

**Avery County Schools**  
**Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan**  
**Effective 2013-2016**

**Approved by local Board of Education on:** 09-APR-13

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Avery County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012). 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 to 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 2013-2016. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's board of Education and sent to NC DPI for comment.

***For 2010-2013, Avery County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:***

**Avery County Schools Vision for local AIG program:** Avery County Schools believes that all students can learn and should be challenged to their individual interest and ability/achievement levels to ensure success in school and in life. Of utmost importance is the development of a program where educational objectives, curriculum and assessment are aligned and where instructional approaches match the learning styles of individual students. Basic to achieving this goal is to provide a classroom environment that promotes dignity and respect for gifted students from all cultures and demographic backgrounds. The classroom climate must be conducive to and supportive of the characteristics of high-end learning as schools strive for academic excellence for all students.

Avery County Schools seeks to educate gifted students for productive citizenship and life-long learning as it teaches students the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that allow them to be successful. This mission will be realized by involving the home, school, and community in providing high quality personnel, facilities, programs, and curricula needed to accommodate the diversity of learners.

**Sources of funding for local AIG program (as of 2013)**

<b>State Funding</b>	<b>Local Funding</b>	<b>Grant Funding</b>	<b>Other Funding</b>
<b>\$106172.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

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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.

### **This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools believes that all children can learn and should be challenged to their individual interest and ability/achievement levels to ensure success in school and in life. Of utmost importance is the development of a program where educational objectives, curriculum and assessment are aligned with student need and where instructional approaches match the learning styles of individual students. Basic to achieving this goal is to provide a classroom environment that promotes dignity and respect for gifted students from all cultures and demographic backgrounds.

Academically and/or intellectually gifted students typically demonstrate intellectual and achievement related characteristics that distinguish them from their age and grade peers. The academically or intellectually gifted student often functions or is capable of functioning at significantly higher levels of performance, thinks with greater complexity and abstraction, and learns at a faster rate than his/her age or grade peers. 'Giftedness' can be demonstrated by high ability in a specific academic discipline, in various academic disciplines and/or intellectual areas. However, some gifted youth including, but not limited to those from culturally diverse or economically disadvantaged families with limited learning experiences, may not demonstrate their potential and may not be readily recognized as gifted. Students who are gifted, therefore, form a diverse group with complex intellectual, social and emotional needs. Gifted children and youth exist in culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged families, as well as in populations of students with disabilities.

Avery County Schools seeks to identify, based on a democratic review of all pertinent information gathered from multiple sources, students who think with more complexity and abstraction, and who learn/perform or show potential for learning/performing in academic disciplines at a significantly faster rate and/or higher level of proficiency than their age/grade peers.

Through professional development, educators become knowledgeable about the characteristics of gifted students. Clear descriptions regarding identification procedures for all categories of giftedness are articulated and made available to all stakeholders. Identification procedures reflect special consideration for diversity in primary languages, cultures, economic and academic levels during the screening and selection processes. At all grade levels, AIG identification teams make equitable decisions using objective and subjective measures, specific to different student characteristics (abilities, intelligence, creativity and leadership) at screening, identification, selection, and placement levels.

**Goals:** Avery County Schools Gifted Education Program's focus on efforts toward more transparency in policies and procedures will effect more efficient dissemination of screening, referral and identification processes. A brochure listing and describing multiple criteria will articulate program standards.

**Description:** In order to articulate the varying characteristics of gifted students within a school population and community, the Gifted Education Program Director, with assistance from the Advanced Differentiation Specialist, reviews behaviors as listed on 'The Gifted Child Checklist' with faculty members at the beginning of each school year when teachers are contemplating referrals for AIG identification teams. The Advanced Differentiated Education Plan's environment and content modifications options are revisited as needed throughout the year. Parents of AIG-referred students are invited to meeting(s) to review student performance during the previous year and to participate in the A-DEP's development for the current year. During group meetings, parents collaborate on parenting issues particular to raising gifted children. A bonding network among parents and one between the home and school is formed.

Avery County Schools recognizes Schneider's (1987) statement remains true: "As is the case for any minority, the social acceptance of the gifted depends in part on the readiness of society to accept, even appreciate, their unique attributes." Every effort is made to articulate and disseminate clear, comprehensive, and equitable screening, referral, and identification processes for all grade levels to school personnel, parents/families, students and the community-at-large by the following tenets:

Practitioners equipped with strategies for working with parents/families of gifted children/youth by offering workshops that focus on effective and collaborative referral practices.

Student teachers' and interns' training include rationale and methods for screening, referral, and identification processes. These efforts must be a part of a larger outreach effort to infuse undergraduate programs with awareness measures and policies for identifying gifted children and youth.

Identification of twice-exceptional, English language learners, students from culturally diverse and/or economically disadvantaged backgrounds afforded longitudinal monitoring during the first 3-5 years of schooling.

Administrators encouraged to attend teacher and parent trainings.

Parent meetings offered that include information about identification measures, nature and needs of gifted children and youth, importance of family support.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Plan posted online;

Paper copies available to all stakeholders;

Spanish translation of plan available upon request;

Objective assessments administered under standardized conditions;

Selected tests appropriate for groups of student and/or individuals;

Technical qualities (reliability and validity) of assessment instruments well researched;

Assessment data can be collected over time, or may be one data event (test/assessment);

Teacher observations provide detail to distinguish behavioral characteristics of gifted students;

BOE minutes reflect policies/procedures;

State allotment reflects policies;

Commendations/Recommendations from DPI;

Follow-up documents from DPI;

Websites, agenda and presentations at parent meetings, faculty meetings, local board of education meetings, etc.;

Interviews with stakeholders;

Surveys;

When appropriate, data portfolios and performance assessments are collected and analyzed;

Procedures and respective evidences (observation forms, rating scale, tests, portfolio, etc.) are aligned with skills and abilities crucial for student success in accelerated/advanced programs;

Procedures are in place to uncover/reveal abilities of students who may not perform consistently in all/some content areas;

Final roster of identified students reflects the demographics of the district;

Identification procedures conform to legal standards;

Procedures internally consistent.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice B**

Employs multiple criteria for AIG student identification, including 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 traditional standardized measures that are based current theory and research.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Multiple criteria (behavior checklists; portfolios; student observations; cognitive, achievement and performance assessments) are used to ensure a comprehensive profile on each student and eliminate formal procedures that reflect cut scores. The use of multiple criteria opens opportunity for greater numbers of students--including those with special needs. Early identification and placement allow for classrooms to implement advanced instructional interventions and enrichment opportunities for high-performing students and for those who show potential for high performance. Learning experiences in rigorous curricular in early years promote opportunities for future acceleration and enrichment.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Systematic and defensible procedures to screen and identify students' abilities are in place: an annual review of each child's achievement and ability test score on group-administered instruments. Students scoring in the highest range (locally normed) are entered in the screening pool. Teachers complete a rating scale related to learning characteristics and motivation. In addition, teachers are encouraged to share anecdotes that describe behavioral characteristics well beyond grade-level expectations. A screening/identification team uses all data to complete a student educational profile and proceed with a case-study approach to selecting gifted students whose academic needs exceed those of the general education program. No one identification criterion will prevent a student from being identified to receive services.

Alternative objective and subjective tools are used in elementary and middle schools and include grades, writing sample, portfolio or performance. Teams of teachers and administrators pay careful attention to selecting assessments that are sensitive to student age and grade level.

The collection of data to support nominations is the responsibility of the referring individual/team. An AIG committee consisting of an advanced differentiation specialist; the ESL Coordinator and/or Exceptional Children Program Director, where appropriate; and other certified personnel knowledgeable in the areas of identification of and curriculum for gifted children and youth review documentation on students. (Central Office administrators ensure inter-rater reliability.) Nomination forms reflecting 'Multiple Indicators of Giftedness' are available to all appropriate personnel and may include the following indicators:

Documentation of observed behavior,  
Student performance record and work samples,

Student achievement data,  
Student aptitude information,  
Information about the student's interests,  
Information reflecting the student's motivation to learn.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Aptitude assessment reports,  
Achievement test reports,  
K-2 literacy and math formative assessments,  
Formative/Summative assessment data/reports,  
Teacher comments/recommendations,  
Parent inventories,  
Performance indicators,  
EVAAS data,  
Discovery Education assessments,  
mCLASS Reading 3D data (DIBELS, TRC),  
Assessing Math Concepts (AMC) assessments,  
Lexiles assignments,  
School-based review team documentation,  
Student AIG folders containing identification information,  
District's AIG Plan and and surveys,  
Emails/Memos.

**Other Comments:**

**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.

**This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools seeks to identify, based on a democratic review of all pertinent information gathered from multiple sources, students who think with more complexity and abstraction, and who learn/perform or show potential for learning /performing in academic disciplines at a significantly faster rate and/or higher level of proficiency than their age/grade peers. The school system's directed effort toward addressing the needs of gifted students from low socio-economic and culturally diverse backgrounds was among topics discussed in a professional development session attended by system administrators and teaching personnel. Awareness of challenges in identifying gifted students from diverse backgrounds, as well as maintaining academic success once students are placed, resulted in a general realization that these students' giftedness is manifested differently and thus, characteristics and learning behaviors warrant a differentiated means of evaluation. Identification procedures and criteria used for decision making must be in keeping with the values that are fostered in the culture of poverty and diversity. The resulting identification/placement procedural adjustments and accommodations will provide all students from poverty the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills, attitudes and behaviors that will increase the probability of their becoming productive

learners. (Slocumb, P., and Payne, R., 2000. Removing the mask: giftedness in poverty).

**Goals:** Avery County Schools seeks to further communicate the many and varied characteristics of gifted students within a school population and community so that a firm commitment to meeting the needs of these students is continually being reinforced in the schools and community.

**Description:** Youth from culturally diverse and/or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as students with physical and/or learning disabilities are included in the search for students with gifted characteristics. In effort toward providing equity of representation of all ethnic and socio-economic groups throughout the district, flexible criteria that include the 'Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test', a culture-fair aptitude test, are used to accommodate students who may be overlooked because of test and/or performance bias related to language and/or culture/socio-economic disadvantages.

In order to articulate the varying characteristics of gifted students within a school population and community, the Gifted Education Program Director, assisted by the Advanced Differentiation Specialist, reviews behaviors as listed on 'The Gifted Child Checklist' with faculty members at the beginning of each school year when teachers are contemplating referrals for the AIG Identification Team. The Gifted Education Identification Team reviews, at least annually, general information that is available on the regular education student population, prek-12, from various written and non-written/traditional and non-traditional sources in order to determine placement eligibility or need for further evaluation. No one identification criterion will prevent a student from being identified to receive service. Information (Spanish version available) may include, but not be limited to the following sources:

Standardized achievement test scores, including NC EOG and NC EOC test scores;  
Standardized aptitude test scores, including 'Test of Cognitive Skills' (administered system-wide in grade 3);  
'Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test' (administered K-12, as warranted);  
ACCESS assessment (administered K-12, English Language Learners);  
Academic/Scholastic performance as recorded on cumulative records and report cards;  
Teacher recommendation;  
Student interest assessments;  
Student/Parent/Teacher/Community member (with academic knowledge of student) inventories  
Scholastic/Academic performance as recorded in cumulative records

Best Research Practices:

The focus should be on the diversity within gifted populations. The gifted do not represent a homogeneous group, nor do the gifted express their talents in the same way.

The goal should be inclusion rather than exclusion of students.

Data should be gathered from multiple sources; a single criterion of giftedness should be avoided.

Both objective and subjective data should be collected.

Educators and non-educators who represent various areas of expertise and who are knowledgeable about behavioral indicators of giftedness should be involved.

Screening for giftedness should occur as early as possible, should consist of a series of steps, and should be continuous.

Special attention should be given to the different ways in which children from different cultures manifest behavioral indicators of giftedness.

Decision making should be delayed until all data on a student have been reviewed.

Data collected during the identification process should be used to help determine the curriculum

Frasier, M.M.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Student AIG folders containing information on measures, Testing calendars and administered instruments list, ACS AIG Plan and surveys, Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test score reports.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice D**

Ensures consistency in implementation of screening, referral, and identification processes within the LEA.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools screens, refers and identifies all students based on a democratic review of all pertinent information gathered from multiple sources, students who think with more complexity and abstraction, and who learn/perform or show potential for learning/performing in academic disciplines at a significantly faster rate and/or higher level of proficiency, than their age/grade peers. Classroom teachers are guided through the nomination process by frequent informal meetings with AIG personnel, and more formal staff development opportunities that reference current and pertinent research on gifted student characteristics.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** The collection of data to support nominations is the responsibility of the referring individual/team at each school. The AIG committee, consisting of the Gifted Education Program Director, the ESL Coordinator, where appropriate (Central Office administrators ensure inter-rater reliability) and other certified personnel knowledgeable in the areas of identification of and curriculum for gifted youth, shall review documentation on students. Nomination forms that reflect 'Multiple Indicators of Giftedness' are available to all appropriate personnel systemwide and include, but are not limited to the following:

- \* documentation of observed behavior
- \* student performance records and work samples
- \* student achievement data
- \* student aptitude information
- \* information about the student's interests
- \* information reflecting the student's motivation to learn

The consistent, system-wide process of matching the student with appropriate services is one guided by the needs of the student. Four phases are involved in the decision-making process that include: student search, nomination and data collection, committee review, placement in service delivery program with appropriated options match.

In addition to teacher/team referrals, the Gifted Education Program Director and the Advanced Differentiation Specialist review, at least annually, general information that is available on the regular education student population, pre-k through grade 12, from various written and non-written/ traditional and non-traditional sources in order to determine placement eligibility or need for further evaluation. Information (Spanish version available) may include, but not be limited to the following sources:

Standardized achievement test scores, including NC EOG and NC EOC test scores;

Standardized aptitude test scores, including 'Test of Cognitive Skills' (administered system-wide in grade 3);

'Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test' (administered K-12, as warranted);

ACCESS assessment (administered K-12, English Language Learners);

Academic/Scholastic performance as recorded on cumulative records and report cards;

Teacher recommendation;

Student interest assessments;

Student/Parent/Teacher/Community member (with academic knowledge of student) inventories  
Scholastic/Academic performance as recorded in cumulative records

Best Search Practices:

The focus should be on the diversity within gifted populations. The gifted do not represent a homogeneous group, nor do the gifted express their talents in the same way.

The goal should be inclusion rather than exclusion of students.

Data should be gathered from multiple sources; a single criterion of giftedness should be avoided.

Both objective and subjective data should be collected.

Educators and non-educators who represent various areas of expertise and who are knowledgeable about behavioral indicators of giftedness should be involved.

Screening for giftedness should occur as early as possible, should consist of a series of steps, and should be continuous.

Special attention should be given to the different ways in which children from different cultures manifest behavioral indicators of giftedness.

Decision making should be delayed until all data on a student have been reviewed.

Data collected during the identification process should be used to help determine the curriculum

Frasier, M.M.

The school level AIG team uses student data to identify those students who require advanced/accelerated levels of instruction. Placement decisions are made to reflect the appropriate advanced differentiation service option that will match the student's needs. The AIG Program Director and, where appropriate, the Exceptional Children Program Director and/or the LEP Coordinator, assess progress toward the school system's goal of equity. Decisions are made using appropriate data and procedures to ensure an accurate appraisal of students' need. No single piece of information will automatically eliminate a student from consideration for services (e.g. a student who has outstanding grades in math and high math test scores should not be prevented placement in advanced math based on a low IQ score.) A single piece of evidence can, however, indicate that differentiated services are warranted (e.g. an IQ score on an individual assessment that is in the superior range is indicative of outstanding intellectual aptitude.) In all schools and at all grade levels, the match between student need and appropriate service delivery option(s) is based on the data gathered during the student search and nomination process.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** AIG child count data reflective of each school's demographics, Screening, referral and identification trends, Samples of identification using non-traditional criteria, Documented testing accommodations where appropriate, Specific program documents and descriptions in AIG Plan, ACS AIG Plan Dropout Prevention data reflective of demographics.

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice E**

Establishes written policies that safeguard the rights of AIG students and their parents/families, including informed consent regarding identification and placement, reassessment procedures, transfers from other LEAs, and procedures for resolving disagreements.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Screening and referral procedures are essential components of placement practices. Avery County Schools recognizes the importance of criteria for placement of students within service delivery options and makes every effort to ensure an appropriate student-to-service match within each school. Placement criteria for each service delivery option are established to guide individual schools in placement decisions. No one criteria can exclude a child from formal identification. The AIG team at each school carefully considers the options available at that school. While specific service delivery options may vary from school to school, each school is invested in expanding opportunities available for gifted and non-identified advanced students. (Program improvements at each school are based on the school's resources and student population.)

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Decisions of the AIG identification team are documented. The AIG team make the following determinations:

- \* Advanced differentiated services are not required at this time.
- \* Information provided is inadequate/incomplete and/or additional testing is needed to determine an appropriate match of differentiated service (Parent signature required should additional evaluation be requested.),
- \* The student should be placed on a 'wait and watch' list where teachers are directed to continue to observe student behaviors, collect work samples and report back to the committee when evidence of 'giftedness' is sited.
- \* Evidence indicates that advanced differentiated services are required and procedures for determining an appropriate match of student options should follow.

The AIG Program Director maintains a roster of all nominations, screening data, and a record of decisions reached. Nominated students remain in the pool of potential candidates, even when placement is not recommended by the AIG team.

