

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

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Swain 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, Swain County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Swain County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Swain County Schools' vision is that every student will graduate ready for college and/or a career. Further, we are committed to preparing all students to reach their fullest potential, to building an inspiring, engaging learning community that expects excellence, and to providing a safe and orderly learning environment where differences are respected. The district vision and beliefs support the goals of the Swain County Academically/Intellectually Gifted program. The Swain County Academically/Intellectually Gifted program aims to provide these unique learners experiences in which they gain knowledge while growing academically, as well as use their unique talents to make sound decisions to enable them to become more productive individuals. The array of services provided to them is structured to meet their varying needs. Through integration with regular educational programs these personalized, challenging educational experiences will enhance and extend the curriculum for these learners. This collaborative approach allows learning opportunities to be maximized and fosters continuous improvement of efforts. Swain County's vision for the Academically/Intellectually Gifted program includes the following:

1. identifying students who perform or show potential for performing at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment
2. providing these students with appropriate, unique learning experiences
3. providing a comprehensive and ongoing professional development for teachers
4. continuously reviewing the services provided

5. increasing collaboration between Swain County Schools AIG program and the community

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

| State Funding | Local Funding | Grant Funding | Other Funding |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| \$82403.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A

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: Although a well-designed plan for identification of academically/intellectually gifted students has been developed, rates of placements for our district have been lower than the state average for at least the past two years. Based on parent and teacher survey feedback, there is a need to ensure that all stakeholders know the process for nominating students for the AIG program and can easily access nomination forms.

Goals:

1. Mini workshops will be held for faculties at each school; workshops will provide information regarding the characteristics of gifted students and the referral/screening process.
2. Copies of the referral flowchart will be distributed to the personnel at each school.
3. Presentations related to the identification process will be scheduled for Open Houses and PTO meetings at each school.
4. Updated notebooks for each school with reference materials and nomination forms will be provided.
5. Links for digital nomination forms and other resources related to AIG will be posted on school websites.
6. A timeline will be established with expectations for completing the referral process.

Description: The Swain County School District is committed to providing an appropriate education for all students. The county has a clearly established process that outlines a comprehensive and equitable screening, referral and identification process for all grade levels. This process is detailed in the current AIG plan and is discussed and explained to parent groups and staff. Stakeholders are involved in the planning and adoption of this process. With this goal in mind, the Academically and Intellectually Gifted Program personnel strives to discover potential and outstanding academic ability by utilizing assessment data that is recognized as appropriate and valid for determining characteristic aptitudes and achievement. Identification is a three-step process that includes Screening, Referral and Eligibility Determination, and Placement in appropriate service options. Information used in each of these phases guide the decisions regarding student needs.

Individual student nominations may be submitted by school personnel, parents/guardian, peers, community members and self. Nominations are reviewed by school-based screening committees. Additional data is added to the student's profile as it becomes available. Nominations may be made at any time. The nomination form includes a subjective narrative of what behaviors have been observed that may indicate giftedness. Also requested is any available objective data.

Each spring and fall, notices are sent to all school personnel requesting nominations. At each

schools' open house a short presentation is made by the AIG Specialist describing the purpose, the criteria, and a flow chart of the decision making process for AIG services. The AIG Specialist is available after the meeting to answer questions and provide interested parties handouts with a brief description of the AIG Program including goals and criteria. A notebook is also available for parents/guardians to request further information by traditional mail or email.

Future plans include the development of an AIG link on each schools website which has a brief description of services and the process for nominations and copies of nominations forms to download.

Refer to Appendix document: "AIG Referral Flow Chart"

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. School websites with posted AIG nomination resources and forms
2. Copies of notices to teachers
3. Handouts for parents/guardians
4. Documentation of presentations at open houses and orientation
5. Notebooks with resources at each school and forms for requesting additional data
6. Articles of interest and reference websites available on the schools' networks

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: Swain County identifies students based on a multi-criteria identification process that includes not only academic/aptitude excellence but also the potential to achieve. Using more than one source and type of data to identify students creates a more balanced and comprehensive profile of student potential.

Since the school community consists of non-traditional and traditional students, measures to identify giftedness should be responsive to these diverse populations and include components that lead to identification of students whose giftedness fits into either category.

The current identification process will be expanded to include criteria for identification of Intellectually Gifted students. Working with the school-based committees and the parent advisory group, guidelines will be developed for identification of IG (Intellectually Gifted) students for placement during the 2013-2014 school year.

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

Description: Giftedness is the manifestation of ability to learn well beyond the expected level of one's

age mates. It can be discovered through assessment, evaluation and observations of a student's aptitude, achievement, outstanding student performance, behaviors and motivation. These abilities are sometimes muted in students by unfavorable environmental circumstances and confounding behaviors, and therefore need to be actively sought.

