, and a component of that plan is to ensure that student academic needs and supports will be provided, including supports for higher ability learners. A yearly annual review is conducted for each AIG identified K-8 student, with the

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review including test data, attendance data, and other information that is critical for program planning. In addition, the AIG High School Specialist monitors the student rosters at the high school in order to track AIG student graduation data. Also at the high school level, the AIG High School Specialist helps administer AP tests and receives performance data on the required AP testing of all students taking AP classes. This data is analyzed to determine which AP classes need additional support, which classes will continue to be offered, and which AP personnel may need to attend summer training events.

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 Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program utilizes the PowerSchool information system to quarterly monitor the rosters of students at each school to identify students from traditionally underrepresented populations, including culturally/ethnically diverse populations, English Language Learners, Highly Gifted Learners (IG and AI,) and twice-exceptional learners. The AIG Program assigns AIG Specialists to work with all twenty-six schools in the district, and, as all K-8 schools in the district are Title I schools, program support for AIG-identified economically disadvantaged students is on-going and consistent. Child Search Forms are utilized by Elementary AIG Specialists as referral documents for program placement. Child Search Forms also allow for data collection about potential candidates and possible assessments that may be needed in the data collection process. A variety of assessment instruments are implemented in order to search and screen students for possible gifted identification. Every attempt possible is made to provide the opportunity for all populations of students to be referred, assessed, identified, and placed for gifted services in a fair and equitable manner. The AIG Program provides this individual student testing as needed and helps administer universal screening tests in the third and sixth grades. The AIG Review Team at the individual schools meets to discuss student referrals on all potential placements. In addition, the AIG Program provides a Young Scholars' Program for students in K-3 who have been referred by instructional personnel as higher ability learners. Students may be referred to this program through the use of data collected via K-3 reading assessments and by teacher observation/checklists. There are three pathways utilized for placement in grades K-2 and in grades 3-8, each with a variety of documentation required for placement. There is one pathway for students in grades 9-12 for placement. In addition, the AIG District Director may provide a recommendation for placement for a student who has passed the ELL ACCESS Test and who has shown extraordinary performance in learning the English language and in classroom achievement.

Practice F

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program is committed to employing AIG-licensed instructional personnel for the district. The AIG Director and all current AIG Specialists are all licensed and copies of their credentials are maintained at the AIG District Office. Other credentials, including teaching licenses for particular grade levels and National Board for Professional Teaching

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Standards Certification, are also maintained at the AIG District Office. The AIG Program also strongly supports educators working to secure an AIG license through a program to reimburse tuition costs for those who complete an accredited license and who submit appropriate documents, including transcripts with grades and tuition-paid receipts. The AIG Director must approve these documents prior to tuition reimbursement. In addition to the AIG Director, the Associate Superintendent for Human Resources and the Finance Director for the district also have rosters of AIG Specialists currently employed and the schools where they are assigned. In addition to those employed by the AIG Program by the AIG budget, the AIG Director maintains a current listing of educators who are AIG licensed in the district who are serving in other positions, including regular classroom positions, Instructional Facilitator positions, and administrative positions.

Practice G

Elicits regular feedback from students, parents/families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program.

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program holds AIG Advisory Board meetings at the end of each semester to review program academic progress and to receive input from stakeholders. The membership of the AIG Advisory Board changes annually in order to reflect a diverse representation of parents, administrators, teachers, AIG Specialists, curriculum directors, and other stakeholders. Classroom teachers of AIG students and a random sample of AIG parents are surveyed annually to assess AIG Program effectiveness. AIG Specialists hold DEP parent meetings annually, and they meet with individual parents as needed to review academic plans and develop Individual Differentiated Education Plans. The survey questions distributed to classroom teachers and parents are posted to the website and are accessible throughout the school year.