Should a student transfer into the school from another system, either in or outside North Carolina as an identified gifted student, the AIG team will review pertinent data in order to determine an appropriate service match for this student. A decision regarding placement shall be made within 30 days of notification to the AIG team.

Parents and nominating teachers not specifically involved in the decision-making process are notified of the recommended student-to-service match and invited to participate in the development of an 'Advanced Differentiated Education Plan'. (ADEP) The ADEP articulates the goals and objectives of the service option(s), the service delivery implementation plan and the manner in which student progress will be assessed. As a minimum standard, an ADEP, aligned with the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSOC) and/or Essential Standards is provided in the areas of English language arts and math, at minimum. Strategies include extended thinking, applied thinking and conceptual thinking; and, by nature, strategies extend the NCSCS/Essential Standards. The ADEP is purposefully designed to provide appropriate content modifications in a learning environment conducive to advanced differentiated instructional practices. Special program options are determined by the student's demonstrated abilities and/or performance, as well as the student's social and emotional needs.

General education bears an integral responsibility to appropriately differentiate instruction for gifted students. The AIG Program Director and the Advanced Differentiation Specialist support and collaborate with the general classroom teachers to address the needs of gifted students by providing additional resources, concept-based units of study, co-teaching/learning strategies and/or professional development in advanced differentiated instruction, high-end teaching/learning strategies and social-emotional issues of gifted students. Signatures documenting participation in the development of the ADEP include all major stakeholders including the following individuals: parent, AIG Program Director, general education teacher(s), Exceptional Children Program Director and teacher (where appropriate), Limited English Proficiency Program Coordinator (where appropriate.) Advanced differentiated services begin immediately. ADEPs are filed in each student's AIG folder; a copy of the ADEP is provided to parents and general education teacher.

## Procedure to Resolve Disagreements

### Level I: School Site Review

If parents have a disagreement concerning screening, identification or services, they shall first request in writing a meeting with the principal, Gifted Program Coordinator and the child's teacher. Other appropriate personnel may be requested to attend this meeting. The parents may also request in writing a conference with the AIG Team.

### Level II: Administrative Review

If the disagreement is not resolved at the school site, the parents may appeal in writing, within 10 days of the school site decision, to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Superintendent. They will review the case and respond to parents and principal in writing within 10 days of receipt of the appeal.

### Level III: Mediation

If agreement cannot be reached administratively, the school system will arrange for mediation with an impartial facilitator within 10 days.

### Level IV: School Board Review

If agreement cannot be reached administratively, the parents may appeal to the Board of Education in writing within 10 days. The Board will offer a written decision to the parents within 30 days.

### Level V: Administrative Law Hearing

If the Board's decision fails to resolve the disagreement satisfactorily, the parents may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The scope of the hearing will be limited to consideration of (1) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted student, or (2) whether the local plan of services for the student has been implemented appropriately.

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Parent surveys/communications,  
Student AIG folders containing written consent,  
ACS AIG Plan including procedures to resolve disagreements,  
Documentation for those requesting to exit AIG program,  
Due process document (Procedure to Resolve Disagreements),  
Policy regarding transfer students from other LEAs.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice F**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools is focused upon matching student need and appropriate service delivery options. Student identification and placement is based on data gathered during the student search and nomination process and then matched appropriately with service options for individual AIG students and reviewed annually with parents/families. Special program options are determined by the student's demonstrated abilities and/or performance, as well as the student's social and emotional needs. Throughout the academic year, the AIG Program Director and the Advanced Differentiation Specialist support and collaborate with general education classroom teachers to address the needs of gifted students by providing additional resources and ensure appropriate academic rigor.

Placement criteria for each service delivery option have been established to guide individual schools in placement decisions. The AIG team at each school will carefully consider the options available at that school. While service delivery options may vary from school to school, each school is invested in expanding opportunities available for strong, gifted and highly gifted learners.

Screening and referral procedures are essential components of the identification process. It is the responsibility of the referring party to collect information about the student for the AIG team to consider. Students who are formally identified and placed will require completed eligibility and placement records. Eligibility and placement records will be maintained by the AIG Program Director and reviewed annually.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Decisions of the AIG identification team are documented; parents, principal and nominating teachers are notified of the recommended student-to-service match and invited to participate in the initial placement meeting to review assessment data and develop the Advanced Differentiated Education Plan (ADEP). Signatures of all meeting participants are required on the 'Summary of Student Eligibility - Recognition of Student Need' before the student is formally placed in the AIG Program. Subsequently, parents, principal and general education teachers (EC Director

and/or Limited English Proficiency Program Coordinator, where appropriate) are invited to attend annual reviews of the Advanced Differentiated Education Plan. A confidential AIG folder is filed that includes initial placement documentation, Summary of Eligibility/Recognition of Student Need (parent signature required), Advanced Differentiated Education Plan (reviewd annually). Combined, these documents articulate demonstrated student need and the goals and objectives of the service option(s), the service delivery implementation plan and the manner in which student progress will be assessed.

Indicators of a student's need for differentiation is based on his/her observable learning behaviors and indicators. These may be shown through the student's abilities in the following areas:

Communication - highly expressive and effective use of words, numbers and symbols;  
Motivation - evidence of desire to learn;  
Humor - Conveys and picks up on humor;  
Inquiry - Questions, experiments, explores;  
Insight - Quickly grasps new concepts and makes connections, senses deeper meanings;  
Interests - Holds intense (sometimes unusual) interests;  
Problem Solving - Exhibits effective, often inventive, strategies for recognizing and solving problems;  
Memory - Maintains large storehouse of information on school and non-school topics;  
Reasoning - Demonstrates logical approaches to figuring out solutions;  
Imagination/Creativity - Produces many ideas, highly original.  
Frasier, 1995

#### Student Performance:

Indicator of a student's demonstrated mastery. This may be shown through work samples, portfolios, grades, or other authentic assessment strategies. In some cases, performance may be demonstrated outside the school area.

#### Student Achievement:

Indicator of a student's knowledge. This may be shown through a standardized test score (85 percentile or above) on an achievement test (i.e. End of Grade/End of Course.) Achievement may also be reflected on criterion-referenced tests designed by teachers.

#### Student Aptitude:

Indicator of a student's capacity for learning. This involves reasoning, problem solving, memory, etc. Aptitude may be shown through an IQ/cognitive score of demonstrated abilities.

#### Student Interest:

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

#### Student Motivation to Learn:

Indicator of a student's commitment to pursue learning experiences. This may be shown through school and/or outside of school activities. With some students, this area may be muted by unfavorable environmental or exceptional circumstances. For these students who have often been called 'underachievers', an individual case study may be important to reflect the students' specific area(s) of need.

PK - 3

SERVICE OPTION: Clustering for advancement in communication skills and/or math; enrichment clusters for extension of thematic units (No formal identification or placement required for this option.)

CRITERIA TO ACCESS SERVICES: Teachers use the following criteria to determine which students need this service:

- Score at upper level on assessment inventories

- Mature social/personal development

- Independent reading ability - above grade level expectations

- Ability to show mastery in a skill area or area of study

- Portfolio of writing samples well above grade level peers (for advancement in CS)

- Strong learning attributes )self motivation, responsibility, consistency, high interest in subject area

- Teacher observations of classroom performance

- Consistent high quality daily work

SERVICE OPTION - Individual Services: Subject Acceleration/Grade Acceleration (Formal identification and placement required for these options.)

CRITERIA TO ACCESS SERVICES: A case study approach that reflects upon the following will be used for determining placement for the students who will access these service options.

- Individual aptitude at 98%ile or higher (recommended) on full scale score

- Score at least three years above grade level expectations on a standardized individual achievement test in all areas for grade acceleration, or two years above grade level in subject to be accelerated

- Mature social/personal development

- Strong teacher recommendation

- Principal recommendation

- AIG Director recommendation

- Parental approval/permission

INTERMEDIATE AND MIDDLE CONFIGURATION: GRADES 4-8

SERVICE OPTION: Flexible Clustering for Advancement in Communication Skills and/or Math (No formal identification and placement required for this option)

CRITERIA: Placement shall be based upon consideration of the following criteria:

- High performance (minimum of 87%ile recommended) reading and/or math, on a math and/or reading subtest of a standardized achievement or individual achievement test (i.e. Woodcock Johnson-R).

- Strong student interest, motivation and sense of responsibility

- Evidence of high quality in daily work/portfolio of high quality work samples demonstrating strengths in subject(s) under consideration.

- Maintain A or B+ average (or equivalent) in the subject(s) under consideration

- Strong teacher recommendation

SERVICE OPTION: Flexible Enrichment Clusters for Extension of Thematic Units (Formal identification and placement required for this option)

CRITERIA: Teachers use the following criteria to align student need/performance with this service.

High performance (minimum 90%ile recommended) in reading/math or other standardized achievement test (based on school demographics).

Demonstrated ability to be compacted out of grade level skills and concepts to allow time for enrichment.

Strong student learning characteristics and motivation to learn (attitude, consistent quality work, responsibility).

Student interest in thematic instruction and interdisciplinary concepts.

Teacher recommendation.

Gifted Program Director recommendation.

Anecdotal information regarding use of time and need for enrichment.

Cognitive score-minimum 85%ile (recommended).

SERVICE OPTION: Individualized Services- Subject Acceleration, Grade Acceleration (Formal identification and placement required for these options)

CRITERIA: A case study approach using the following criteria will be used for determining placement for the learners who will access these services.

Performance at a minimum of three years above grade level expectations.

Score at upper level on aptitude (e.g. WISC III-R) 98%tile recommended

Score at upper level (minimum score 95%tile recommended) on standardized achievement test

Psychological/Educational evaluation that may include off-level testing

Mature social/personal development

Strong teacher recommendation

Gifted Program Director recommendation

Principal recommendation

Anecdotal information regarding social and academic levels

Portfolio of high quality work samples

Strong student interest

Consistently high grades/performance in specified area(s)

Student interview

Project proposal or independent study plan

SECONDARY CONFIGURATION: Grade 9 – 12

SERVICE OPTION: Honors, Advanced Placement, dual enrollment (No formal identification required for this option.)

CRITERIA: Teachers use the following criteria to align student need/performance with this service

English:

High performance (minimum of 90%tile recommended) on reading subtest of normed achievement test;

Reading/EOC English

Teacher recommendation

## Student performance

### Math:

High performance (minimum of 90%tile recommended) on math subtest of normed achievement test

Teacher recommendation

Student performance

### Science:

High performance (minimum of 90%tile recommended) on math and/or science subtest of normed achievement test

Teacher recommendation

Student performance

### Social Studies:

High performance (minimum of 90%tile recommended) on reading and/or social studies normed achievement test)

Teacher recommendation

High student performance

**SERVICE OPTION:** Individualized Services, Special Schools (State selection criteria)

**CRITERIA:** A case study approach considering the following criteria is used for determining placement for gifted learners who will access these services.

Performance three years (recommended) above grade level expectation

Aptitude (WISC III-R)/cognitive score at upper level (98%tile recommended)

Score at upper level (95%tile recommended) on standardized achievement test

Psychological/educational evaluation that may include off-level testing

Mature social/personal development

Strong teacher recommendation

Gifted Program Director recommendation

Principal recommendation

Anecdotal information regarding social and academic levels

Portfolio of high quality work samples

Strong student interest

Consistently high grades/performance in specified area(s)

Student interview

Project proposal or independent study plan

Parent approval

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Student folders containing ADEPs/IDEPs,  
Annual parent meeting documentation on forms,  
ACS AIG Plan,  
Method for archiving data,  
Documentation of parent annual review meetings.

**Other Comments:**

## **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.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Academically or intellectually gifted students enrolled in Avery County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program. AIG services are integrated in a 1:1 technology-rich environment. Recognized as an Apple Distinguished Program, ACS provides all students, K-12, with an computing device (K-5 students receive an iPad; 6-12 students receive a MacBook) for use during the school year.

Avery County Schools recognizes that the classroom climate must be conducive to and supportive of the characteristics of high-end learning as schools strive for academic excellence for all students. Because academically or intellectually gifted students possess unique behaviors and characteristics, a qualitatively differentiated educational program, beyond the general educational offerings, is required to provide an appropriate academic experience that addresses these students' unique needs.

AIG services are integrated with the general education program, PK-12, where flexible grouping is used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual, social and emotional growth.

Avery County School seeks to provide appropriate education opportunities through an array of service delivery options designed to provide a stimulating and challenging curriculum so as to ensure that student potential is developed. A comprehensive service delivery system for gifted and highly able students is outlined in three segments: elementary (PK - grade 5), middle (grades 6 - 8), secondary (grades 9 - 12). Differentiated services take place in a variety of settings and provides most positive effects when students are grouped for instruction. The effect of grouping for gifted students is most productive and effective when instruction is appropriately advanced, extended and/or accelerated or when challenging enrichment activities are offered.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Avery County Schools Academically or Intellectually Gifted Education Program is purposefully designed to provide learning opportunities that promote the growth of skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for gifted students to reach their potential. Instructional programs provide a steady challenge without frustration or excessive pressure.

Strategies for the teaching/learning process are designed to respond to the unique needs of students. As educators become aware of the strengths and needs of students, an academic program that

responds to the unique learning styles of students is built that delivers a curriculum outlined in the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) and Essential Standards. Differentiation of curriculum and instruction is paramount in an educational program that seeks to address, meet and challenge each individual student's potential. Educational personnel involved in providing learning opportunities for gifted students must possess the knowledge and skills to meet and support the needs of these students.

The Revised Standard Course of Study provides a curriculum base on which to build a framework for extending, enriching, and/or accelerating curriculum for academically gifted and other academically able and motivated students. It is the intent of the integrated program to link and align instructional strategies and assessment instruments with students' talents and needs. The classroom in which thinking is encouraged is one where questions are valued, intellectual challenges are welcomed, and one in which education is viewed as a process of teaching what is known and, perhaps more importantly, a process for searching for solutions to what is unknown. All students must be afforded educational experiences that encourage them to find problems and speculate on possible solutions. The critical thinker must be awarded time to deliberate, think of alternate solutions to given problems, weigh evidence and ultimately articulate and defend a logical conclusion.

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that in-class flexible clustering opportunities are afforded to highly able students grouped in heterogeneous classrooms. Advanced levels of content differentiation strategies used to enrich, extend and accelerate the curriculum may be seen in general education classrooms throughout the system and include the following offerings: integrated units, curriculum compacting, advanced differentiated instructional units, literature circles, learning centers, interdisciplinary thematic units, Socratic seminars, tiered assignments, learning compacts, project/problem-based learning products.

Inherent to the program's content are teaching/learning strategies that foster reasoning and problem solving skills. Students are expected to represent their thinking and solutions to tasks in speaking and in writing. In math students use diagrams, models and graphs to communicate reasoning skills. In effort to meet the needs of the gifted learner, specific open-ended tasks draw attention to deeper and broader concepts of various investigations. By encouraging students to find, create and solve problems with multiple solutions, students become adept at investigating and creating more challenging problems of their own.

Flexible pacing options 'place students at an appropriate instructional level, creating the best possible match between a student's achievement and instruction and allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills'(Daniel and Cox, 1988). A variety of settings where differentiated services are delivered include the following: the regular homeroom, another classroom, a resource room, or a special school. In some cases, the settings may go beyond the school walls by providing job shadowing, internship and apprenticeship experiences and concurrent college enrollment.

The AIG program is based on a multifaceted view of giftedness, recognizing that students manifest strengths in a variety of ways. Treffinger (1989) defines gifted education as the design of many options and alternatives that vary in kind, degree and duration form many different students. He promotes a paradigm shift from thinking of a 'gifted program' to thinking of 'programming for

giftedness', implying a more inclusive definition of giftedness that promotes a range of programming options which address student needs. A full continuum is planned that allows for the development of gifted potential while addressing the needs of students who presently demonstrate advanced skills and abilities. Services address the needs of special populations, including gifted students with disabilities, underachievers, culturally diverse students and highly gifted students.

The learning environment provides a variety of settings where differentiated services are delivered. The effect of grouping for gifted students is positive when instruction is differentiated to meet learning need. (Purcell and Eckert, 2006; Colangelo, Assouline and Gross, 2004.) Flexible clustering describes the purposeful grouping of students to facilitate the teaching of students at their demonstrated readiness level. Such instructional grouping is flexible - within and between individual classrooms or within and between teams. Students are able to move in and out of groups based on their needs and performance. Students may be placed in a group based on their ability and/or performance or they may be placed in an option on a trial basis based on the recommendation of their teacher(s).

Content differentiation strategies are used to modify curriculum for gifted students within each environment and include:

- \* Content Acceleration - the use of advanced materials that match the student's level of performance regardless of their grade placement.
- \* Content Sophistication - the use of complex material, presented with a higher level of abstraction, from a more complex viewpoint, using multidisciplinary material that allow students to see the larger system of ideas and concepts related to the core content.
- \* Content Novelty - the use of completely different materials not necessarily provided in the general curriculum, often selected from students' interests and involves independent or small group investigations.

Talent development is provided through enrichment services that focus on the development of interests and special talents. At the elementary and middle school levels, interest development might occur through classroom centers, special activities and projects, special mini-courses, enrichment clusters. At the secondary level, interests and talents are further expanded through special elective courses and opportunities for independent investigations of topics of interest through seminars, mentorships and internships. Most of these programs are offered through general education, distance learning courses or co-curricular opportunities, dual enrollment courses; some are available from community resources.