A screening of the general population will be made by the AIG Specialist and the school counselors when the results of the group cognitive skills test in grades 3 and 7 and the End of Grade/End of Course scores become available. Pretests when available may also be considered. Data can also include performance on formative assessments from STAR Reading and Math and Classscape programs. Students scoring at the 95th percentile or above in the cognitive skills assessments and at the 95th percentile on the EOG /EOC achievement tests will be added to the AIG Nomination Pool.

Classroom teachers will observe and collect documentation on students who exhibit latent or manifested potential. Written documentation of the observations of gifted traits, attributes and behaviors and intrinsic motivation of the nominees will be submitted. Teachers may make the nomination based on their own observations or may be asked to submit this data by the AIG Specialist.

Although students may be nominated on a single criterion, students are identified by evidence of need based on multiple criteria.

The objective and subjective data to be assembled will include:

Demographic information

Available achievement, performance and aptitude assessments

Observation of gifted behaviors

Anecdotal records

Writing samples

A portfolio consisting of work samples.

Questionnaires from custodial parent(s)/guardian(s)

Questionnaires from the nominated student

Both objective, subjective, traditional and nontraditional measures are used as indicators of giftedness. These include:

- Observations by classroom teachers using Frasier's Traits, Aptitudes and Behaviors Referral Form
- Indicators of student needs for differentiation based on observable characteristics
- Student performance through work samples, portfolios, grades and other authentic assessments
- Student achievement based on a standardized test (95 %tile or above)
- End of Grade/End of Course achievement
- Criterion referenced tests designed by teachers
- The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children and the Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test
- Test of Cognitive Skills by CTB-McGraw Hill administered in Grade 3 and 7
- Student motivation to learn exhibited through school and/or outside school activities
- Research-based questionnaires completed by the student
- Narratives of observed behaviors

Indications of a student's demonstrated areas of gifted strengths may be shown through work samples, portfolios, grades, and other authentic assessment strategies. In some cases, performance may be demonstrated outside the school area. Within any indicator, a single criterion may reveal a need for services; however no single criterion can eliminate a student from consideration.

Indicators of a student's commitment to pursue learning experiences may be shown through school and/or outside of school activities. With some students this area may be muted by unfavorable environmental conditions. These students are often labeled underachievers. For these students an individual case study may be important to reflect the student's specific areas of need.

Refer to Appendix document: "The Gifted Learner: A definition and Multiple Indicators of Giftedness"

- Planned Sources of Evidence:**
1. Student nomination forms
 2. Copies of existing data available from the students cumulative folder or other sources
 3. Student and parent/guardian questionnaires
 4. Student portfolio of work samples
 5. AIG School Teams minutes and notes of meetings
 6. Student AIG folders containing identification information

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 Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Traditionally under-represented populations are represented in our AIG population. Nominations are actively sought and are received from all interested parties. Swain County's largest minority population is Native American students. Through quarterly Native American parent meetings, program components and processes will be explained.

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

Description: A wide variety of achievement assessments, attributes and cognitive function information are used by the Swain County AIG Program to identify gifted students. The School-level AIG Screening Team takes into consideration both objective and subjective information for multiple sources. The variety of sources involved in the nominating/screening procedure may include personnel and information from a second language teacher, exceptional children's staff, Native American tutors and others familiar with the child both in and out of the school setting. Information on confounding behaviors is shared on the district website, handouts, informational emails, publicized resources, websites, personal contact and workshops on gifted students in under represented populations. Information is available and publicized for confounding groups of gifted students

including but not exclusive to underachieving, English as a second language, attention deficits, Asperger syndrome, and learning disabled. Assessments in the student's native language are available for use as needed.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. AIG child count reflective of each school's demographics
2. Screening, referral, and identification trends
3. Samples of identification using non-traditional criteria
4. Posted and distributed information resources
5. Documented testing accommodations

Other Comments:

Practice D

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: An emphasis will be made to standardize the screening, referral, and identification process throughout the LEA and increase the consistency of implementation. The practices are in place but not consistently understood across the LEA according to survey responses. While procedures and documents have previously been developed, there is a need to ensure that the process occurs in an efficient and timely manner for all students.

Mini workshops on identification processes have not been scheduled and/or provided during the past year. New personnel, especially, need to be trained in the referral/screening process. Parent and teacher surveys also indicate concerns with the length of time occurring between nomination and placement.

Transfer students may not be recognized as identified AIG until parents ask about services. A systematic process for early identification of transfer AIG students will be developed.