Practice H

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program utilizes multiple sources of data to review and revise the local plan and to provide comprehensive and strategic assessment and monitoring of program standards. Data from Power School and for twice-yearly headcounts provides rosters to examine and analyze for numbers of students identified; the identification status—IG, AI, AR, AM, AG; the representation of traditionally under-served populations; and the location of feeder school patterns to support planning for AIG Specialist school assignment and support. Survey data collected from parents and classroom teachers provides information for scheduling supplemental instruction to the core curriculum and allows for determination of needs for differentiation training at various school sites. Principals provide input at mid-month and end-of-month meetings to the AIG Director that address AIG student issues in regards to student growth and performance on annual testing. The on-site evaluation during district-wide reaccreditation through AdvancED requires analysis of each program component, including AIG programs, and the need for addressing comprehensive standards with fidelity. District Directors of Curricula, the Testing and Accountability Director, the ELL Director, and the Associate Superintendent for Educational Program Services, all

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submit information that is utilized in comprehensive program planning and review of the AIG Program and the service delivery to students.

Practice I

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

District Response: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program submits a copy of the three-year comprehensive plan for approval by the District Superintendent and the Board of Education. Copies of the plan are maintained in the District Office and the plan is posted to the AIG website for the Caldwell County School District. The AIG Advisory Board is created annually and copies of the plan are made available to those members during twice yearly meetings to review and monitor for performance. AIG Specialists assigned to the twenty-six schools provide AIG Program information to their schools through parent meetings, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) planning sessions, and differentiation workshops. Information from surveys is shared with District Curriculum Directors and with the AIG Advisory Board. Finally, the AIG Parent Brochure shares information about the local AIG program and the brochure is distributed to parents at parent meetings and is posted on the AIG website.

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: The Caldwell County Schools' AIG Program follows established due process procedures that are articulated and distributed to parents at parent meetings and via the AIG website. The AIG Program Parent Rights/Due Process Document has been local school board approved and is given to parents when students are placed in the AIG Program. This document is also available at a review of testing results and at annual DEP/IDEP meetings. The Parent Rights/Due Process Document is available on the AIG website at all times and can be accessed by parents, administrators, advocates, and other stakeholders. The Parents Rights/Due Process document states that the Board of Education "believes that students and parents have the right to an orderly, equitable solution to problems, which may arise affecting them and the school system. The student/parent shall start at the school level using established procedures to resolve the matter(s) of concern. The Board of Education will not consider any such matter until all administrative remedies have been exhausted. Whenever a student and/or parent believes that he or she has been adversely affected by a decision of the school based committee regarding eligibility, placement, service delivery, or other matters related to accessing and/or benefitting from services for gifted children, due process may be requested in accordance with this policy. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that disagreements will be resolved amicably and justly at the lowest possible level. Time limits have been established to assure prompt attention to each situation. If the student/parent does not process his or her complaint within the set time limit, it may be considered settled and not open to appeal." (See Caldwell County Schools' AIG Website for the complete document.) AIG Specialists work with administrators and AIG Review Teams to address all parent concerns. Parents always have the due

process right to appeal to the AIG Program Director and to the School Superintendent. Every effort is made to look at all options available for testing, identification, and placement to support the instructional needs of higher learning students and the academic interests of parents and guardians.

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: - Incorporate a suggestion box on the district website to gain feedback from stakeholders.

- Hold an annual data meeting with AIG specialists to disaggregate EOG, EOC, AP, and ACT data to guide practice and improvements and to help determine if AIG students needs are being met.
- Develop IDEPs for all IG identified students.

Sources of Evidence: - 2016-2019 Caldwell County Schools AIG Plan

- School Board meeting agenda/minutes (from 06/13/16)
- AIG Census File audits
- AIG K-5 service notebooks
- Annual Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) budget statement(s) (034 funds)
- Inventory of curriculum resource materials/Lending Library
- AIG Specialists' schedules
- Twice a year AIG headcount
- Updated End-of-Grade and/or End-of-Course data
- Surveys and/or feedback from related stakeholders
- NCDPI comments for previous AIG Plan
- Advisory Board sign-in sheets, agendas, notes from committee meetings
- Parent Rights/Due Process document

Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

- AIG Placement Packet grades 3-8.docx (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
- Grades 9-12 High School Pathway.docx (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
- High School DEP.docx (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
- K-2 Placement Pathways.docx (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
- K-8 DEP.docx (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
- Parent Due Process.docx (*Appendix - Standard 6*)
- AIG Plan Approval June 13, 2016.pdf (*Local Board Approval Document*)