Flexible clustering describes the purposeful grouping of students that is used to facilitate the teaching of students at their demonstrated readiness level. Such instructional grouping is flexible - within and between individual classrooms or within and between teams. Students transfer in and out of groups based on their needs and performance. Students may be placed in a group based on their ability and/or performance or they may be placed in an option on a trial basis based on the recommendation of their teacher(s).

Descriptions of various possible grouping options designed to allow maximum opportunity for enrichment, extension and acceleration options include the following:

Balanced heterogeneous class: Students are carefully placed by a teacher(s) in order to create a balanced learning environment. Care is taken to cluster enough high ability students to ensure an appropriate instructional group that can offer challenge and positive competition.

In-class flexible clustering: Students choose or are assigned to a small group for instruction based on interest, ability or skill level for varying lengths of time depending on instructional goals.

Cross-Age Grouping (Multiage): Students are grouped within a school by interests or skills.

Flexible Clustering for Advancement in Communication Skills and Math: Within class, across teams, and across grade levels - Students in each class are assigned to a small group for instruction based on their achievement and/or performance and need for differentiation. The Advanced Differentiation Specialist consults with teachers responsible for these groups to ensure that tasks are challenging and appropriate. The Advanced Differentiation Specialist assists the regular classroom teachers in designing differentiated instructional activities and helps provide appropriate resources.

Cluster Grouping Within a Regular Class: A cluster group (4 to 10) of gifted students is assigned to a regular heterogeneous class. The teacher receives training and works with the Gifted Program Director and Advanced Differentiation Specialist to design appropriate, differentiated curriculum for this group.

Cluster Grouping Across Teams: Students are assigned to teams heterogeneously. Each team identifies students performing at an advanced skill level. These students are pulled together during an instructional period and taught by one teacher. Teams meet regularly, plan collaboratively and reconfigure groups as needed.

Cluster Grouping Across Grade Levels: Students, whose ability and performance demonstrate mastery of subject material and skills in a specific subject area(s), are placed for part of their day in the next higher grade, usually for reading and/or math.

Flexible Enrichment Clusters for Extension of Thematic Units: Students whose ability and achievement level demonstrate mastery of subject material and skills are eligible to attend an enrichment class under the guidance of appropriate supervising personnel. Classes are planned collaboratively between the regular classroom teacher and the Gifted Program Director. Students must demonstrate conceptual knowledge of the subject and are expected to keep current with material being covered in the regular education class however they will not be expected to make up skill and practice activities assigned in the regular classroom. The project or activities assigned in the enrichment class are assessed and that assessment substitutes for the class work missed.

Enrichment classes permit students to participate in challenging appropriate projects/activities and interact with their intellectual peers. Topics for enrichment may be guided by student interest or are topics that extend the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

Subject Acceleration: Based on assessment, students who demonstrate above grade level mastery and the ability to bypass specific subjects or skill levels, may receive instruction at a higher level, at a faster pace with another grade level group of students, yet remain with their grade peer group for the majority of their instructional day. Care must be taken that once begun, such acceleration opportunities continue to be made available to the students.

Grade Acceleration: Students move ahead a grade level, skipping levels in the normal sequence of promotion. Specific guidelines must be followed and this option should be considered for highly gifted students.

Concurrent (Dual) Enrollment: Enrollment in two levels of schooling at the same time.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Sample curriculum units;  
Haiku (learner management system) posted lessons and activities;  
Student centered lessons;  
Student work products and assignments;  
DEPs/IDEPs;  
Student inventories/surveys;  
Supplementary instructional resources, pacing products;

Assessment protocols, strategies;  
Classroom observational data;  
ACS AIG Plan;  
Learning profiles from InView cognitive assessments;  
End of Grade score reports;  
Formative and summative assessment reports;  
mCLASS reading assessment reports;  
Assessing Math Concepts assessment reports;  
Content-based programs;  
Competitions/Contests;  
Duke University's TIP (Talent Identification Program)  
Advanced Placement/Honors courses;  
Schools of choice (Mayland Early College High School)  
STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics)

**Other Comments:**

**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.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools recognizes components of a high-quality, comprehensive curriculum that is appropriate for all students at all grade levels, including gifted and highly able students. A proactive pre-kindergarten – grade 12 curriculum offers teachers and administrators opportunities for professional development in current, research-based practices and affords teachers planning time to develop and implement practices reflected in trainings.

Avery County Schools maintains that multicultural education begins with a mission to make all aspects of the school experience equitable. The school system is directed in its charge to ensure that all students have the opportunity to reach their full potential as learners. Multicultural classroom activities, as evidenced in the system-wide adoption of the 'Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), are designed to increase awareness and counter past negative effects of race, ethnic, socio-economic bias and discrimination.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Content goals for a unit should address concepts, generalizations, skills that are core to the subject matter. Goals are developmentally appropriate and aligned with the local, state and national standards.

Multiple assessments (formative and summative) are aligned with content goals and include pre-tests, ongoing assessment and post-tests. A variety of assessment tools (class assignments, teacher observation, formal/informal evaluations, standardized and teacher-made assessments, checklists, etc.) should contain rubrics that reflect a ceiling high enough for the advanced learner to show full

extent of learning, yet appropriate for regular education students. Provisions are in place for monitoring progress of all learners throughout the extent of the unit.

Curriculum content are engaging, motivating and interest sustaining.

Grouping strategies should address students' achievement/ability/interest levels, as well as teaching strategies, learning activities and content goals.

Instructional strategies are varied with methods and materials that support active involvement. Motivating instructional experiences are designed tso that learned skills and content can be applied to creative problem solving activities. Appropriate levels of challenge address needs of a diverse population of learners.

Products (work samples, homework, class assignments, performances), aligned with content goals are motivating, authentic to the subject matter and ultimately used to assess student learning and guide instruction.

Instructional materials that support teaching/learning are motivating and aligned with content goals. Developmental level of resources are appropriate for students' varying achievement and ability levels.

Enrichment/extension experiences related to content goals are authentic and open-ended, motivating and ultimately enhance student learning.

Differentiation strategies, aligned with content goals, and purposefully designed to address strengths and needs of all learners, porpmote advanced learning.

Grouping decisions are based on teacher observation, assessment and evaluation.

Content includes provisions for activities that build upon and extend the NC SCoS. Special attention is directed toward protecting students' dignity and respect.

Suggested program models include: Problem Based Learning, Concept Based Learning, Understanding by Design.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Curricular units, lessons/activities evidenced in Haiku learner management system posts/entries;  
Instructional strategies evidenced in Haiku learner management system posts/entries;  
Student work products;  
DEPs/IDEPs;  
Student inventories/surveys;  
Supplementary instructional resources, pacing products;  
Assessment protocols;  
Classroom observational data;

Intentional programming, PK-12 evidenced in ACS AIG Plan;  
InView cognitive assessment learner profiles;  
Compacting Curriculum options;  
End of Grade reports;  
Formative and summative assessment reports (Discovery Ed., Assessing Math Concepts-K-2, mCLASS Reading 3D);  
Subject acceleration options (Algebra I & II-grades 7/8, English I-grade 8);  
Grade acceleration options.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice C**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools recognizes components of a high-quality, comprehensive curriculum that is appropriate for all students, including gifted and highly able students. A proactive Pre-Kindergarten – 12th curriculum offers teachers and administrators opportunities for professional development in current, research-based practices and affords teachers planning time to develop and implement practices reflected in trainings.

Because of the unique behaviors and characteristics possessed by academically gifted students, a qualitatively differentiated educational program, beyond the regular education offerings, is required in order to provide an appropriate academic experience that addresses the unique needs of these students. Educational personnel involved in providing learning opportunities for gifted students must possess the knowledge and skills to meet and support the needs of these students.

Academically or Intellectually gifted students enrolled in Avery County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program. Academically Gifted services are integrated with the regular education program, K-12, where flexible grouping is used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual and emotional growth.

Strategies for the teaching/learning process are designed to respond to the unique needs of students. As educators become aware of the strengths and needs of students, an academic program that responds to the unique learning styles of students is built that delivers a curriculum outlined in the NC Standard Course of Study. Differentiation of curriculum and instruction is paramount in an educational program that seeks to address, meet and challenge each individual's potential.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Content Differentiation Resources and Strategies:

**Advanced Differentiated Instructional Units:** Differentiated units that incorporate individual learning abilities and different levels of content and skill are designed by teachers. Instructional lessons or units of study may be common to a heterogeneous group of students, but follow-up activities and assignments will be differentiated to meet the needs of individual learning abilities and skill levels.

**Advanced Placement Courses:** The Advanced Placement program consists of college-level courses and examinations for high school students. AP Course descriptions are carefully followed and are taught by teachers who have received specific training. Courses and examinations are available in several areas of the curriculum. AP courses typically require a full year to complete and are usually open to any student demonstrating the prerequisite skills.

**Apprenticeships:** Qualified high school students are offered the opportunity to work in real-life situations that allow them to begin learning a skilled trade, using a combination of on-the-job training and related technical classroom instruction. Students are selected based on interest and motivation in specific disciplines.

**Community Resource:** Students are offered a variety of mentorships and job-shadowing experiences to provide a greater appreciation of the responsibilities required of a particular career.

**Contracts for Learning:** Learning contracts are agreements made between teacher and student that allow students to work independently on either accelerated or enriched materials related to a unit of study.

**Counseling for Underachievement:** In the event that a student's assessed ability level is widely discrepant with his achievement and performance level, counseling is offered to determine the cause for that discrepancy. Intellectual, emotional and social issues are investigated and strategies are developed to align ability and performance.

**Curriculum Compacting:** Curriculum compacting is modifying or streamlining the regular curriculum in order to eliminate repetition of previously mastered material, upgrade the challenge level of the regular curriculum, and provide time for appropriate enrichment and/or acceleration activities while ensuring mastery of basic skills (Reis and Renzulli, 1985). Curriculum compacting can be implemented at any grade level. During compacted time, students may pursue activities in the regular classroom, media center, or special enrichment class.

**Discover Program:** A computerized career exploration program.

**Distance Learning via the NC Information Highway:** A statewide network that provides video and data. The video feature is two-way, connecting sites that can interact with each other in real time.

**Electives:** Courses designed to provide opportunities for students to pursue an area of interest or special talent.

**Enrichment Events:** Any event or activity that is designed to extend and enrich a unit of interest or special talent.

**Field-Based Trips:** Off campus trips taken by a student or group of students that are designed to enrich and extend the student's field of knowledge/experience in a curricular topic or area of study.

Haiku: Online learner management system.

Honors Courses: Advanced courses that cover traditional content, but also focus on issues, problems, and themes related to topics. They are designed to help students develop a knowledge base in a specific discipline and learn to apply that knowledge at an advanced level.

Independent Study: Students who display content mastery and are self-directed with strong interests and a clear idea of what they would like to investigate, may contract with the teacher for an independent study project. Independent study may be used as a way to either accelerate or enrich learning. The teacher serves as a resource person and meets periodically with the student to assess progress. At the secondary level, independent study may be implemented as a course in which students work independently and come together periodically to share experiences in a seminar.

Individual/Small Group Investigations: Students explore, in depth, a topic of interest. At the secondary level the independent investigation may be combined with a mentor program or internship and may meet periodically in a seminar.

Integrated Units: Units that deal with information from various disciplines that are integrated under a broad-based theme such as conflict, power, patterns, etc. Content is typically studied at a highly abstract level of sophistication.

Interest-Based Electives: Electives designed to provide opportunities for students to pursue an area of interest or special talent.

Internships: Opportunities for students to work in real-life situations that often involve professional areas. Students are usually selected based on their interest and motivation in specific disciplines and work without pay to become more familiar with the responsibilities and requirements of a particular profession.

Job Shadowing: Is an opportunity for students to spend a portion of the instructional day with a person who serves as a career model in the area of the student's career interest. Students become better acquainted with the specifics of that career choice.

Learning Centers: A means of providing content enrichment and one that adapts well to the development of multiple intelligences, learning centers are typically designed as tabletop workstations for individual or group work. Students may self-select centers or be assigned to centers on a rotating basis.

Lucy Calkins Writing Program: An instructional writing program designed to teach the formal writing process by writing units. Students in grades K-5 participate in whole group mini-lessons, writing assignments and free writing opportunities, and individualized conferences with the teacher.

Mastery Learning Units: Teachers design units of instruction having enrichment activities that students might pursue once they have documented mastery (85%) of the basic material. Reinforcement activities are also designed for students needing additional work or performing below mastery. The units are "learner based", but "teacher paced" which allow teachers to appropriately pace the instruction for the entire class for an extended period of time and yet provide differentiation and an incentive for high performance. By "testing out", students gain access to the enrichment activities. In a team situation, teachers might alternate groups, one taking the "reinforcement group"

and one taking the "enrichment group" and then switch groups. At the end of each unit, all students return to the same place in order to ensure that enrichment and reinforcement groups remain flexible.

**Math Stories for Problem-Solving Success:** Comprehensive problem-solving activities incorporating writing designed for advanced math learners.

**Mentoring Mathematical Minds:** An advanced math program designed to integrate advanced problem solving activities with the writing process, grades 3-5.

**One-to-One Digital Initiative:** Each K-5 student issued an iPad; each 6-12 student issued a MacBook Air for use during the academic year.

**Portfolios:** A collection of work samples, text, visual and/or multi-media representations that reflect initial to final production of work in a grading period or course. Student growth is measurable and can be observed by parents and/or professionals interested in the student's performance.

**Reader's Workshop:** A reading program designed to engage students in literature. Students select books to read independently during a designated reading period. Monitoring of student progress is accomplished through follow-up activities that include: student-teacher conferences, student-teacher written correspondence, reading logs and group discussions. Authors, literary elements, genres are comprehensively addressed as they related to a piece of literature.

**Special Schools:** Selected students attend North Carolina School of the Arts and North Carolina School of Science and Math, full time residential schools that address the needs of highly gifted students. Eligibility requirements may be based on aptitude and performance or on interest, depending on the nature of the program.

**Technology-Enhanced Instruction - Computer-Based Learning/Computer-Supported Research:** Instructional program used to both enrich the curriculum and remediate specific skill deficits- especially appropriate for gifted students having specific skill gaps, gifted underachievers, learning disabled, or those from culturally diverse backgrounds. Enrichment activities are challenging, problem solving and decision-making in nature. Appropriate services for gifted are accessed through a variety of databases, CD-ROM encyclopedias and the Internet, a global network that links thousands of computers thus enabling users to share services or to communicate.

**Mentorships:** Students having strong interest in specific topics or career options are assigned to an adult with similar interest or career, who serves as a resource to the student who is doing an independent investigation or exploring a career choice.

**Portfolios:** A collection of work samples, text an/or visual representations that reflect initial to final production of work in a grading period or course. Student growth is measurable and can be observed by parents and professionals interested in the student's performance.

**Program of Study:** Students, parents and counselors at the high school level develop a course of study designed to prepare the student for future career choices. The four year Program of Study outlines course selections that prepare students to enter the workforce or a post-secondary institution.

**Telecommunications -**

\* **Telecourses:** Distance learning opportunities for high school and middle school students offered

by LEARN NC and NC VPS. Specific course offerings allow students to attend classes and receive credit for courses not offered on site.

\* Teleconferencing: Instructional communications/interviews conducted by classroom telephone by students or teachers to augment class assignments/projects.

\* Email: Internet option that allows students and teachers distance communications.

Tiered Assignments: The use of different levels of activities within a class to accommodate the needs and prior knowledge level of the student.

Writer's Workshop: A writing program designed to teach the formal writing process through five stages: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Students learn the skills of written language, to focus attention on writing and express their feelings and ideas through their finished pieces.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** See items listed-Practice A;

Examples of selected advanced curriculum products;

List of resources that include above grade level materials;

Intentional programming, PK-12, as evidenced in ACS Plan;

Advanced Thinking Maps;

Reading Foundations;

Letterland (PK-3)

Jacob's Ladder;

Math Foundations;

Developing Number Concepts (K-2);

Math Investigations;

Connected Math;

Core Plus Math;

Mentoring Mathematical Minds;

Math Stories for Problem Solving;

Mentoring Mathematical Minds

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice D**

Fosters the development of 21st century content and skills by infusing the following at an advanced level: high-level content for global awareness, civic and economic literacies, and health awareness; critical thinking and problem solving; high-level communication and collaboration; applied information and media literacy, including concepts, systems, and operations in challenging research contexts; creativity and innovation; real-world learning in local, regional, and global contexts; and applied life skills for leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, productivity, responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** It is the aim of Avery County Schools to eliminate the achievement gap. The NC Standard Course of Study provides a curriculum base on which to build a framework for expanding and/or enhancing curriculum for academically gifted and other academically able and motivated students. It is the intent of the integrated program to link and align instructional practices and assessment instruments with students' talents and needs. A 21st century classroom is one in which thinking is encouraged is one where questions are valued, intellectual challenges are welcomed, and one in which education is viewed as a process of teaching what is known and, perhaps more importantly, a process of searching for solutions to what is unknown. All students must be afforded educational experiences that encourage them to find problems and speculate on possible solutions. The critical thinker must be awarded time to deliberate, think of alternate solutions to given problems, weigh evidence and ultimately articulate and defend a logical conclusion.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Avery County Schools' comprehensive gifted education program provides state-of-the-art technology to support appropriate services. The AIG program is purposefully designed to provide 21st century learning opportunities that promote the growth of skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for gifted students to reach their potential in a competitive global society. Recognized as an 'Apple Distinguished Program' all Avery County Schools students are issued a computing device (K-5: iPad/6-12: MacBook laptop/teachers and administrators: iPad, MacBook, Smartphone) for use throughout the school year.