Goals: 1. Schedule and deliver mini-workshops for teachers to ensure an understanding of the characteristics of gifted students and the identification and placement process
2. Provide copies of the referral flowchart to all personnel at each school
3. Include AIG reference articles, resources, and forms in faculty handbooks at each school and on school and/or district websites
4. Establish a time-line to set expectations for timely completion of placements
5. Identify and utilize a school site contact for distribution and collections of letters to and from parents
6. Review nomination and placement data at the end of each semester
7. Develop a plan for recognition of AIG students who transfer into our school system by data managers and/or guidance counselors and for communication of information to AIG specialist and regular education teachers

Description: Consistency of the identification procedures throughout the Swain County School system ensures fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory detection of the gifted population. A complete

AIG Plan notebook containing the identification procedures notebook is available to all principals and administrators.

AIG teams at each school are very familiar with the criteria and procedures. A standard form for the county documents the student profile and the detailed progression for each student considered for placement. Sections are dated and signed by the committee when they are completed. Recommendations and decisions are also recorded, dated, and signed. This form is kept in the student file whether placement or non-placement is decided. Placement folders are secured in a locked file in each of the schools and transferred as the student advances. Non-placement documents are archived and are also moved to the next school when the student progresses.

The flowchart of procedures is shared with all administration and faculty at each of the four schools. The chart clearly delineates the order of the steps to be taken. While all of these components are developed, it is the interpretation and implementation of the process that needs to be strengthened.

Refer to Appendix Document: "Identification of Students for Differentiated Services"

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. AIG Notebooks, Faculty Handbooks, Websites with referral information and forms
2. Flowchart of the identification procedure
3. Minutes of school based AIG Committees
4. AIG folders of students with nomination, referral, and placement documents
5. Folders on non-placement students
6. Semester review of placement data using tracking document

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: Written policies, established forms, and printed procedures for resolving disagreements ensure the consistency of policy and practices and safeguards the rights of AIG students and their parents/families throughout Swain County Schools for the AIG Program. The safeguards are developed and clearly stated and communicated to parents.

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

Description: Swain County's Plan delineates all policies, forms and procedures for resolving disagreements. The Program Notebooks are distributed throughout the school system to the principals and are available for the faculty and staff.

Procedures to Resolve Disagreement is included in written communication with the

parents/guardians. This written communication is included in the Notification of Nomination, Consent to Assess, copies of the placement papers and copies of DEP and/or GEP. If a reassessment is needed the Procedures to Resolve Disagreements are also attached. Copies will be found on the AIG web link at each school.

Any transfer student to Swain County School that indicates that he/she was receiving differentiated instruction in an AIG Program is added to the Nomination Pool to be evaluated for eligibility for AIG service in Swain County. The AIG Specialist is informed that a student has enrolled and has evidence of prior participation in a program for academically and/or intellectually gifted students. The guidance counselor or school secretary requests records from the student's previous school. Upon receipt of the student's records, the AIG Identification Team will review the records for local eligibility. Placement is based on the individual student's need for differentiated education and follows general placement procedures. Students must meet local eligibility standards to receive differentiated and enrichment services. If no records of a previous placement are received the student is placed in the Nomination Pool. The procedure is the same as a new nomination.

The Process to Resolve Differences is comprised of the following information:

APPEALS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF ACADEMICALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED STUDENTS

Parents, guardians and teachers of academically and intellectually gifted students should work together as partners to nurture the growth and progress of children. Conferences and open communications are encouraged in order to maximize the potential of the student.

According to Chapter 115-C, Article 9B of the General Statute of North Carolina a parent or guardian who disagrees with a school's Academically Gifted Team decision regarding referral, placement, or service options, are guaranteed the due process procedures following:

Step I. Parent/guardian may request a conference with the Academically and Intellectually Gifted Team for Gifted Education, known as the AIG Team.

Step II. The parent/guardian may appeal the AIG Team's decision to the Swain County Schools' Academically Gifted/Exceptional Children's Coordinator.

Step III. The parent/guardian may next appeal to the Superintendent of the Swain County Schools or his designee.

Step IV. The parent/guardian may then petition the administrative law judge for a contested case hearing.

SWAIN COUNTY SCHOOLS ACADEMICALLY and INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED STUDENTS.

Step I. AIG Team Conference

A. Parent/Guardian may make a request for a conference with the AIG Team to discuss the

concerns. (A written request is required. Please keep written request for documentation.)

B. School-Based Committee (known as SBC) and the AIG Team, reviews the student's record and their previous referral, identification, and service option decisions. The committee may gather additional information about the student from teachers and parents as needed. The Individual Student Profile may be updated.

C. The AIG Team and SBC grant the conference within 10 school days of request and responds to the parent/guardian and principal in writing within 5 school days prior to conference.

IF THE DISAGREEMENT IS NOT RESOLVED AT THE AIG/SBC TEAM CONFERENCE, THEN PROCEED TO STEP II—APPEAL TO AIG COORDINATOR.

Step II. Appeal to AIG Coordinator

A. Parent/guardian may appeal the AIG/SBC Team's decision in writing to the AIG Coordinator within 10 days of receiving the response.

B. AIG Coordinator shall review the grievance within 10 days of receipt of appeal.

C. AIG Coordinator responds in writing to the parent/guardian and principal concerning the outcome of the review within 10 school days.

IF GRIEVANCE IS NOT RESOLVED AT STEP II, THEN PROCEED TO STEP III – APPEAL TO SUPERINTENDENT.

STEP III. Appeal to Superintendent

A. Parent/guardian may appeal in writing the decision of the AIG Coordinator to the Superintendent or his designee within 10 days of receiving the response.

B. Superintendent reviews the grievance within 10 days of the receipt of the appeal.

C. Superintendent responds in writing concerning the outcome within 10 school days to the parent/guardian and principal.

IN THE EVENT THAT THE LOCAL GREIVANCE PROCEDURE FAILS TO RESOLVE THE DISAGREEMENT, THEN THE STATE LEVEL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED.

STEP IV – State Level Grievance Procedure

A. Parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of chapter 150 B of the General Statutes. The scope of the review shall be limited to:

\ whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as a high achiever or an academically gifted student.

\ whether the local plan has been implemented appropriately in regard to the child

B. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings of fact and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on all parties, and is not subject to further review under Article of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

Refer to AIG document: "Appeals Procedure for Parents/Guardians"

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Procedures to Resolve Disagreements are included in the AIG Plan
2. The Procedures to Resolve Disagreements are available for all personnel and staff in the Swain school system
3. The Procedures to Resolve Disagreement are disseminated to parents/guardians
4. Documented process of an actual grievance
5. Documented transfer from other LEAs with placement papers and GEP/DEP requested
6. Documented annual meetings with parents

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: An AIG folder is maintained for each student identified. This plan includes the identification process and service options selected for individual students. Annual parent meetings are the goal of the AIG program but have not been completed for every student every year. Multiple formats of AIG documents exist and should be reviewed and revised to eliminate redundancy.

Goals: 1. Every AIG student will meet annually with the AIG Specialist to update accomplishments, education plans, contact information and other relevant data.
2. Every parent/guardian will meet annually with the AIG Specialist to update the education plans of their children.
3. Each teacher that is responsible for differentiation in the classroom based on the areas of strength in reading, math, or both, will contact the parents to develop, confer and sign the DEP. A copy will be kept by the teacher, updated and filed in the students AIG folder annually.
4. Complete an AIG folder audit to ensure documentation of identification data and service options for all students.

Description: The AIG specialist begins a folder for each student who is nominated for AIG placement. The folders include the original nomination form, all documents from the school-based committees actions, additional testing data, communications with parents, and differentiated education plans. These folders are maintained by the AIG specialist in locked storage at each school. Folders are transferred to the new school as the students transition through the grades. Ideally, information and DEP are updated annually.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Student folders with identification and screening information
2. Differentiated Education Plan or Group Education Plan included in individual folders
3. Notation and summary of parent meetings
4. Updates to the child's data as it becomes available
5. Meeting notes on conferences directly related to a particular AIG student

6. Results of folder audit

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County Schools heterogeneously place students in grades K-8. The teaching staff is aware of the identified abilities of the AIG students in their general education classes. Informal and formal assessment methods are used to determine learning needs according to the Common Core and North Carolina Essential Standards curriculum. The AIG specialist serves as a resource for regular education teachers in choosing appropriate strategies for differentiation within the classroom.

Student, parent, and student survey feedback indicate the desire for more close alignment of AIG activities with Common Core and North Carolina Essential Standards curriculum providing enrichment and extension related to the core curriculum. Self-assessment discussions at the school level identified the lack of collaborative planning between regular education and AIG specialist to be a limiting factor for meeting this standard.

- Goals:**
1. Include collaborative planning time in schedule for AIG specialist (Grade level meetings at least once per month).
 2. Have regular education teachers submit pacing guides for CC and NC ES curriculum to AIG specialist at the beginning of each semester.
 3. Use half-day release days for professional development for teachers on differentiation of instruction for AIG students; include in-class support for implementation
 4. Enhance collaborative development of Differentiated Education Plans including extensions and accelerations within the classroom for AIG students.
 5. Provide regular updates to parents regarding activities in AIG class, correlations to core curriculum, progress report on student performance, and resources for parents to use for reinforcement of AIG activities.