Educational professionals, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, direct focused effort in monitoring the progress of all students in order to ensure that all graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education, prepared for a productive life in the 21st century. By providing a safe and orderly environment, students are offered programs that require collaboration in performing tasks that reflect the most current, research-based practices. Curriculum is rigorous and relevant for all students. Advanced differentiated strategies are in place to assure appropriate challenge for advanced learners in all areas; literacy skills that include reading, writing, speaking, computing, and solving problems are incorporated in all learning environments. All teachers' enter unit and lesson plans onto online curriculum maps thereby ensuring vertical alignment of all subject areas and a comprehensive scope and sequence of disciplines.

A special directed focus is in place at the elementary level where the teaching of reading is recognized as critical. The use of the latest technology is used by teachers to monitor student progress by web-based formative assessments and progress monitoring. Middle school and high school teachers incorporate reading and writing skills in their delivery of more in-depth content-specific areas of instruction.

All teachers employed by Avery County Schools are highly qualified. Elementary teachers have a broad knowledge of all subject areas and offer a nurturing program of integrated study; middle and high school teachers skills reflect deeper levels of experience and expertise in one or more specific content areas. Vertical alignment is assured by online curriculum maps accessible to teachers and administrators at school and system levels. At all levels, teachers of self-contained and discipline specific classes recognize and appreciate that all content is related and interconnected. Teachers are cognizant of and incorporate international relevance of the subjects they teach to promote awareness

of 21st century global issues: financial, economic, business, entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, and health and wellness awareness.

Adept in the areas of teaching and learning, teachers design differentiated lessons that use current resources and instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. Teachers collaborate in professional learning communities (PLC) and use various data sources for curriculum mapping. Online mapping allows for frequent and efficient means of monitoring and modifying plans to enhance student learning with plans that are sensitive to learning styles and cultural differences. The use of information and communication technology is inherent to the process; technology is used to learn content, think critically, solve problems, access reliable information, interact and collaborate in teams. Eliminating the achievement gap is the goal. Lessons are designed to strengthen social relationships, improve interactions with peers, develop leadership skills and interact with people from different cultures.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** See above Practice A;

Student work products reflecting advanced Common Core/Essential Standards content and skills;

Assignments and project rubrics;

Student involvement in school, community, regional, and global applications of life skills;

Student participation in high school reform initiatives (i.e. Mayland Early College High School);

Middle school student participation in non-traditional accelerated courses;

Student participation in related extra-curricular opportunities;

Multiple literacies;

Discovery Education Techbook;

Wikis;

Blogs;

Graduation Project and presentations;

Skype;

Haiku learner management system posts/entries;

MacBook/iPad issued to all students, K-12;

Advanced CTE courses;

Moodles;

Key Club.

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice E**

Uses on-going assessment to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** In order for programs and services to align with student needs, gifted educational programs and services must be aligned with with the on-going assessments used to identify students and differentiate curriculum and instruction. Instruments must be sensitive to under-represented populations of students (English language learners, twice exceptional, low socio-economic income,

minority, etc.); appropriately differentiated curriculum programs and strategies are offered to accommodate need for acceleration and enrichment, according to on-going assessment reports.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** On-going formative and summative assessment data is used in all grade levels, PK - grade 12 throughout Avery County Schools to provide educators with detailed information about students' progress in assimilating and expressing knowledge and skills. Well-designed formative assessments assess student progress and understanding of concepts and skills so that teachers are able to tailor instruction to enhance learning. Summative assessments, i.e. NC End of Grade and NC End of Course tests provide useful information to educators on how students display their knowledge for comparative purposes.

Formative and summative data provides teachers with the ability to monitor what students know and how they demonstrate skills and comprehend content. Based on student performance, students are clustered in instructional groups and differentiated instruction is planned and delivered as reflected in the students' ADEPs and IDEPs.

Avery County Schools's full-scale, systemic investment in formative and benchmark assessments, K - 12, in the areas of reading and math that are supported through the use of technology (tablet/laptop devices), increase efficiency when administering an assessment. Increased accuracy of timed components is assured. Data entry tasks are eliminated and reports are generated immediately. Perhaps most importantly, results are valid and reliable. Teachers and administrators use student, class, school and district reports to monitor progress; early intervention and enrichment activities become routine means of differentiating curriculum and instructional strategies for all learners.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Documentation/Examples of summative, formative, pre/post-assessments, benchmark assessment data;  
Documented student readiness or diagnostic assessment results and trends;  
Use of flexible grouping;  
Discovery Education assessments;  
mCLASS Reading (DIBELS and Text Reading Comprehension);  
Assessing Math Concepts (AMC) assessments, K-2;  
Projects;  
Seminars;  
Response to Instruction (RTI) in all schools;  
Tiered assignments.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice F**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools recognizes that the social and emotional needs of gifted students must be met in order for students to positively adjust to the learning environment. Students who understand themselves and others function effectively and productively; they function appropriately in social environments and are able to express themselves in an appropriate manner.

Research indicates that gifted and highly able students require academic provisions to meet social and emotional needs. These include, but are not limited to the following provisions: the opportunity to learn with others of similar interest and ability; an appropriate level of challenge in the regular classroom, and flexible pacing through the curriculum. (Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002.)

Research also suggests that some gifted students struggle with heightened sensitivity, perfectionism, asynchronous development, peer relations, college and career planning (Neihart et al., 2002). Some gifted students experience emotional or behavioral challenges related to learning disabilities, under-motivation, under-achievement, depression or attention/focus issues. Twice-exceptional gifted students are recognized to have greater frustrations than their twice-exceptional peers because of the greater discrepancies between their abilities and disabilities (Baum, Cooper, & Neu, 2001).

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** High-quality guidance and counseling services both in- and outside the classroom include the following tenets:

All school-based professionals understand unique characteristics of gifted students and are equipped to address and meet their needs.

Counseling services are sensitive to diversity- Interventions recognize challenges related to cultural, language and socio-economic variances.

Classroom curricular materials are sensitive to culture and gender.

Flexible, clustered grouping arrangements provide access to intellectual peers so that similar achievement levels, interest areas and pacing of instruction needs are met. Some flexible grouping options may include cross-classroom and cross-grade level groupings.

Differentiated guidance services address common concerns that specific groups of gifted students share.

Opportunities for subject and grade acceleration, early entrance to kindergarten and dual enrollment in college courses for qualified gifted and other advanced students are offered.

Periodic surveys of students, parents and teachers communicate students' social and emotional needs.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Student/Parent/Related personnel surveys/data;  
Curriculum units/lessons (online and hard copies) which address the affective domain;  
Agendas, meeting minutes and presentations addressing the social/emotional issues;  
Flexible cluster grouping;  
Subject/Grade acceleration;  
Clubs;  
Bibliotherapy;  
Parent nights.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice G**

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

**This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** When young children are recognized for high-ability learning potential in the early years, interventions are implemented that extend and/or enrich the NC SCoS, thereby enhancing students' strengths and, where necessary, address areas in need of growth. Activities and learning experiences that involve a higher level of curricular challenge provide opportunities for acceleration and enrichment for young children with a demonstrated need for greater academic rigor.

**Goals:** Avery County Schools recognizes that when high-ability children are identified in the early grades, an advanced differentiated education program designed to meet their unique needs will greatly enhance strengths and identify areas for potential growth. By meeting these students' challenge needs, a program is in place to ensure later school success and skill development. Experiences/Activities that involve rigorous curricular work at a very young age enhance opportunity for acceleration and enrichment in later grades.

Student performance in rigorous activities, student work portfolios, teacher/parent recommendation and students' participation in probationary participation in accelerated activities providing opportunity for children to demonstrate high performance/ability will be used to increase numbers of young children placed in the AIG program.

**Description:** NURTURING POTENTIAL IN FIRST GRADE STUDENTS TO ENSURE EQUITY OF ACCESS INTO GIFTED PROGRAMS

The purpose of this program is to establish screening/placement procedures, a well-defined curriculum and strong instructional program aimed at nurturing and supporting young minority and low-wealth students. Instructional strategies are purposefully directed toward nurturing gifted behaviors in children who may come from environments where opportunities for developing the knowledge, skills and experience known to contribute to academic success are limited.

In effort to identify potential in students who manifest intelligence in nonconforming ways, the teacher will develop a working knowledge of gifted behaviors that often appear in culturally diverse gifted

students. The teacher will use diverse means to recognize talent in potentially gifted students. In order to increase numbers of minority/low-wealth students in the gifted program, flexible criteria and culture fair tests are used to accommodate students who may manifest advance abilities in atypical ways and who may be discriminated against by traditional assessment methods. The teacher will be sensitive to student behaviors that have been known to cause teachers to overlook gifted potential: 'teacher pleasers' are not necessarily gifted; disruptive behaviors may indicate boredom and the need for more challenging study; lack of motivation may indicate disability.

Differentiated levels of instruction will promote opportunities for subject acceleration in the regular curriculum based on the students skills, abilities and learning needs. In addition, a critical thinking skills curriculum will be offered to all students in the class. As children begin to develop proficiency in critical thinking skills within differentiated instructional groups, the students' higher achievement learning patterns will become evident. A culturally relevant curriculum will be incorporated to ensure that students from various backgrounds are successful in the program. All students will be reviewed annually to determine need for an accelerated program of study and advanced curricular experiences focusing on critical thinking. A Nurturing Differentiated Education Plan (NDEP) for targeted potentially gifted students will be revised annually in order to ensure student achievement in higher levels of differentiation. During NDEP annual review meetings, parents will become more knowledgeable of gifted behaviors and strategies that nurture and support them.

Ultimately, the mission of the Nurturing Gifted Potential Program is to establish increased rigor for all students with an emphasis on broadening academic experiences for minority/low-wealth populations at the elementary level. Improving AIG identification/placement methods with the use of multiple and diverse assessments at early grade levels, and promoting movement of minority/low-wealth students toward higher levels of differentiation and an accelerated curriculum will raise representation of minority/low-wealth populations in Avery County Schools Gifted Education Program.

**EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN:** The 1997 General Assembly passed legislation allowing a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16th to enter kindergarten if he or she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. The parents/guardians present information to the principal to support that the child has extraordinary academic ability and is appropriately mature to justify early admission. In determining eligibility, the principal shall convene a committee of educational professionals who will assist him/her in making decisions about each individual child. Guidelines are approved by the North Carolina State Board of Education, updated November 1998, and found in the School Attendance and Student Accounting Handbook (SIMS Manual). The North Carolina general statute 115C-364 provides that a child, who on or before April 16, has passed the fourth anniversary of his/her birth, to enter kindergarten. This may occur if the child is presented for enrollment no later than the end of the first month of the school year and if the principal of the school finds, based on information submitted by the child's parent or guardian, that the child is gifted and that the child has the maturity to justify admission to the school. Specific guidelines for early entrance will be used to make this decision.

The Gifted Program Director will review the files of students admitted to school according to these guidelines after the first ninety calendar days of the child being enrolled in school if the principal deems it appropriate for the child to continue in kindergarten. If the records indicate a possible placement then a case study is conducted to make a formal AIG placement decision.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** See above Practice A;

Formal program, stakeholder communications/involvement;  
Examples of differentiated lessons and resources, PK-3;  
Data on patterns and trends;  
Enrichment and intervention opportunities;  
5-Star academically focused/oriented pre-k classrooms in all elementary schools;  
Aligned PK-3 literacy and math curriculum;  
Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum in all PK classrooms;  
Formative/Summative reading (mCLASS) and math (Assessing Math Concepts) assessments, K-3;

### **Other Comments:**

### **Practice H**

Ensures collaboration among AIG personnel and other professional staff, including exceptional children's personnel and others related to AIG students, to develop and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Academically or intellectually gifted students enrolled in Avery County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program. Instructional services are integrated with the regular education program, Exceptional Children's Program and the Limited English Proficiency Program, PK-12, where flexible grouping is used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual and emotional growth.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Academically or Intellectually Gifted Integrated Program: Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 12

Strategies for the teaching/learning process are designed to respond to the unique needs of students, including those with special needs, those with limited English proficiency and those who come from low socio-economic backgrounds. As educators become aware of the strengths and needs of students, an academic program that responds to the unique learning styles of students is built that delivers a curriculum outlined in the NC Standard Course of Study. Differentiation of curriculum and instruction is paramount in an educational program that seeks to address, meet and challenge each individual's potential.

Academically or Intellectually gifted students enrolled in Avery County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program. Academically Gifted services are integrated with the regular education program, K-12, where flexible grouping is used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual and emotional growth. The Revised Standard Course of Study provides a curriculum base on which to build a framework for expanding and/or enhancing curriculum for academically gifted and other academically able and motivated

students. It is the intent of the integrated program to link and align instructional strategies and assessment instruments with students' talents and needs. The classroom in which thinking is encouraged is one where questions are valued, intellectual challenges are welcomed, and one in which education is viewed as a process of teaching what is known, and perhaps more importantly, a process of searching for solutions to what is unknown. All students must be afforded educational experiences that encourage them to find problems and speculate on possible solutions. The critical thinker must be awarded time to deliberate, think of alternate solutions to given problems, weigh evidence and ultimately articulate and defend a logical conclusion.

Efforts toward the development of support staff, regular classroom teachers, AIG specialists and administrators through additional personnel preparation in gifted education are encouraged and supported. Excellence in pedagogy, as reflected in appropriate curriculum differentiation options for gifted students in the regular classroom that include curriculum compacting, independent studies, active research, computer-based instruction, and acceleration will thereby be ensured. Enrichment activities will be implemented that emphasize critical and creative thinking and stress awareness of students' responsibilities to society. Each teacher, with guidance and direction from the AIG Director, will be better prepared to determine, implement and evaluate differentiation strategies.

Avery County Schools Academically or Intellectually Gifted Education Program is purposefully designed to provide learning opportunities that promote growth of skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for gifted students to reach their potential. Instructional programs provide a steady challenge without frustration or excessive pressure.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Planning notes, agendas, minutes from school and district meetings;  
Samples of advanced differentiation strategies and lessons/units resulting from schools and district collaboration;  
Interviews with personnel;  
Common planning periods;  
Professional Learning Communities;  
Meetings to ease transition from each level to the next;  
Lateral and vertical alignment;  
Lessons/Units shared on Haiku learner management system;  
Regional Wiki;  
Teacher/School websites;  
General education and gifted education initiatives (collaboration with total school community).

**Other Comments:**

**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 students, such as a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). This document is reviewed annually with parents/families to ensure effective programming, a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools' Gifted Education Plan defines a comprehensive curriculum and service delivery plan that addresses the varied needs of academically or intellectually gifted students. The Advanced Differentiated Education Plan (ADEP) is developed by a variety of stakeholders that includes the parent, general education teacher, Advanced Differentiated Specialist, principal, Gifted Education Program Director, Exceptional Children's teacher (where appropriate), Limited English Proficiency Program Coordinator (where appropriate).

The ADEP serves to communicate to all stakeholders the student's academic needs in a specific curricular area(s). In addition, the plan articulates all components of the gifted program designed to enhance student learning. Acceleration/Enrichment opportunities are included options.

ADEPs are reviewed annually; signatures of major stakeholders are evidenced. (Parents are invited to conference at least annually to review and update the ADEP.)

The ADEP communicates the following components:

The curriculum resources and strategies provided by general education to deliver the NC SCoS and the manner in which the curriculum is to be advanced/enriched for the AIG student.

The ADEP provides opportunities for expansion of general education services in the student's identified area of strength/giftedness.

The ADEP considers affective needs of the gifted student.

The ADEP addresses flexible cluster grouping arrangements.

The ADEP is reviewed at least annually and updated as needed. Signatures of all major stakeholders on the Summary of Student Eligibility/Documentation of Student Need and the ADEP is required before an initial placement decision is finalized.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Placement/Service Options Match and Documentation of Decision

Phase IV: Placement/Service Options Match and Documentation of Decision

The match between student need and appropriate service delivery option(s), will be based on the data gathered during the student search and the nomination process. Decisions of the AIG Identification Team will be documented. Parents and nominating teachers will be notified of the recommended student-to-service match and invited to participate in the development of an Advanced Differentiated Education Plan (ADEP). The ADEP articulates the goals and objectives of the service option(s), the service delivery implementation plan and the manner in which student progress will be assessed. As a minimum standard, an ADEP, aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NC SCS) shall be provided in the areas of reading, writing and math. Strategies include

extended thinking, applied thinking and conceptual thinking and, by nature, extend the NC SCS, are designed to provide appropriate content modifications in a learning environment conducive to advanced differentiated instructional practices. Special program options will be determined by the student's demonstrated abilities and/or performance, as well as the student's social and emotional needs. Regular education has an integral responsibility to appropriately differentiate instruction for gifted students. The AIG Program Director supports and collaborates with the regular classroom teachers to address the needs of gifted students by providing additional resources, concept-based units of study, co-teaching and/or professional development in advanced differentiated instruction, high-end teaching/learning strategies and social emotional issues of gifted students. Signatures documenting participation in the development of the DEP will include: parent, AIG Program Director, student's regular teacher and principal. Advanced differentiated services will begin immediately. ADEPs are filed in each student's AIG folder. Copies are provided to the students' parents and teachers.

Special placement consideration will be given to culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, and disabled populations based on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) disaggregated data.