Description: Available service delivery options provide the framework for selection of activities to enrich and extend the curriculum. These options are leveled from activities that would occur in the general education classroom to independent studies that students would completely outside of class and at their own pace. Topics are selected by students in the areas of language arts, math or other subject area content based on their interests and with support from the AIG specialist.

Student placement is based on the individual student's need for a differentiated education. The emphasis for placement is to match students with educational experiences that will afford them the opportunity to receive instruction on an appropriate level so they will experience and demonstrate growth in academic subjects and enrichment programs.

The regular education teacher has the responsibility of appropriately differentiating the academic curriculum for gifted students according to their identified strengths. Differentiation beyond the core curriculum is possible in all subject areas. Adjustments to the standard curriculum will be made to meet the learning capacity and the rate of learning of each student. Study habits, interests, past achievement and current needs are always considered.

In grades K-6, reading instructional groups, including direct instruction and targeted assistance groups (TAG) are based on on-going formative assessments and school-wide collaborative planning by teachers. Students receive instruction in groups with other students with similar achievement levels in order to maximize growth and continuous improvement. These grouping patterns have been enhanced by the availability of appropriate assessment tools such as DIBELS and STAR assessment programs.

High school and middle school students are able to self-select or to be recommended for participation in advanced courses. Middle school students have the option of taking two high school courses during their eighth grade year: Common Core Math I and Earth/Environmental Science. This acceleration provides more opportunity for AIG students to pursue advanced, honors, and Advanced Placement courses during high school. High school students have an array of honors, advanced, and AP options in many subject areas from which to choose.

The matching of the AIG student with the appropriate learning environments, content modifications and special programs will be determined by each school's AIG Team. This is based on demonstrated identified abilities. These may be modified to meet the student's current needs in a conference with the classroom teacher, AIG Specialist, and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). There are service delivery and differentiation options in the areas of learning environment, content, and instructional strategies available at all levels. The AIG Program serves as a resource for and supplement to a differentiated academic education.

Refer to Appendix documents: "Service Delivery Options"

- Planned Sources of Evidence:**
1. Differentiated Education Plans
 2. Sample curriculum units, lessons and activities
 3. Examples of students work and projects
 4. Parent updates and communication products

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Some differentiation practices are used in general education classrooms, including the school-wide instructional groups implemented for reading instruction in the elementary schools. Those that are implemented are effective and meet the range of learning needs of AIG students. Several other techniques could be developed to further meet the needs of identified students. With

the implementation of new curriculum standards during the present school year, teachers have identified the need for training and support for differentiation within the classroom. Professional development will be provided to develop teacher knowledge of the wide range of learning needs in their classrooms and how to differentiate to meet those needs.

- Goals:**
1. To provide professional development for general education teachers on effective instructional practices that address a range of learning styles and abilities
 2. To provide teachers with resources for effective differentiation, including model lessons and instructional materials appropriate for AIG learners
 3. To share differentiation strategies to modify core curriculum with regular classroom teachers

Description: Differentiation strategies being utilized for elementary and middle school students include:

1. Modification of assignments-AIG students are provided class time to pursue a related alternative assignment such as an independent project on a related topic that allows a deeper, more complex study of core curriculum content. Often the AIG student presents his or her findings to the class which provides enrichment of the topic for all of the students as well as bolsters the presentation skills of the AIG student.
2. Modification of questions-Teachers may use the modified Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide to develop questions that require higher levels of cognition such as analyzing and evaluating that are included in most lessons.
3. Use of open-ended questions-These questions stimulate higher order thinking skills and provide an opportunity for expressing diversity of opinion. Students develop greater ability in defending their positions and conclusions and greater appreciation for the differing opinions of others.
4. Use of Learning contracts-Teachers use pre-test results to tailor an enrichment contract for students that already have acquired the basic knowledge and concept being introduced. The contract provides an opportunity for gifted students to build on the prerequisite knowledge to tackle challenging new content or problems.
5. Cluster grouping-Teachers provide subject-specific small groups for students with similar abilities to promote more appropriate pace and/or level of instruction for AIG students. This grouping strategy can increase peer interaction for AIG students.
6. Acceleration of content-Middle school students may take high school level math and science courses, generally during the eighth grade year. Students receive high school credit, but their grades are not included in their high school GPA. Occasionally, younger students have been placed in instructional groups, particularly for math, in a grade or two above their age mates as middle school students.
7. Honors and Advanced Placement classes-During high school, students may be placed with other students of like abilities either through advisement or self-selection to pursue accelerated instruction. These courses provide a more demanding curriculum often including more rigorous pace. Another benefit of the classes is to provide an opportunity for younger, capable students to study and interact with an older peer group whose maturity level more closely matches their own. Advanced Placement

courses provide the opportunity to accrue college credit during high school based on performance of national exams.