Annual Review:

The progress of each student participating in advanced differentiated services will be reviewed at least annually through ongoing discussions/conferences with teachers, progress reports, report cards, and North Carolina End-of-Grade Test scores. Where evidence reflects a positive growth in student performance, parents are notified and continued placement is recommended in those options. Should an increase in differentiated services be warranted, the Gifted Education Program Director may amend the Advanced Differentiated Education Plan. A student-led conference format is recommended for annual performance reviews.

In the event that student performance is not satisfactory, the AIG Team will reevaluate its decision concerning advanced differentiated services. Caution is taken when using grades to determine discontinued eligibility for gifted service options. Grades alone, unless specifically requested by parents or students, are insufficient criteria for exiting students from program services. The parents and student, along with the AIG Team determine continued need for services. Decisions might result in development of an amended Advanced Differentiated Education Plan, or may conclude that advanced differentiated services are no longer appropriate for the student. When gifted differentiated services are no longer deemed appropriate, an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) may be developed and support provided to the student in order to reenter the gifted service options(s) at a later date, if and when appropriate.

The AIG Team, parents and rising ninth grade students, conference with counselors from the middle and high schools referencing teacher recommendations and academic information to discuss high school gifted education options. The educational plan outlined during this meeting becomes the Career Development Plan and an Advanced Differentiated Educational Plan for gifted students throughout their high school career is attached. A 'Student-to-Student'(S2S) organization comprised of AIG upperclassmen, provides academic support, social interaction and peer guidance to rising eighth graders and freshmen to ensure smooth transitions.

Should an AIG student transfer to a school within or outside the school district, a copy of the contents of the AIG folder will be included with other official school records to the receiving school.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Advanced Differentiated Education Plans/Individualized Advanced

Differentiated Education Plans,  
Documentation from annual parent meetings;  
Various communications to various stakeholders.

**Other Comments:**

### **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.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools is committed to ensuring that professionals responsible for providing service for gifted students have an appropriate base of knowledge and skill in order to design and implement a differentiated education plan of instruction based on student need. The school system provides ongoing professional development that supports a cadre of well-prepared administrators, teachers, and support personnel to meet the needs of gifted and other advanced students.

Decisions regarding gifted education programming are based on the strongest, research-based evidence. A comprehensive set of services and practices designed to promote student learning and develop academic potential is articulated. Decisions regarding identification processes and criteria, curriculum, instructional resources, teaching/learning strategies, formative and summative assessments, and related counseling services are made by licensed gifted education specialists and are based on sound, evidence-based research and sound theoretical foundation.

The Gifted Education Program Director works collaboratively with stakeholders to create a system-wide comprehensive AIG program. All efforts are directed toward improving effectiveness of the program. Operating under the understanding that change is constant, the AIG-licensed teachers and administrators advocate for positive change in programming and lead and participate in implementing initiatives to improve student learning. An Advanced Differentiation Specialist is employed to provide direct services to AIG/advanced students and to serve as a resource to teachers who are tasked to meet the needs of AIG/advanced students.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** In order to articulate the varying characteristics of gifted students within a school population and community, the Gifted Education Program Director reviews behaviors as listed on 'The Gifted Child Checklist' with trained faculty members at the beginning of each school year when teachers are contemplating referrals for AIG program placement. The Advanced Differentiated Education Plan's environment and content modifications options are revisited as needed throughout the year. During group meetings led by the Gifted Education Program Director and/or the Advanced Differentiation Specialist, parents collaborate on parenting issues particular to raising gifted children. A bonding network among parents and one between the home and school is formed. Strategies for the teaching/learning process are communicated.

As educators become aware of the strengths and needs of students, an academic program that responds to the unique learning styles of children is built that delivers an extension to the NC SCoS. Advanced differentiation of curriculum and instruction is paramount in an educational program that seeks to address, meet and challenge each individual's potential. Professional, AIG-licensed educators make decisions that increase student learning and are accountable for costs, quality and equity of opportunity for all students. AIG licensed educators are responsible to all stakeholders and must be able to effectively articulate the sound and researched-based decisions so as to defend all aspects of the program.

Please see Standards 1 and 2 of this document for description of the identification procedures and advanced differentiated education plan and services guided by AIG licensed educators.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

District AIG leaders' job description,  
General education professional development that reflects advanced differentiation strategies/products,  
AIG leaders' qualifications,  
Advanced Differentiation Specialist,  
AIG-licensed classroom teachers,  
Documentation of licensure in personnel files,  
Personnel roles/responsibilities in Plan,  
AIG licensed teachers serving on Task Force.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice B**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools believes that a comprehensive education plan for gifted students is only as effective as the AIG specialists that lead the program's design and implement the service delivery plan. All professionals who are assigned to work with gifted students must possess the skill and requisite knowledge to implement the advanced differentiated program designed to respond to the students' academic and social-emotional needs.

Licensed AIG teachers and specialists understand meta-cognitive processes of the AIG learner and

appreciate the impact that external factors such as development, culture, language proficiency, socio-economic level, etc. affect the learning process. The AIG licensed Advanced Differentiation Specialist assists teachers in designing lessons and locating and adapting resources to meet the needs of advanced students. The Advanced Differentiation Specialist and the classroom teacher collaborate to develop and apply strategies to ensure a rigorous and relevant program of study for advanced students.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Key personnel are required to implement a comprehensive program for gifted students. A comprehensive understanding of and proficiency in the following tasks which explicitly address the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners is expected among all AIG specialists:

Collaborate with classroom teachers on referral process for AIG program;

Facilitate meetings with parents and teachers to develop the Advanced Differentiated Education Plan;

Articulate with school personnel characteristics of gifted children using assessment criteria and observations of learning behaviors;

Develop the Advanced Differentiated Education Plan designed to meet the unique academic and social-emotional needs of gifted students;

Collaborate with teachers on integrating advanced learning activities for advanced learners;

Evaluate student success using formative and summative data and adjust/modify curriculum where necessary;

Model strategies and technique and coach teachers in the use of integrated gifted education methods and modifications;

Collaborate with curriculum forum activities to advocate for the needs of gifted learners and the resource materials required to meet those needs;

Facilitate the programming, including flexible cluster-grouping options in heterogeneously or homogeneously grouped classrooms;

Provide and/or plan academic services that are specifically designed for the identified academic needs of gifted students;

Participate in ongoing professional development for the advancement of gifted education;

Communicate with parents regarding services and opportunities for gifted children;

Lead discussions with parents and teachers on developing the Advanced Differentiation Education Plan.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Teaching schedules, time logs;  
Surveys with related personnel and stakeholders;  
Calendars documenting time spent participating in school events.  
Specialist services documented on curriculum planning map and calendar,  
Documentatin of units, professional development, assessment/screening administrations,  
Parent meetings,  
faculty meetings,  
Collaboration with support personnel to address the needs of special populations (i.e. EC, SIT, ESL, SAT, guidance, etc.)  
Participation in flexible grouping decisions based on academic and affective needs

**Other Comments:**

**Practice C**

Establishes specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, exceptional children's personnel, counselors, and school administrators.

**This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** In order to assure the quality of Avery County Schools educational personnel, the school system is committed to providing an ongoing and comprehensive plan for staff development. The district considers staff development a key feature of its plan for expanding options for gifted/advanced students and crucial for successful implementation of the gifted program.

Efforts toward the development of AIG licensed professionals, general education teachers, support staff, Exceptional Children's personnel, counselors, and school administrators through ongoing personnel preparation in gifted education is encouraged and supported. Excellence in pedagogy, as reflected in appropriate curriculum differentiation options for gifted students in the general education classroom is thereby ensured. In our current environment, teachers are expected to assume new roles within the school and be able to appreciate and teach children from diverse backgrounds by offering a culture-sensitive curriculum on an ever-expanding curricular base of knowledge. Provisions for professional development with inherent provisions for influencing teacher effectiveness is paramount.

**Goals:** Appropriate and specific professional development is offered for teachers and school administrators; counselors and exceptional children's personnel are invited/encouraged to attend. Specific professional development sessions designed for specifically for counselors and exceptional children's personnel respectively, will more effectively address twice-exceptional student needs and social-emotional needs of gifted students.

**Description:** Avery County Schools offers a professional development opportunities required for all educators who serve AIG students, including, but not limited to classroom teachers, exceptional children's personnel, counselors, and school administrators. Professional development offerings reflect the following tenets:

Aligned with district staff development offerings so as to assure full integration and alignment with general education initiatives;

Planned and implemented collaboratively with general education teachers and gifted education specialists;

Reflect content that is generally viewed and accepted by participants as a necessary pathway to achieve advanced student learning;

Based specifically on best-practice/research-based initiatives;

Delivered in an appropriately differentiated manner so as to address needs of various levels of expertise and experience among participants;

Includes a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development session.

Professional development for teachers of gifted learners are designed to include the following:

- \* Promote awareness of gifted student characteristics and learning needs,
- \* Increase positive attitudes toward gifted students and their uniqueness,
- \* Expand teachers' backgrounds in content areas appropriate for gifted student learning,
- \* Provide information about methods of differentiation and strategies appropriate for gifted students,
- \* Generate enthusiasm for programs that provide differentiated learning opportunities for a wide range of student abilities and needs, and
- \* Contribute to an overall purpose of renewal and revitalization throughout the total school program.

Adapted from 'Staff Development for Gifted Programs', National Association for Gifted Children Publication, Peggy Dettmer, Editor

Professional development content endorsed for general educators, exceptional children's personnel, counselors, and school administrators include the following:

- \* Curriculum Differentiation for advanced gifted learners,
- \* Critical and creative thinking,
- \* Creative problem solving,
- \* Higher order thinking and questioning strategies
- \* Teaching advanced content in a digital environment
- \* Teaching underachieving/under-represented populations

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Professional development requirements for various personnel,  
Professional development opportunities available to various stakeholders,  
Documented professional development participation,  
Results from surveys, professional development based on surveys from stakeholders,

Advanced content professional development,  
Professional learning community discussions based on formative, summative and EVAAS data,

### **Other Comments:**

### **Practice D**

Places AIG students in general education classrooms with teachers who have met the LEA's professional development requirements for that position or have earned an AIG add-on license.

### **This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Research is clear that persons with training in gifted education are better equipped to meet the specific academic and social-emotional needs of gifted learners. Programs that address these needs appreciate the effectiveness of a collaborative program that integrates gifted education within the general education program.

**Goals:** In order to provide effective services for meeting the unique needs of gifted learners, Avery County Schools will focus on identifying highly qualified personnel whose responsibility is to provide instructional services to gifted students. In order to assure the quality of educational personnel, the school system is committed to providing an ongoing and comprehensive plan for staff development. Avery County Schools considers staff development a key feature of its plan for expanding options for the highly able students it serves and crucial for successful implementation of the Gifted Education Program. Professional qualifications guide the hiring practices of personnel who are assigned to work with gifted and highly able students. A focused and deliberate effort is in place to assign advanced learners to classes where teachers with AIG certification or AIG local endorsement plan and lead instruction.

**Description:** Educators with specialized training in gifted education content and strategies are more effective when delivering instructional programs to advanced learners. These teachers and support personnel require specific knowledge and skills to provide developmentally appropriate, differentiated and challenging instruction in classrooms. Ongoing professional development is required to update and keep abreast of new research in gifted education.

One of the goals of Avery County Schools program for gifted students is to develop and support a cadre of well prepared teachers and support personnel to meet the needs of talented, advanced, and gifted students. In order to assure the quality of our educational personnel, the school system is committed to providing an ongoing and comprehensive plan for staff development. Avery County Schools considers staff development a key feature of the plan for expanding options for the highly able students and crucial for successful implementation of the Gifted Program.

The purposes of staff development include:

- \* Promote awareness of gifted student characteristics and learning needs,
- \* Increase positive attitudes toward gifted students and their uniqueness,
- \* Expand teachers' backgrounds in content areas appropriate for gifted student learning,
- \* Provide information about methods of differentiation and appropriate strategies for advanced

students,

- \* Enhance skills for working effectively with the highly able,
- \* Generate enthusiasm for programs that provide differentiated learning opportunities for a wide range of student abilities and needs, and
- \* Contribute to an overall purpose of renewal and revitalization throughout the total school program.

Adapted from Staff Development for Gifted Programs, NAGC Publication, Peggy Dettmer - Editor

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** AIG personnel and general education teachers roles and responsibilities clearly stated,  
Licensed AIG personnel on file,  
Documented professional development participation on file,  
AIG student class assignments/class rosters,  
Advanced Differentiated Education Plans/Individualized Differentiated Education Plans,  
All teachers highly qualified,  
Cluster grouping policy in place for effective and efficient advanced differentiation.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice E**

Aligns professional development with local AIG program goals and other district initiatives.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools provides an integrated gifted education plan within the general education program. Gifted education and general education personnel collaborate to deliver a comprehensive instructional program designed to challenge all students to their potential. Professional development opportunities designed to enhance gifted services are aligned with the general education staff development initiatives. All initiatives are aimed toward continuous improvement for the system-wide growth.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Professional development opportunities are aligned with other district initiatives and are designed to increase effectiveness of all educators. Increasing student learning is the focus. Sessions are planned to reflect relevant knowledge, research-based skills and strategies that offer a variety of differentiated options in order to meet the needs of varied learner profiles. An ongoing, systemic process, professional development is an integral component of the school district.

Gifted education professional learning sessions share general education staff development components in the following ways:

District mission and vision statements are aligned;

Basic gifted education and general education competencies are addressed;

Common learning needs of gifted and general education professionals are addressed;

Learning outcomes are based on best-practice research;

Research-based gifted and general education initiatives reflect current practices;

Sessions span elementary, middle and high school grade ranges;

Sessions address academic, intellectual and social-emotional needs of gifted and general education students.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Schedule, agenda, participation logs, sign-in sheets, etc. of professional development offerings aligned with AIG goals;  
District professional growth plan reflects needs of gifted learners;  
Personnel surveys reflecting a needs assessment for professional development for gifted learners;  
AIG/Advanced learners incorporated in district strategic plan;  
System-level professional development plan;  
BOE presentations;  
Administrative meeting minutes.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice F**

Aligns professional development opportunities with state and/or national teaching standards and best practices in gifted education, including 21st century skills and content at advanced levels.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** High-quality professional development opportunities, aligned with state and/or national teaching standards that include 21st century research, skills and content, are necessary to ensure that goals set by school improvement teams are met. Continuous improvement for advanced students, reflected in school improvement plans, are inherent to professional development designed to enhance learning for all students. Recognized as a 'Distinguished Apple Program', all teachers and administrators are provided with a laptop and tablet and receive regularly scheduled professional development on ways to implement 21st century skills and advanced content in a one-to-one digital environment.

Ever-evolving times require educators, both licensed and non-licensed, to assume roles that are

vastly different than past expectations. Diversity among learners demand a multitude of instructional skills and strategies that address a variety of learning styles teachers face in classrooms every day. Care must be given to providing staff development that influences teacher effectiveness. Sessions reflect and incorporate 21st century skills, content and research-based practices in order to positively impact teacher effectiveness.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Avery County Schools promotes professional development opportunities that include the following tenets:

- \* Aligned with state and/or national teaching standards;
- \* Integrally reflected in continuous improvement efforts as defined in school improvement plans;
- \* Collaboratively planned by teachers, administrators, AIG specialists and administrators;
- \* Differentiated to address different levels of expertise among participants.

Professional development opportunities are aligned with the district's vision and mission statements. Sessions are planned to meet the learning needs of teachers and administrators charged with delivering services to gifted and other advanced learners, PK-12. Current research and/or best practice is reflected in all endeavors; all sessions are based upon sound evidence and theory and provide insight into the advanced learner's metacognitive processes to participants. Sessions are delivered in various venues that include, but not are limited to: face-to-face presentations; online presentations; webinars; moodles; LEARN NC offerings, large group, small group, direct one-to-one service delivery. Required sessions for all licensed, as well as non-licensed educators, are pre-planned. Sessions requested by specific educator populations are also offered to encourage educators' input into planned professional development offerings.

During professional learning communities (PLCs) teachers are offered opportunities for reflection. Follow-up teaching strategies and learning are shared. Planning for future lessons is discussed and follow-up professional development needs are articulated. PLCs offer opportune time for collaborative lesson planning and mapping, as well as analyses of student work. Skills are refined; successes shared. Problems and issues that arise during the academic year are brought to the group for collaborative solutions. AIG licensed specialists and curriculum coaches are available to share their areas of expertise.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Documented alignment with an use of NAGC professional development standards, NC teaching standards, NC AIG licensure standards; Related programs, schedules, presentations aligned with state/national teaching standards; ACS district professional development plan; Advanced technology training- podcasts, voice embeded technology, online professional development, moodles, webexes/webinars, skype options; NC SCoS enhanced by AIG professional development; New Teacher Evaluation model; 21st century skills reflected in all professional development.

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice G**

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

### **This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Effective professional development sessions provide educators with opportunities to plan implement and refine new learning. Teachers are afforded a choice in the ways in which new information is presented so as to match the learning style of the individual (i.e. face-to-face, online, text-based, webinar sessions). The most efficient and effective professional development opportunities are aligned with the teachers' professional growth plan.

In order for professional development opportunities to provide lasting effectiveness, sessions must be meaningful; opportunities for discussion, debate and intellectual conversation before, during and after the sessions assure lasting learning and promote probability for positive change.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Professional learning sessions provide educators opportunity for professional growth. Content takes into consideration the participants' level of expertise, prior knowledge and experience. Presentations are based on current research and best practice; information is sound and is relevant to the audience.