8. Dual enrollment/College Course work-High school students have several options, both in-house, on-line, and off-campus, for pursuing college level course work through the local community college and the state university system.

9. Early admission to kindergarten and grade skipping-For highly gifted individuals, the district allows for acceleration to higher grades than the like-age peer group when it is determined that the child has the pre-requisite skills and achievement level to be successful in the new setting. The determination is made by the principal in cooperation with the parent and teachers who weigh ability, achievement, and social/maturity factors in making a final decision.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Differentiated Education Plans

2. Sample curriculum units or lessons

3. Sample student contracts

4. Records of professional development opportunities and participation

5. Procedures and notes for acceleration decisions

Other Comments:

Practice C

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: While the AIG specialist provides supplemental resources that add to the general education curriculum and instruction, there is a need for greater involvement and outreach into other available opportunities for Swain County AIG students to enhance and increase their strengths, including competitions, regional enrichment opportunities, and community-based learning experiences.

Goals: 1. Identify competitions available

2. Discuss with students and parents resources required

3. Select at least one competition to enter

4. Develop list of community-based resources

Description: The AIG specialist provides a variety of additional resources for the general education teachers but there is a need for selecting competitive academic programs (Odyssey of the Mind, Math Counts, etc.) that will allow AIG students to stretch their academic skills.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Locate resources/sponsors for competition

2. Description of teams developed

3. List of community resources/opportunities

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County Schools provide a variety of opportunities for students to develop and practice 21st century real world skills. The system's technology resources are ranked high for small school systems. This allows Swain student's to develop skills necessary for future school endeavors. However, our district is recognizing that having available technology resources does not always translate into implementation at a high level within the classroom.

Goals:

1. Continue to refine the district's definition and expectations for 21st century learning environments
2. Provide specific professional development activities for implementation of new and creative methods and strategies (flipped classrooms, Edmodo, STEM entrepreneurship integration, for example)
3. Develop a list of guest speakers, field trips, and service learning opportunities aligned to content standards and program goals

Description: The implementation of Common Core and North Carolina Essential standards has helped to raise awareness of the many aspects of 21st century content and skills. Each school has a technology facilitator available to assist with integrating technology into instructional practice. The technology facilitators provide training as well as in-class support for implementation. Teachers are also working to incorporate more types of real-world experiences and project-based learning activities into instruction. Additional professional development and in-class support for new methodologies will be important in supporting the implementation of these practices.

Some options from which students are able to select and/or participate to meet their unique needs include:

1. Dual-enrollment in community college course work, both on-line and on-campus options
2. North Carolina Virtual Public School
3. Field trips offered through regular education, the AIG program, and extracurricular clubs
4. Guest speakers
5. Mentoring experiences
6. Service learning projects
7. Extracurricular clubs related to their academic and career interests

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Record of relevant professional development participation
2. List of guest speakers, field trips, etc., with curricular alignments

Other Comments:

Practice E

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County Schools uses a variety of instructional assessments to assist with differentiating learning in classrooms. These include STAR Reading and Math, DIBELS, ClassScape, cognitive tests and teacher-developed assessments. EVAAS predictors are used to identify students for early intervention. The EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT suite have added to the available tools for middle school and high school formative assessment and planning for differentiation.

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

Description: Swain County Schools has recently purchased assessment tools including STAR Reading and Math as well as the Accelerated Reader option for STAR at the elementary level. The process of developing common benchmarks assessments to use district-wide is a needed next step. These assessments will be used to differentiate learning for all students based on what skills are missing and what skills students have already mastered. Based on these assessments, teachers will create lessons that match student needs or potential. This process should allow our AIG students to move at their own pace through the curriculum. The process has been highly successful for facilitating differentiated grouping and instruction for elementary English Language Arts. The district is exploring the establishment of data teams and/or PLC's to more effectively utilize the data to differentiate instruction within the classroom. The district will develop procedures based on state guidelines for granting credit by demonstrated mastery during the 2013-2016 plan cycle.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Records and minutes of data team meetings
2. Professional development offerings in data use and differentiation
3. Benchmark assessment - results
4. Samples of classroom lessons that expand learning based on benchmarks

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: Swain County Schools provides gifted learners processes and skills to support their growth in social and emotional areas. This occurs through support of the AIG

specialist in resource classes and also from counselors at each school. Student survey results indicate that AIG students value the culture of the AIG resource class and the opportunity to interact with student of like abilities and interests.