Provisions for reflection, planning implementation and refining applications among educators provides opportunity for sharing ideas and further intellectual dialogue that extends and customizes the content of the session. Professional learning communities are formed to ensure content discussion and promote implementation.

Post-staff development session learning communities provide opportunity for the following discussions:

- Analyze student work samples,
- Collaborate on curriculum planning and mapping,
- Plan peer-coaching experiences,
- Share successful instructional strategies,
- Discuss student concerns,
- Share expertise in a particular instructional practice in professional learning communities,
- Share advanced content units in Haiku learner management system posts/entries.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** ACS AIG Plan incorporated into School Improvement Plans;  
Examples of resources produced through collaboration;  
Documented meeting notes and agendas;  
Professional learning community meetings;  
AIG emails, Haiku learner management system posts/entries;  
Collaborative planning sessions;  
Instructional coaches/Advanced Differentiation Specialist team meetings.

**Other Comments:**

## **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 grade levels and settings.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** The current movement in gifted education is based on a multifaceted view of giftedness, recognizing that students manifest strengths in a variety of ways. Avery County Schools' gifted program, therefore, is comprised of options and learning opportunities that vary in description in order to meet the needs of the diverse population of gifted learners served. A shift from 'gifted program' to 'programming for gifted learners' reflects the district's definition of 'gifted' and an appreciation of the range of characteristics of gifted learners and their individual needs. A full continuum is purposefully planned that allows for the development of gifted potential. Services address the needs of special populations including gifted students with disabilities, underachievers, culturally diverse students and highly gifted students.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** A comprehensive service delivery system for advanced, gifted and highly gifted learners is outlined in three segments: elementary (PK-5), middle (6-8), and secondary (9-12). A service delivery plan is divided into two major sections that address the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners across all grade levels and settings: academic development and talent development. Service options are presented in four areas: learning environment, content differentiation, interest/talent development, and special programs.

The Academic Development side of the grid describes different learning environments, grouping options, and content differentiation strategies that are appropriate for a variety of learners.

The Learning Environment describes the variety of settings where the differentiated services will be delivered. The effect of grouping for gifted students has been found to be positive when instruction is differentiated to meet learning needs (Purcell and Eckert, 2006; Colangelo, Assouline and Gross, 2004, Kulik and Kulik, 1995; Rogers, 1994; Feldheusen, 1992). Flexible clustering describes the purposeful grouping of students that is used to facilitate the teaching of students at their demonstrated readiness level. Such instructional grouping should be flexible within and between individual classrooms or within and between teams and should enable students to move in and out of groups based on their needs and performance. Students may be placed in a group based on their ability and/or performance or they may be placed in an option on a trial basis based on the recommendation of their teacher(s).

Flexible pacing options are provisions that "place students at an appropriate instructional level,

creating the best possible match between a student's achievement and instruction and allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills" (Daniel and Cox, 1988). A variety of settings where differentiated services will be delivered include: the regular homeroom, another classroom, a resource room, or a special school. In some cases, the settings may go beyond the school walls by providing job shadowing, internship and apprenticeship experiences, and may also include simultaneous college enrollment.

Content Differentiation describes strategies used to modify curriculum for gifted students within each environment. They included four curriculum modifications:

Content Acceleration – the use of advanced materials that match the students' level of performance regardless of their grade placement.

Content Sophistication – the use of complex material, presented with a higher level of abstraction, from a more complex viewpoint, using multidisciplinary material that allow students to see the larger system of ideas and concepts related to the core content.

Content Novelty – the use of completely different materials not necessarily provided in the regular curriculum, often selected from students' interests and involves independent or small group investigations.

Talent Development describes the enrichment services that focus on the development of interests and special talents. At the elementary and middle school levels, interest development might occur through classroom centers, special activities and projects, special mini-courses, enrichment clusters. At the secondary level, interests and talents are further expanded through special elective courses and opportunities for independent investigations of topics of interest through seminars, mentorship's, and internships. Most of these programs are offered through regular education, distance learning courses or co-curricular opportunities; some are available form community resources.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Array of services, K-12;  
Advanced Differentiated Education Plans/Individualized Differentiated Education Plans;  
Specific program descriptions and data reports;  
Student identification profile matched to service options.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice B**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** In order to deliver high-quality, efficient and effective AIG programs and services, program goals are established and aligned with mission and vision of Avery County Schools and state and local policies. Measured steps are taken to ensure that the unique learning needs of high performing/high ability students are met in the area of AIG identification. Goals are aligned with

general education goals and advanced differentiation plans are in place that target the specific strengths of high advanced students.

Budgets are aligned with systemwide goals and AIG service and program need. AIG budget line items reflect gifted services and initiatives that are aligned and integrated within the total school program. A focused community of learners is thus created and supported.

Academically gifted students enrolled in Avery County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program; AIG programs and services are aligned with students' area(s) of AIG identification, program goals and resources systemwide. AIG services, specific to area(s) of identification, are integrated with the general education program, PK-12, and reflect research-based, best practices. Inherent to the district's philosophy and definition of giftedness, special care is given to students from traditionally under-represented populations.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Avery County Schools integrates the gifted education program within the whole school environment through collaborative strategic planning by educators, parents and community members to ensure total school improvement. The planning processes that include programs and services, program goals and resources are aligned with the system's mission statement and core beliefs.

Identification procedures are consistent throughout the district. School-based AIG identification teams, consisting of regular education teachers, the principal, the Advanced Differentiation Specialist and the Gifted Program Director meet at each site at the beginning of the school year to review recent standardized cognitive and achievement test data, teacher observations, classroom performance records on all students enrolled at the school. A list of high performing students is generated for AIG referral. As needed throughout the year, formal and informal staff meetings reiterate 'Fraiser's Best Search Practices' and the use of multiple criteria for identification, in order to maintain a current AIG student roster. (Please refer to Standard 1 for specific gifted identification procedures aligned with program goals and services.)

Program objectives, aligned with district and school improvement goals, include the following:

- \* Analyze patterns in growth score data for general education students and gifted students with particular focus on under-represented gifted populations (i.e. twice exceptional, low socio-economic, culturally/linguistically diverse) to provide for a more inclusive program.

- \* Provide ongoing professional development and coaching training on formative and summative assessments data interpretation and follow-up progress monitoring.

- \* Evaluate existing continuum of services to ensure alignment with local, state and national curriculum standards.

- \* Provide appropriate education through an array of service delivery options designed to provide a stimulating and rigorous curriculum so as to ensure that student potential is developed.

Aligned with system and school improvement goals, AIG budgetary decisions are based on program needs. Planning sessions among general education teachers, administrators and gifted educators provide guidance on directing time, funding and personnel resources toward building and delivering a program that is purposefully focused on advanced student learning.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** See above Practice A,

State 034 funds matched to AIG services,  
Local funds allocated for AIG services,  
ACS AIG Plan incorporated within other areas of ACS and vice versa,  
Subject/Grade acceleration,  
Leveled classes,  
Advanced course options.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice C**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools' comprehensive gifted plan articulates programs and services designed to identify and meet the needs of advanced and gifted students. Basic to the success of an integrated program is the alignment between gifted education and general education services. Ultimately, a successful delivery model results in increased school-/system-wide student learning. Opportunities for rich content, high expectations for critical and creative thinking and problem solving are objectives shared by general and gifted educators; all are recognized as critical components of a 21st century instructional program.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Academically or Intellectually Gifted Integrated Program PK-12

Strategies for the teaching/learning process are designed to respond to the unique needs of students. As educators become aware of the strengths and needs of students, an academic program that responds to the unique learning styles of students is built that delivers a curriculum outlined in the NC Standard Course of Study. Differentiation of curriculum and instruction is paramount in an educational program that seeks to address, meet and challenge each individual's potential.

Academically or Intellectually gifted students enrolled in Avery County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program. Academically Gifted services are integrated with the regular education program, PK-12, where flexible grouping is used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual and emotional growth. The Revised Standard Course of Study provides a curriculum base on which to build a framework for expanding and/or enhancing curriculum for academically gifted and other academically able and motivated students. It is the intent of the integrated program to link and align instructional strategies and assessment instruments with students' talents and needs. The classroom in which thinking is encouraged is one where questions are valued, intellectual challenges are welcomed, and one in which education is viewed as a process of teaching what is known and, perhaps more importantly, a process of searching for solutions to what is unknown. All students are afforded educational experiences that encourage them to find problems and speculate on possible solutions. The critical

thinker must be awarded time to deliberate, think of alternate solutions to given problems, weigh evidence and ultimately articulate and defend a logical conclusion.

Enrichment activities are implemented that emphasize critical and creative thinking and stress awareness of students' responsibilities to society. Each teacher, with guidance and direction from the AIG Director and Advance Differentiation Specialist, are better prepared to determine, implement and evaluate differentiation strategies.

Avery County Schools Academically or Intellectually Gifted Education Program is purposefully designed to provide learning opportunities that promote the growth of skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for gifted students to reach their potential. Instructional programs provide a steady challenge without frustration or excessive pressure.

Avery County Schools continues to integrate the Gifted Education Program within the whole school environment through collaborative strategic planning by educators, parents and community members to ensure total school improvement. The following programming goals guide this effort:

Objective: Analyze patterns in growth score data for regular education students and gifted students with particular focus on under-represented gifted populations (i.e. twice exceptional, low socio-economic, culturally/linguistically diverse) to provide for a more inclusive program.

Objective: Provide ongoing professional development and coaching training on pre- and post-assessments and advanced differentiation strategies based on assessment data. Evaluate existing continuum of services to establish alignment with local, state and national curriculum standards.

Objective: Analyze and compare the proportion of special student populations (twice exceptional, culturally/linguistically diverse, low socio-economic) with those in larger school community to create a more inclusive and equitable program.

Avery County Schools provides appropriate education opportunities through an array of service delivery options designed to provide a stimulating and challenging curriculum so as to ensure that student potential is developed.

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that in-class flexible clustering opportunities are afforded to highly able students grouped in heterogeneous classrooms. Instructional technology, integrated units, curriculum compacting, differentiated instructional units, literature circles, learning centers, interdisciplinary thematic units, Socratic seminars, tiered assignments, learning contracts, etc. are content differentiation strategies that may be seen in regular classrooms throughout the system.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** See above Practice A;

AIG student folder data;

Grade level, cross grade level, multi-disciplinary collaborative planning;

Students' instructional schedules;

Haiku differentiated instructional lessons/units/activities;

Policies and procedures for acceleration and grouping with academic/intellectual peers stated in ACS Plan;

Flexible clustering;  
Inclusion;  
Advanced differentiation;  
Enrichment;  
Subject/Grade acceleration options.

**Other Comments:**

**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.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Based on current and comprehensive research, Avery County Schools is firm in its belief that a practiced effective service delivery program is crucial in order for gifted and advanced students to reach their potential. High ability students demonstrate a variety of affective and intellectual needs that must be addressed in order to maximize learning. A common practice of advanced differentiated instruction must be offered in classrooms where high ability students are enrolled. Students must be provided regular opportunities to interact with intellectual peers; academic challenge must be inherent in the instructional program.

Appropriate service delivery for gifted and advanced students is most effective when deemed a priority and embraced by all teachers, school and system administrators and support staff who develop and deliver programs for advanced and gifted students. A clearly articulated expectation of differentiated services and instructional delivery serves to communicate to all stakeholders the importance of the practice. A description of differentiated services and instruction for AIG students and AIG program regulations embedded in the local AIG plan serves to inform all stakeholders of the program's purpose.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** The Avery County Schools local AIG plan articulates viable cluster grouping arrangements that provide a platform for differentiated services in the general education classroom. Grouping and acceleration management options are inherent to differentiated services across all grade levels, district wide. Clearly stated in the system's AIG plan are a variety of options designed to meet the needs of all levels of learners.

A school level AIG Team will use student data to identify those students who require advance differentiated services and guide the development of the overall program. Placement decisions must be made to reflect the appropriate advanced differentiation service option that will match the student's needs. The AIG Team will meet periodically throughout the year to monitor AIG students' progress and ensure a student-services match. Annual reviews of students will include evaluations of student performance in the program. The AIG Program Director and, where appropriate, the Exceptional Children Program Director and/or the LEP Coordinator, assess progress toward the school system's

goal of equitability. Curriculum and assessment studies and student success as indicated by normed testing data are used to analyze appropriate service delivery to all students.

The AIG Team may determine:

That advanced differentiated services are not required at this time

That the information is inadequate/incomplete and additional testing is needed to determine an appropriate match of differentiated service, (parental permission will be obtained should additional evaluation be required)

That a student should be placed on a "wait and watch" list where teachers are directed to continue to observe student behaviors, collect work samples and report back to the committee when evidence of "giftedness" is sited

That evidence indicates that advanced differentiated services are required and procedures for determining an appropriate match of student options should follow.

(Please refer to Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction)

#### **Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Agendas, minutes, from collaborative planning meetings;  
Agendas, minutes, from district and school focused on stakeholders and personnel;  
Communications to related stakeholders and personnel;  
District and school web sites, newsletters;  
Haiku learner management system posts;  
Local board of education presentations;  
Meeting agendas;  
Website posts;  
Presentations to faculties/staff;  
Presentations to district level instructional coaches;  
Presentations to principals and department heads;  
Professional learning community minutes/meeting notes.

#### **Other Comments:**

#### **Practice E**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Effective communication among and between teachers, schools and central office administrators is essential to the success of the AIG program and the services it provides. A plan to articulate the aligned and integrated services ensures seamless transitions between grades and schools so as to provide for continuation of services, PK-12. A proactive approach with the intent of

transitioning advanced differentiated plans for identified gifted students further ensures continuation of services. Teachers collaborate proactively by providing and receiving academic and social-emotional information on students so as to better understand and plan for student success. Misconceptions are eliminated; a base of understanding is established. Program goals and long- and short-range plans can be developed in advance with better a understanding of students' performance levels and needs for potential growth.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Avery County Schools is directed in its efforts to communicate the many and varied learning styles and characteristics of gifted students within a school population, PK-12. A firm commitment to meeting the needs of advanced students is continually being reinforced in the schools and community.

Effective communication among and between teachers and schools is critical when planning programs that address students' strengths and needs. Throughout the year, teachers and building administrators communicate to align program content with specific student need. At transition points, opportunities for pedagogical dialogue is planned within professional learning communities so as to reduce/eliminate misconceptions, misunderstandings and confusion with students transferring from one grade to the next, or from one school to another. In a sensitive and respectful environment, discussions are open and remain confidential; student learning profiles are shared to promote and insure continuation of the PK-12 service delivery program.

In order to articulate the varying characteristics of gifted students within a school population and community, the Gifted Education Program Director reviews behaviors as listed on The Gifted Child Checklist with faculty members at the beginning of each school year when teachers are contemplating referrals for AIG identification teams. The advanced Differentiated Education Plan's environment and content modifications options are revisited as needed throughout the year.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Consistent AIG services among all schools;  
Agendas/minutes from district and schools focused on all services, including advanced/AIG programming;  
Student and parent communications;  
Key transition points meeting agendas/notes;  
Transitional meetings notes (PK to K, elementary to middle, middle to high school);  
Vertical alignment meetings;  
Haiku learner management system entries;  
Professional learning community agendas/meeting notes;  
End of year communications to teachers/administrators;  
Scheduling discussions/decisions;  
School handbooks;  
Spring parent night agendas/meeting notes;  
Parent and student tours of next grade span;  
Open house activities, agendas, notes;  
District novel lists/approved reading lists by grade level.

## **Other Comments:**

### **Practice F**

Ensures collaboration and involvement among regular education teachers, exceptional children's teachers, other specialists, instructional staff, parents/families, and administrators to provide differentiated programming and services.

### **This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Collaboration between gifted education, special education and general education in efforts directed toward enhancing student learning ensures that both programs are aligned and positioned to meet the goals of the school-wide program. Depth of content, critical and creative thinking learning experiences, creative problem solving opportunities are delivered with high expectations for student involvement. Dialogue among general education teachers, exceptional children teachers, other specialists, instructional staff, parents/families, and school-based and central office administrators provides for rich discussion and shared expertise. Each brings particular knowledge and teaching strategies that result in a menu of differentiation options for all. The result is increased learning for diverse populations of students.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Avery County Schools' general education teachers, exceptional children's teachers, other specialists, instructional support staff, parents/families and school-based and central office based administrators collaborate to develop, support and evaluate district-wide differentiated programs and services. Instructional strategies are shared during professional learning communities, professional development sessions, team meetings, faculty meetings, and formal and informal conversations. General education personnel and gifted educators collaborate during planning sessions to develop a comprehensive instructional program that is differentiated to meet the needs of diverse learners. Teachers and support staff with varying areas of specialization, expertise and experience interact so that a rigorous and challenging curriculum is made available to all levels of learners.