In order to develop the academic and intellectual potential of the gifted learner, the social-emotional development must be highly operable and well integrated. These students require help in learning to accept themselves as they are, and to appreciate the ways in which they are both similar to and different from others. It is the obligation of the educators of the gifted to create opportunities for them to experience and value themselves as unique persons.

The degree to which their social and emotional needs are met strengthens the ability of AIG students to think at higher levels. In response to that need, the Swain County AIG Program offers support to foster their development in this area. Educational planning for this development must stem from the characteristics of the children served and the special needs implied by those characteristics.

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

Description: In order to develop the academic and intellectual potential of the gifted learner, the social-emotional development must be highly operable and well integrated. Some generalizations may be made but are seldom applicable to any one gifted learner.

Generalization of the gifted learner include:

- perception of greater personal freedom
- value cooperative and democratic forms in interactions though less willing to compromise
- tend to be more independent and less conforming
- often show leadership abilities in community projects and concerns
- generally aware of morality and justice at an earlier age
- prefer intellectual peers to chronological age peers

Resource - Growing Up Gifted by Barbara Clark

These children require help in learning to accept themselves as they are, and to appreciate the ways in which they are both similar to and different from others. It is the obligation of the educators of the gifted to create opportunities for them to experience and value themselves as unique persons. The degree to which their social and emotional needs are met strengthens their ability to think at higher levels.

In response to that need the Swain County AIG Program offers support to foster their development in this area. Educational planning for this development must stem from the characteristics of the children served and the special needs implied by those characteristics.

Strategies used in the AIG classes that address these needs include:

1. School counselors who provide a valuable resource for individual and small group counseling and grade level activities.
2. Units investigated in the AIG Enrichment/Extension Classes may include:

- a. "Creative Problem Solving for Kids" Target Group: grades 3, 4 & 5
Focus: teaching children how to think and apply their thoughts toward a desired outcome
 - b. "5 Traits of Competent Kids" Target Group: grades 3 & 4
Focus: understanding and accepting self as having learning differences
 - c. "The Gifted Kid Survival Guide" Target Group: grades 4 & 5
Focus: understanding and accepting self as having learning differences
 - d. "Too Young for This, Too Old for That" Target Group: Grade 6
Focus: adjustment to middle school and pre-adolescence
 - e. "Psychology for Kids I" Target Group: Grade 7
Focus: assessing personal style including social, creative, thinking and learning styles, attitudes, and feelings
 - f. "Psychology for Kids II" Target Group: Grade 7
Focus: discovering other peoples' beliefs & attitudes, perceptions, differences, styles of learning, etc.
 - g. "7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens" Target Group: grade 8
Focus: step-by-step guide to help teens and apply principle centered to improve self-image, build friendships, achieve goals, get along with parents and peer and apply principle centered living in all areas
 - h. "Doorways to Decision Making" Target Group: grade 8
Focus: teaching children practical decision making strategies
 - i. "Who Moved My Cheese" Target Group: grade 8
Focus: accepting change, risk taking
3. Resource books including A Handbook for Counseling the Gifted and Talented, by Barbara Kerr, PhD.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Lessons/units introduced
2. Co-teaching units between the AIG specialist and school counselors

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 Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Regular classroom teachers of young (K-3) students differentiate instruction based on on-going formative assessment of performance in reading and mathematics for all students. Because of

limited staffing, no specialized program for K-2 students is available. In general, K - 2 students exhibiting traits that possibly might identify them as gifted are provided individual programming/classroom support developed with cooperation of school principals.

The district will be considering moving the group screening ability assessment to the second grade year in order to facilitate earlier identification of students. Service model for these younger students would be addressed through in-class activities promoting higher order thinking skills, creativity, and advanced content supported by the AIG program.

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

Description: The majority of student referrals for AIG placement happen as a result of general screening of ability assessments that are administered early in the 3rd grade year. The AIG specialist and third grade teachers develop a list of potential candidates for consideration by the school-based committee. During the remainder of the year, these students may participate in an enrichment class with the AIG specialist in which observations may be documented to add to the objective data provided by grades and EOG results at the end of the third grade year. Ideally, at the end of the third grade year the screening committee will consider formal nominations for students. Those students who are placed begin receiving specialized services through a pull-out class during their fourth and fifth grade years.

Sometimes, younger students have been referred as a result of individual test results obtained in the process of a referral for the EC program or independently requested by parents for some other reason.