During annual review meetings, Advanced Differentiated Education Plans for gifted students are developed or reviewed by the gifted education team. The gifted education team, typically comprised of general education teacher, Gifted Program Director/Advanced Differentiation Specialist, principal, Exceptional Children's teacher (where appropriate), Limited English Proficiency Coordinator (where appropriate) sign the Advanced Differentiated Education Plan documenting all stakeholders' involvement and participation. At times and when appropriate, the student meets with the team and participates in the process.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Documentation of meetings with related personnel (agendas/meeting notes);  
Advanced Differentiated Education Plans/Individualized Differentiated Education Plans;  
Documentation of parent/school partnerships;  
ACS and school websites;  
Related personnel schedules and rosters;

Collaborative planning time;  
Advanced Differentiated Education Plans w/ signatures documenting participants (Exceptional Children (EC), Limited English Proficient (LEP), general education, local education agency representative, parent, etc.);  
Curriculum nights/Open house presentations, discussion items;  
Instructional support coaches promote advanced differentiated services, K-12.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice G**

Ensures that school counseling personnel, regular education teachers, AIG specialists, parents/families, and others collaborate to address the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

**This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** In order for gifted students to reach their full potential, social and emotional needs must be purposefully included in programs and services for this population. A proactive support structure is established when school systems make provisions for affective services. Asynchronous development, issues relating with peers, heightened sensitivity, perfectionism, depression, college and career planning can present challenges for highly able students. Students experiencing these struggles, as well as the under-motivated, twice exceptional, students diagnosed with ADHD benefit from programs that support the learning and environmental needs. Of particular interest and concern is the research that indicates greater frustrations in gifted children because of an awareness of discrepancies between learning strengths and disabilities. Risk factors for social and emotional issues among this population is increased, furthering the need for proactive programming to help students cope with these struggles. Clear evidence indicates that when programs are in place where emphasis and focus is placed on the social and emotional needs of gifted students, learning is maximized.

**Goals:** Avery County Schools is committed to providing a system-wide program that addresses the social and emotional needs of gifted students. Counseling services must have a school-wide emphasis evidenced by all certified and non-certified school personnel who work with gifted students be aware and able to address the unique social and emotional needs of these students.

Services must include parent information sessions so that parents are also made aware of the unique characteristics of gifted populations and are thus better inclined to support the efforts of the school.

**Description:** Avery County Schools recognizes that the social and emotional needs of gifted students warrant a program supported by counselors, general education teachers, gifted education specialists, parents/families. School-wide differentiated services, including designed especially for these students that address particular social and emotional needs provide opportunities for students with common interests, abilities and motivation to work together on appropriately challenging tasks. Flexible grouping, flexible pacing and flexible use of SIOP strategies are inherent to the program allowing for the dynamic make up of groups and curriculum.

Because the district's population is becoming more ethnically diverse, sensitivity to cultural, language and socio-economic diversity becomes increasingly important. Counseling interventions that address issues related to diversity must be explored and delivered. Counselors collaborate on teams with certified and non-certified personnel who work with gifted and highly advanced students to address and resolve issues that may arise due to differences in cultural background, language and socio-economic levels.

Flexible grouping allows students of similar achievement/ability levels, common interests/passions to work together for a portion of the school day/week. Research is clear: gifted and high ability students' learning increases significantly when offered opportunities to work with intellectual peers. When guidance personnel work with teachers to ensure a positive and productive collaborative learning environment, behavioral issues are kept at a minimum.

For highly gifted students with significantly advanced academic social-emotional needs, opportunities for subject and grade acceleration are offered. Early entrance to kindergarten and dual enrollment are included in policies and procedures for qualifying students; the student, parents, classroom teacher(s), principal, Advanced Differentiation Specialist, Gifted Education Program Director are encouraged to participate in the decision process. (Please refer to Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction.)

#### **Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Related professional development opportunities;  
Intentional and purposeful student programming and instruction;  
Communications among guidance counselors, students, teachers, administrators, parents;  
Advanced Differentiated Education Plans/Individualized Education Plans;  
Professional development sessions addressing social/emotional needs;  
Parent night discussions;  
Open house discussions/presentations;  
High school counselors assist w/ rising AIG student registration;  
Individualized Education Plans and 504 plans modifications.

#### **Other Comments:**

#### **Practice H**

Articulates and implements a process for accelerative instructional and placement options when an appropriate body-of-evidence indicates that such a practice is warranted for an individual gifted learner.

#### **This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** A variety of service delivery options ensures that student need is matched with appropriate service options. A comprehensive service delivery system that includes accelerated instructional and placement options offered when appropriate evidences are presented and designed to provide a stimulating and challenging curriculum maximizes learning. Differentiated services within and across a variety of settings where instruction is appropriately advanced, extended and/or accelerated promote student success and academic growth.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** All teachers of gifted and advanced students receive professional development in the areas of appropriate grouping strategies and curriculum differentiation, PK-12. Curriculum and instructional strategies are integrated throughout the general education program and include specific modifications that are designed to meet the needs of gifted and advanced students. Online curriculum maps in content areas reflect differentiated content and instructional strategies aimed at challenging gifted students. Regularly scheduled formative and summative assessments provide evidence of student growth.

When a student's progress profile and behavioral attributes indicate the need for higher level of instruction in a specific subject area, provisions for acceleration are in place. Options for subject acceleration and grade acceleration are available to the student who demonstrates sufficient evidence for this option. (Please refer to Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction.)

Students who reach their fourth birthday by August 31st of the academic year may be assessed by non-public school professionals to provide evidence of need for early entrance to kindergarten. Consideration for early entrance will be based on multiple criteria that include ability and achievement test score reports.

Students who demonstrate unusual ability and/or achievement levels in a specific academic area are potential candidates for subject acceleration. These students typically perform at least two grade levels above their age/grade peers on normed assessments, and thereby require grade level curriculum that includes higher-order thinking, creative thinking and problem-solving activities at a grade level higher than age peers in the specific content area(s) of strength.

Students who operate at least two grade levels above age/grade peers in all academic areas as evidenced on normed achievement assessments are potential candidates for grade acceleration. Candidates who are considered for this option show no academic areas of weakness. Attributes that include self-direction, high motivation, social-emotional maturity.

(Policies and procedures for early entrance to kindergarten, subject acceleration and grade acceleration are articulated in Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction.)

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Acceleration options available and processes communicated in Plan;

Use of appropriate acceleration procedures;  
Student profile/body-of-evidence examples;  
Minutes, agendas, documentation from related meetings;  
Service delivery array;  
Criteria listed in Plan: subject and grade acceleration;  
Early entrance to kindergarten policy in Plan;  
Accuplacer testing system.

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice I**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Data studies indicate that under-representation among minority groups in gifted programs is disproportional at all levels of education, beginning in kindergarten. Under-represented gifted populations that include culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted and twice-exceptional students require specialized considerations and services to ensure inclusive identification practices and appropriate service delivery programs. Appropriate assessment instruments are needed to assure fair identification procedures that overcome roadblocks that these typically under-represented AIG populations typically face. An inclusive AIG placement process ensures that full academic potential for students from all cultural/ethnic groups and from all socio-economic levels is recognized and fostered.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Avery County Schools recognizes that gifted youth form a diverse group with complex intellectual, social and emotional needs. Gifted children and youth exist in culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged families, as well as in populations of students with disabilities. Effort are directed toward early identification by educators who have received training in recognizing gifted characteristics among typically under-represented populations. Multiple criteria are used in the identification/placement process for all students. In addition to normed score reports ('rigid gatekeepers'), teachers are encouraged to consider student performance, observations and work samples from enrichment lessons when making referral decisions.

Professional development is offered to general education professionals that is focused on learning characteristics of under-represented populations and addresses: cultural sensitivity issues, twice-exceptional student learning profiles, positive peer cultures. Increased student identification among under-represented populations becomes an outcome of these professional development sessions.

An appropriate integrated curriculum is aligned with learning needs of under-represented gifted. Targeted interventions promote success in rigorous, college-prep course work. Opportunities to engage in higher-order problem solving activities, built into content area curriculum, allow special gifted populations to develop skills that improve self-esteem.

The Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Program Coordinator leads a staff of LEP professionals who translate documents, translate meeting content for Spanish-speaking parents, provide intervention services for LEP students and communicates with parents in the schools' efforts toward encouraging family involvement in all activities that promote student success.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Intentional and purposeful programming documents and related service options;  
Student data and trends;  
Advanced Differentiated Education Plans/Individualized Education Plans;

Nurturing program for young learners;  
Use of formative assessment for enrichment/acceleration need;  
Early College option;  
WIDA Standards;  
Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT).

**Other Comments:**

**Practice J**

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

**This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Enrichment and extra-curricular programs and events enhance and further develop the needs and interests of advanced and AIG students. When gifted/advanced students' social and emotional needs are met, learning is maximized and positive self esteem is developed.

**Goals:** A focus is directed toward enhancing extra-curricular services offered in Avery County that addresses the affective needs of all students, including gifted and advanced students.

**Description:** Activities that bring awareness of, develop and enhance talents allow students to excel in new and previously unexplored areas of interest. In addition, extra-curricular activities offer opportunity for all students to further explore areas of interest, engage in rigorous and challenging activities that extend classroom studies in environments shared with others of similar interests.

Drama productions - Avery High School Drama and Theater department offers opportunity for students interested in performance as well as technical backstage experience. Productions are presented annually.

A week-long summer enrichment experience designed for gifted and advanced students during summer months would further enhance programming for these students. Hands-on, inquiry-based activities reinforce school-year learning and would serve to continue the school system's efforts of creating successful student problem solvers.

An enhanced extra-curricular enrichment program would allow gifted and advanced students to explore areas of specific interest and passion throughout the school year and summer.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Student participation in extra-curricular programs, service learning, inquiry-based projects, mentorship programs, etc.;;  
Apple Distinguished Program recognition for technology advancement (online global extra-curricular opportunities);  
Variety of extra-curricular school-level opportunities promoted;  
Advanced Differentiated Education Plan/Individualized Education Plan;  
Duke University - Talent Identification Program (elementary & middle school levels);

Participation in school, district, state, and national competitions;  
Budget support for competitions;  
Interest Clubs (i.e. Battle of the Books, Beta Club, Key Club);  
System-level math competitions;  
Spelling Bee;  
Geography Bee;  
Interact Simulations.

**Other Comments:**

## 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 academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of AIG students.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** When communication is clear and consistent, assurances of appropriate services for the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of students is increased. Positive and proactive practices and policies become inherent to the program when advocates for gifted education communicate and partner with parents/families and the community.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Goals of gifted programming are defined by the Gifted Education Program task force comprised of parents, gifted education educators, general education educators, building and central office administrators, and communicated to all stakeholders.

Clear, focused and consistent communication is delivered to parents/families at all gifted education meetings and professional development sessions. Written and verbal communications to stakeholders serve the following functions:

- \* articulates the need, purpose and benefit for appropriately different programming for gifted learners,
- \* establishes long- and short-range goals,
- \* provides a means of program planning,
- \* provides a forum for open dialogue,
- \* promotes involvement in decision-making process,
- \* assures equity among all sub-group populations,
- \* increases opportunity for greater parent/family/community involvement in the program.

Alignment of gifted education and general education is supported by all stakeholders as evidenced by signatures of parent, general education teacher(s), gifted education personnel, special education and LEP personnel (where appropriate), principal, AIG Program Director on all AIG identification/placement and Advanced Differentiated Education Plan forms.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Various modes of written, text, verbal communication, websites, brochures, etc.;

Agendas, minutes, presentation at related meetings, work sessions;  
Parent/family and community surveys/communications;  
Intentional recruitment efforts;  
Membership and involvement of parents/families and community in school and district-wide meetings/events;  
Collaboration with related community groups, local colleges and university;  
Advanced Differentiated Education Plans/Individualized Differentiated Education Plans;  
Annual reviews;  
Report cards with performance/achievement levels;  
Conferences advocating for advanced/gifted learners;  
Newsletters;  
Progress reports/Midterm reports;  
Board of education meeting presentations and meeting notes;  
Newspaper articles;  
Media releases (radio/TV spots);  
Web pages (teachers', schools', district's homepage);  
Haiku learner management system entries/posts and parent portal;  
Blogs/Wikis;  
Parent organizations;  
School Improvement Teams;  
Community outreach/Student-to-Student activities;  
Brochures;  
Handbooks (school and district);  
Translations of all pertinent documents available;  
Phone logs;  
Email communications;  
AlertNow recordings;  
Student presentations to authentic audiences (parents, stakeholders)  
Open house events;  
Band/Choral/Music/Visual/Performing arts productions;  
Career fairs;  
Student-led conferencing;  
Mentorships;  
Apprenticeships;  
Graduation project.

**Other Comments:**

**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.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Avery County Schools recognizes that clear information with regard to program goals, the AIG plan and other policies is a critical aspect of gifted education programming. Articulated information regarding the program's strengths and areas of need shared with all stakeholders results

in greater advocacy for gifted services. Research clearly indicates that effective communication is critical to the success of any program.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Information about all aspects of the program and its services is communicated to all groups of constituents: students, parents, general educators, gifted educators, administrators, board of education members, the Department of Public Instruction. Various means of text and verbal communications ensure that mechanisms for giving and receiving information/input are in place. In this way, a base of understanding, appreciation and collaboration is formed and maintained.

Communications are sensitive to the political climate and culture of the community.

Communications reflect specific and more general needs of the AIG program.

Gifted education communications are aligned with general education goals.

Communications are clearly articulated in order to avoid misconceptions.

Communications are time-sensitive, relevant and designed to be proactive.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** See above Practice A;

Haiku learner management system parent portal;

ACS AIG Plan posted on district homepage;

Task Force participation;

Central Office Leadership Team;

Transition meetings;

Awards programs.

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice C**

Involves stakeholders, reflecting the diversity of AIG parents/families and the community, in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG program and plan.

**This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Stakeholders who reflect the diversity of AIG parents/families and community are better prepared and more strongly committed toward ensuring equity of programs and services. Assurances must therefore be in place to promote an appropriately diverse group of family and community-based individuals who participate in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG program and plan.

**Goals:** A purposeful effort toward including families from diverse cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds will ensure a broader array of stakeholder perspective, and thereby ensure equity of

program offerings and services.

**Description:** The Gifted Education Task force is comprised of parents/community members, gifted and general educators, building administrators, central office administrators, special area teachers, and therapists. A focused effort is directed toward a representative balance among all grade levels served by the program.

A concerted effort is in place to increase the number of under-represented populations. Gifted curriculum and program offerings are reviewed to ensure offerings of culture-sensitive curriculum materials and instruction. Awareness of specific learning needs of students from diverse cultural, linguistic, economic backgrounds, as well as needs of twice-exceptional students become acute when parents and community members advocate for these students. Community members bring real-world applications to the planning table. In addition, a diverse population of stakeholders work toward increasing the number of students who are likely to benefit from an appropriately rigorous advanced curriculum.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Invitation and membership on various AIG-related committees: task force, programs, plan revision;  
List of AIG committee members and representative roles in AIG Plan;  
Communications and online surveys that include diverse groups from the community (colleges, business);  
Blogs and Glogs (graphic blogs);  
Plan posted on line;  
Student focus groups;  
Teacher observations;  
Task Force;  
Board of education input;  
Parent meetings.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice D**

Informs parents/families and the community of opportunities available to AIG students on an ongoing basis and in their native language.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Communication of opportunities available to AIG students, articulated on an ongoing basis in parents'/families' native language, is essential to the success of a gifted education program. Information regarding programs and services for gifted learners that is shared among all stakeholders is required in order for AIG students' needs to be addressed and met.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Gifted program services and opportunities offered to advanced students are based on best-practice research. Programs are monitored and offerings are updated regularly to reflect current

initiatives. Every effort is directed toward matching program offerings with student interest and need. Formal and informal communications, verbal and written/text communications articulate program initiatives and services as they become available. Annual review meetings, held at least yearly, provide ongoing, scheduled opportunity to inform parents/families, by phone or face-to-face of programs, initiatives, services, learning opportunities, etc. available to students on an ongoing and scheduled basis.

A translator is provided during meetings with Spanish-speaking parents; all documents/ pertinent and verbal communications to Hispanic parents of gifted students are translated into Spanish.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Various modes of translated communication: websites, emails, online forums, etc;  
Intentional and purposeful programming;  
Translated documents;  
Website;  
AlertNow messages translated;  
Collaboration with support personnel (Title I, Exceptional Children, Limited English Proficiency, etc.);  
Translators present as needed for Advanced Differentiated Education Plan/Individualized Differentiated Education Plan meeting.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice E**

Forms partnerships with parents/families, institutions of higher education, local businesses and industry, and other stakeholders within the community to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** In order to be successful, a gifted education program must be reflective of and responsive to the families of the students it serves. Parents, in particular, rightfully expect a program of the highest quality for their children. Ultimately gifted programs and services are accountable to a community of stakeholders. In order to offer and maintain assurances of quality programs, parents/families must be afforded opportunities to support gifted education.

The practice of recruiting volunteers who meet regularly over an extended period of time to provide guidance and support to those responsible for service delivery promotes a higher level of program success. Partnerships with stakeholders from varying elements of the community ensure a broad and balanced perspective in the decision-making process.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Parents are afforded opportunity to meet at least annually with general and gifted teachers and administrators regarding their child's Advanced Differentiated Education Plan. During

annual review meetings, discussions involving current gifted education best-practice initiatives and services are reviewed. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback on ways in which initiatives/services currently in place are working for their child.

Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in Gifted Education task force efforts, a collaborative effort among all stakeholders. Goals are established/re-visited, and, where necessary, revised before presentation to the Avery County Board of Education. Parents thereby become better informed and more knowledgeable about research-based programs and services. Dialogue between the home and school promotes increased student learning. Ultimately, gifted education programs and services become more responsive to constituents.

Collaborative sessions that include parents/families, members of the business and professional community, school/central office administrators, general educators, exceptional children educators, gifted program educators, local college and university representatives meet periodically to develop and promote a sense of 'school family' with common purpose and goals. School/District-wide community partnership meetings include, but are not limited to the following: dropout prevention, Graduating Our Future, NC Pre-Kindergarten Program, high school reform, early college initiative, school improvement team, alternative programs, gifted education task force. Agenda items include data disaggregation, professional development options, planning for future initiatives and evaluating existing programs.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Intentional and purposeful programming;  
Participation of community agencies, organizations, community, and families in AIG programming, professional development, mentorships, guest speaking events, planning meetings, workshops, AIG student involvement activities;  
Photos, newsletters, media articles;  
Awards and recognitions from outside agencies;  
Curriculum nights;  
Haiku learner management system posts/entries, and parent portal;  
Extra-curricular activities;  
Advanced Differentiation Education Plan/Individualized Education Plan annual reviews;  
Transition meetings and school tours;  
Student-led conferences;  
Graduation Project;  
Family involvement programs and handouts;  
Grant applications;  
Dual enrollment;  
Mayland Early College High School partnership;  
Teacher of Algebra Network (Appalachian State University)  
Online courses;  
NCVPS;  
Field trips to Institutions of Higher Education;  
Talent Identification Program-TIP (Duke University)  
Governor's School  
NC School of Math and Science  
National Young Junior Scholar's Program;  
Summer Enrichment programs (Appalachian State University & others);

**Other Comments:**

## **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 describing the local AIG program in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy, which has been approved by the LEA's school board and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** A written AIG plan describing the Avery County Schools Gifted Education Program and approved by the Avery County Board of Education ensures that curriculum differentiation, instruction and assessment for gifted students is aligned with best practice research. Specific policies and regulations of the district's AIG plan are aligned with state standards of general education and extended to address the needs of highly-able and gifted students to ensure program quality. Formative assessments, monitored throughout the school year, and summative assessment data, analyzed annually, ensures that gifted students' learning is maximized and that expected proficiency goals are met.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Avery County Schools Board of Education approved AIG plan is aligned with state and local legislation and policies. Included in state and local legislation and policy are the following:

- \* A definition of giftedness,
- \* Criteria for identification,
- \* Use of multiple criteria (achievement and aptitude assessments, performance, behaviors/characteristics, etc.),
- \* Identification and placement recommendations matched with appropriate service delivery programs,
- \* Provisions for an appropriately rigorous differentiated curriculum in specific area(s) aligned with students' needs,
- \* Equitable decisions for identification and placement that address special needs of typically under-represented populations of gifted students,
- \* Procedure to resolve disagreement.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** ACS AIG Plan and review,

Local board of education minutes,  
State allotment,  
Commendations/Recommendations from Department of Public Instruction,  
Follow-up response documents to Department of Public Instruction.

**Other Comments:**

**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.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Developing and delivering the local AIG program and plan in accordance with current legislation and state policies ensures fidelity of implementation for all AIG program components. Frequent monitoring of programs and services ensures that policies are aligned with current, best-practice research and provides opportunity for program/practice improvements. Ultimately, appropriately implemented gifted programs and services result in enhanced operations and increased student academic and social-emotional growth.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** In order to ensure fidelity of implementation for all AIG program components, program policies and procedures are articulated clearly. Periodic professional development sessions reiterate and reinforce current legislation and state policies and ensure common understanding and interpretation. Stakeholders monitor procedures and practices for compliance and identify areas where procedures and practices are in need of strengthening.

The Gifted Education Program Director leads a task force comprised of parents, special education practitioners and administrators, general education and gifted education practitioners and administrators, and community leaders. The task force ensures that the AIG program and plan are aligned with current legislation and state policies. Teachers and administrators responsible for delivering AIG programs and services collaborate to implement the AIG program by actively participating in its management. Fidelity is thereby promoted and ensured.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** School-based programming checks/audits;

Disaggregation of End of Grade, End of Course test data;

Disaggregation of formative assessment data;

Data reports, patterns/trends of related topics;

Parent/Teacher/Student communications;

Adherence to Article 9B;

Due process;

Periodic meetings with leadership team;

Director/Administrator and teacher monitoring checklists;

Parent and student surveys;

Focus group interviews;

Teacher evaluations.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice C**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Effective and efficient budgetary operations are critical components of the AIG program and plan, without which the program could not operate. Funds for specific operational expenditures are identified and aligned with program goals in order to ensure that program objectives and student performance outcomes are achieved. Activities, resource materials, personnel requirements are aligned with a budgetary timeline and monitoring scheme designed to manage expenditures needed to deliver a quality and policy-compliant program.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** The Gifted Education Program Director and other administrators meet with the district Finance Director to prepare the gifted program's budget that is in complete compliance with state policy. Familiar with and knowledgeable about all aspects of the gifted program and its practices, participants responsible for preparing the AIG budget advocate accordingly and ensure that all budget spending is directly related to supporting the program's goals and objectives. As part of the total school curriculum, line items for professional development, instructional materials, etc. reflect the program's integration with general education offerings.

The AIG budget is maintained and monitored continuously and reflects all program expenditures. All state allocated funds are accounted for in the AIG program budget. Budgets are prepared by gifted education, building and central office administrators who are knowledgeable about gifted services and act as advocates for the program. Representation on budget committee by general education administrators ensures integration and alignment with general education goals and objectives.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Annual budget statement,  
Line item review,  
Teacher licensure and PRC 034 funds,  
Contracts for professional development,  
Receipts for materials and instructional products.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice D**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Student performance growth and annual drop-out data for gifted and advanced students is maintained, analyzed and shared. Reliable and valid assessment instruments are used; reports support student growth performance and/or areas where potential program revisions are warranted. Score reports and student performance growth data beginning in third grade that are shared among teachers and administrators at the elementary, middle and high school levels predict potential for student drop-out and can be used when planning proactive dropout prevention initiatives.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Avery County Schools maintains, analyzes, and shares student performance growth reports. Since all general and gifted education teachers and administrators are focused on increased student achievement for all students, including gifted education students, formative and summative assessment reports are disaggregated to ensure growth among gifted and advanced student sub-populations. Formative assessments are scheduled regularly throughout the year and summative assessment data is collected annually across all grade levels beginning with grade three. Results are analyzed and used in making curricular and program decisions. Individual student score reports are analyzed in order to ensure an appropriate service match.

Score reports of elementary and middle school students who perform significantly below grade level on standardized state testing are analyzed and shared among central office, middle and high school administrators. Critical intervention strategies are planned and delivered.

Formative and summative assessment data identifying at-risk student populations is collected, disaggregated, and analyzed. Alternative programs are in place to re-enroll students who have previously dropped out and those who are at risk for dropping out.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Disaggregation of End of Grade, End of Course tests;  
Formative and summative assessment data, as well as other indicators;  
Communications with school personnel;  
Advanced Differentiated Education Plans/Individualize Differentiated Education Plans;  
Drop-out data including at-risk AIG students;  
Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum (pre-k);  
List of interventions, progress monitoring, and documentation of implementation;  
Board of Education minutes;  
Testing and accountability reports.

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice E**

Monitors the representation 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.

**This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Research indicates an under-representation of students who are culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, and twice-exceptional in gifted programs. Conversely, evidence indicates an over-representation of these students in remedial classes. In order to increase access of gifted students from typically under-represented populations, statistics must be monitored to ensure equity of access.

**Goals:** Avery County Schools is focused on providing opportunities that enable special populations of students who show high achievement or potential for high achievement to participate and succeed in gifted and advanced programs. A goal will be realized when a matching demographic profile between the identified gifted student child count roster and the demographic profile of Avery County Public Schools is in place.

**Description:** Avery County Schools recognizes that academic and leadership potential and levels of giftedness exist among all populations of students, including those with multiple exceptionalities and those from culturally, linguistically, ethnically diverse backgrounds. Traditional means of identifying and serving special populations of gifted students have proved ineffective. Therefore, modifications in identification procedures and curriculum delivery must be made to accommodate these learners' academic and affective needs. Communications among counselors, exceptional children's program educators, limited English proficiency educators and gifted education educators promote and ensure that equitable identification and service delivery programming that meet the needs of under-represented student populations are met. To further ensure continued success, parents of gifted students from special populations are invited and encouraged to actively participate in initial placement and annual review meetings where curriculum decisions are made. Translators attend meetings where appropriate; all pertinent documents and forms are translated in Spanish.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Data regarding referral and identification trends based on demographics/sub-groups;  
Enrollment data in upper level courses;  
Retention data;  
Agendas, minutes, presentations from related meetings, work sessions, professional learning communities;  
Surveys/Communications with related stakeholders;  
Evaluation instruments;  
Annual reports;  
Policy revisions;  
School based team minutes;  
Child count data;  
Extrapolations from system level accountability reports.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice F**

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

**This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Gifted and advanced learners are better served when educators who deliver services have knowledge and competencies needed to fulfill planning and teaching responsibilities. Professional development opportunities offered to keep educators abreast of current, research-based programs and practices maintain program integrity.

**Goals:** Avery County Schools recognizes that effective instructional personnel is the key to successful teaching and learning. In order to create a learning environment that responds efficiently and effectively to the learning needs of advanced and gifted students, the district is focused on promoting gifted licensure programs, local endorsement coursework, and increased professional development. A greater number of educators licensed or locally endorsed and competent in recognizing characteristics of gifted students, developing high-quality advanced differentiated learning opportunities and communicating knowledgeably with parents and educators about student and program needs are better equipped to deliver a quality program.

**Description:** Gifted and advanced learners are better served when educators who deliver services have knowledge and competencies needed to fulfill planning and teaching responsibilities. Professional development opportunities offered to keep educators abreast of current, research-based programs and practices maintain program integrity.

Educators who are assigned to work with gifted and advanced students, whether in homogeneously or heterogeneously grouped settings, require understanding and appreciation of gifted students and their exceptional abilities. Avery County Schools recognizes the value of special training in gifted education content and pedagogy and encourages educators to pursue gifted licensure. Teachers who are interested in becoming more adept in recognizing characteristics of the gifted student, research-based/best-practices in advanced differentiation instruction and service models are encouraged to pursue courses that lead to local endorsement. All educators responsible for the learning environment of gifted students participate in professional development sessions address curriculum and instruction appropriate for meeting the needs of those learners. All records of AIG licensure, AIG graduate study coursework, local endorsement, and professional development sessions are recorded and kept current in teachers' personnel file. AIG licensure and professional qualifications guide the employment practices.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Licensure reports,  
Personnel files,  
Teacher certifications,  
Professional development records,  
PRC 034 fund reports,  
HRMS reports,  
Student placement.

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice G**

Forms an advisory group of community members, parents/families of AIG students representative of diverse populations in the program, teachers of the gifted, and other professional staff who meet regularly to review all aspects of the local AIG program and make recommendations for program improvement.

**This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** An advisory group comprised of community members, parents/families of AIG students representative of diverse populations in the program, teachers of the gifted and other professional staff who meet regularly to review aspects of the AIG program makes for a stronger program that has greater opportunity for success and longevity. In addition, equity issues are presented and addressed by passionate stakeholders who represent diverse populations.

**Goals:** Avery County Schools recognizes the need for regularly scheduled meetings with agenda items that include reviewing aspects of the AIG plan. With a schedule set for periodic meetings, program supports will continuously be refined and supported; compliance with state and local regulations and policies is thus assured.

**Description:** Avery County Schools gifted task force is made up of community members, parents/family members of AIG students, general educators, gifted educators, general administrators, special education administrators and gifted administrators who offer perspective, specific areas of passion and expertise, personal time and commitment to developing and implementing a successful AIG plan. Representatives from diverse populations established the initial gifted education program in Avery County and representatives from diverse populations make up a task force where efforts are directed toward reviewing and revising services and guidelines as needed. Gifted task force members serve as advocates for comprehensive gifted programs and services. Committee members are knowledgeable and committed to their volunteer efforts aimed at supporting and improving the district's efforts in educating gifted students.

### **Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Agendas, minutes, presentations at related meetings/work sessions, professional learning communities;  
Invitations to serve on membership committees;  
Surveys;  
Interviews w/ related stakeholders;  
AIG Task Force/Leadership Team participation.

### **Other Comments:**

### **Practice H**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Communications among stakeholders (students, parents/families, general education teachers, building administrators, gifted education teachers, central office administrators, local Board of Education members and DPI) are open and transparent. Various means that include formal face-to-face meetings, informal conversations, written and electronic messaging communicate strengths and opportunities for potential program growth. Effective and timely communications are essential to the success of an AIG program.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Feedback is solicited regularly from all stakeholders. Interactions occur in both verbal and written and electronic form; all communications encourage dialogue between/among participants. Effective communications align content with specific needs of the constituency representative(s) and provides opportunity for the school to proactively anticipate misconceptions by clarifying program services.

Effective communications among students, teachers, administrators, central office personnel and the Avery County Board of Education serve to communicate program goals and objectives. In addition, regular communications keep stakeholders informed of current research and program initiatives. Alignment between general education and gifted education is communicated and reinforced so that stakeholders respond to the face-to-face, written or electronic communication's content from the perspective of the constituency group they represent. Feedback from stakeholders provides valuable information regarding perceived effectiveness of program and service offerings.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Data/Minutes/Meeting notes from parent conferences,  
Agendas and meeting notes,  
Data/Notes from focus group meetings w/ stakeholders,  
Data gathered from focused questions at annual review and initial placement meetings,  
Blog entries,  
Surveys,  
Data from student-led conferences,  
Student Council meeting notes,  
Student groups,  
Focus groups,  
Email communications,  
School Improvement Team meetings,  
Instructional coaches team meetings,  
AIG school based identification meetings.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice I**

Reviews and revises the local AIG program and plan based on multiple sources of data for

continuous program improvement.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Critical to the effectiveness and quality of the AIG plan is the input of the various groups of people that the plan is designed to serve. Stakeholders include: students, general education and special education teachers, advanced differentiation specialists, building and central office administrators, members of the local board of education, parents of gifted students, and the community at large. Stakeholders' contributions to plan development, review and revisions are critical if the plan is one that is meaningful, relevant and effective in meeting teaching and learning needs.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** The Avery County AIG Plan reflects the work of key stakeholders from its original planning stages and continues to reflect multiple sources of data from a variety of oral and written forms as the plan is updated and revised. Through formal and informal data collection methods and sources, interests and needs of all stakeholders are addressed and every attempt to accommodate the unique learning characteristics of gifted students and those who teach them is taken under advisement. The review and revision process is an open one that takes place at least every three years. That process is an open, transparent and public one that invites and encourages all stakeholder input.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** DPI recommendations reflected in plan revision,  
Explicit plan revisions based on feedback from various stakeholders,  
EVAAS disaggregation reports,  
Formative assessment reports,  
Summative assessment reports,  
Summer staff development opportunities,  
Surveys,  
Testing and accountability disaggregated data,  
Principals' meetings agenda and meeting notes,  
Instructional coaches meeting comments/notes,  
WRESA updates,  
AIG regional roundtable meetings.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice J**

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

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** The Avery County Schools Gifted Education Plan and the program that is defined therein is accountable to the stakeholders that it serves. Specifically and purposefully designed programs and services ensure funding sources and the stakeholders that the plan addresses ensure that resources are efficiently and effectively spent and that the educational initiatives and strategies are of

the highest quality reflecting current, best practices. Evaluations are facilitated by individuals with experience and expertise in the area of gifted education. Findings are disseminated to the public in the form of media releases, open meetings, and website postings as information is gathered.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** Traditional (i.e. standardized End of Grade test reports) and nontraditional data and indicators of a successful program are defined, reported, analyzed and explained to the public. Outcomes are presented to the public as events occur and reports are generated. Findings are relevant to the ongoing evaluation process and are communicated in clear and precise terms that reflect local interests and state and local policies/regulations. At all times, data and outcome reports are sensitive and respectful taking into account the persons involved in the reports.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:**

Media releases,  
Website postings,  
Memos,  
Letters,  
Emails,  
Blogs,  
System's Facebook postings,  
Twitter posts,  
Board of Education minutes,  
Principal and faculty meeting agenda and minutes,  
Assessment reports/Data available to all stakeholders upon request.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice K**

Protects the rights of all AIG students through policies, procedures, and practices.

**This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Gifted education policies, procedures and practices as defined and executed in the Avery County Schools Gifted Education Plan are binding. Student identification, program services, advanced curriculum options, instructional strategies, student assessments, teacher and administrative professional development, and program evaluation adhere to state and local regulations. Comprehensive policies, procedures and practices are evaluated for appropriateness and effectiveness in delivering services that address and meet the unique social-emotional and learning needs of all AIG students.

**Goals:** This section does not need to be completed based on the chosen category of the practice.

**Description:** The policies, procedures and practices outline specific components that protect the rights of all AIG students. Monitoring by individuals who have expertise in the area of gifted education ensure that regulations are implemented and compliant. The district plan, updated and revised at

least every three years at a system level, looks at fairness and equity issues relating to student screening, referral and identification processes, program management and services at each grade level, student outcomes and assessment processes, student grouping procedures, professional development, counseling and guidance services, funding sources, and program evaluation.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Due process procedures written, posted online and shared among all stakeholders,

Process for documentation of complaints and subsequent LEA responses and changes posted,

Interviews with parents/guardians and school personnel where disagreements occur,

Office of Civil Rights reports,

Board of Education attorney updates,

Article 9B adherence,

Program delivered to fidelity.

**Other Comments:**

**Glossary (optional):**

**Appendix (optional):**

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