The district AIG plan does not define a formal process for proactively seeking referrals prior to the third grade year. However, individuals have been considered for early entrance to kindergarten or for grade acceleration. These procedures are facilitated by the school principals, often in cooperation and consultation with the AIG specialist.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Notes from meetings related to screening assessment decision
2. PD for K-2 teachers related to inclusion of differentiated/accelerated activities in regular classrooms
3. Data related to early admissions and grade or content acceleration for younger students

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County strives to support an array of services of differentiated experiences for the AIG population. The system has developed a multi-tiered process of criteria and sources of

information to match students to the appropriate service option.

Based on the self-assessment process, as well as stakeholder surveys, communication among all personnel concerning AIG students must be increased and improved. Professional development linked directly to characteristics of gifted learners, curriculum compacting, content differentiation, and identification will provide a broader base for student experiences within the general education classrooms. Teachers will develop a better understanding of best practices that should be used in teaching gifted learners.

Goals: 1. Set schedules for formal collaboration times between AIG specialist and general education teachers

- a. Grade level meetings with general education teachers at least monthly
 - b. Collaboration meetings including support staff at least quarterly
2. Provide professional development opportunities sponsored by AIG program for regular education teachers on differentiation strategies for AIG students

Description: While Swain County has a well developed AIG plan, the system struggles to provide requested support due to limited resources and time. The consistency of implementation and understanding of the AIG program across the system is an area that needs to be strengthened.

- Planned Sources of Evidence:** 1. Schedule for AIG specialist with time for grade level and collaboration meetings indicated
2. Notes from collaborative meetings
 3. Sign-in sheets and agendas for PD offerings

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County develops specific plans for each identified student based on their unique needs and characteristics. This plan is updated at key transition points for students. This process will continue to be implemented.

- Goals:** 1. Strengthen the collaborative approach to DEP development with parent, student, regular education, and AIG specialist involvement
2. Review plans at least annually with parents and students
 3. Provide vertical collaboration for teachers serving AIG students at key transition points

Description: Differentiated Education Plans are developed cooperatively by the classroom teacher

and the AIG specialist, who review the plan with parents during conferences.

Differentiated Education Plan components include:

1. Basic student information and rationale for selection
2. Specific goals and objectives to be achieved
3. Types of assessments that will be used to document growth
4. Service delivery, instruction management, and process differentiation options
5. Documentation of appropriate participants in the decision making process

Refer to Appendix documents: "AIG Forms"

- Planned Sources of Evidence:**
1. Individual student AIG plans
 2. Documentation of parent conferencing for DEP development and review

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: Swain County School employs an AIG specialist to serve as the lead AIG educator for the county. The AIG specialist is an experienced AIG-licensed educator.

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

Description: Swain County School employs an AIG specialist to serve as the lead AIG educator for the county. In the present program design, the AIG specialist directly serves students in grades 3-8 through pull-out enrichment classes and indirectly provides services through consultation and support of general education elementary teachers who plan differentiated learning experiences for AIG students in their classrooms at other grade levels.

There are at least two other AIG-licensed teachers in the district. Professional development opportunities in differentiation strategies for AIG students are offered and encouraged for all faculty members. Tuition reimbursement is available for teachers who wish to take college course work toward add-on AIG certification.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. AIG Specialist's resume
2. Personnel file information
3. Licensure information

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: The AIG-licensed specialist works exclusively with students who have been recommended for AIG services. The specialist's schedule includes three forty-five minute elective periods at the middle school, one class for each grade level, along with two forty-five minute planning periods each day to support the middle school program. The specialist then teaches two afternoons each week at the the two elementary schools providing forty-minute pull-out enrichment classes for fourth and fifth grade groups. One afternoon each week is reserved for collaborating with regular

education teachers, conferencing with parents, and completing referral, placement, and service option documentation.

Self-assessment discussions have resulted in a renewal of commitment to provide more support for high school AIG students.

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

Description: The AIG specialist works directly with the identified students in Swain County. The format is pull-out enrichment classes in the elementary schools. Although a yearly academic focus is chosen, social and emotional needs can also be addressed as they deal with the "label" of being gifted, peer interactions, working in a heterogeneous classroom and the homogeneous enrichment classes. Family and peer relationships are the subject of a concentrated mini-unit every year. As situations arise during the school year, the focus may shift to other topics to meet the immediate needs of learners.

In the middle school, there is an AIG elective that focuses on different topics each semester. Topics include: subject matter that is teacher selected, student suggested topics, specific academic skills, and higher order thinking skills and problem solving. Group, small group, and individual projects are woven throughout each semester class. Mini-units focus on social and emotional needs such as stress reduction, study skills, critical problem solving, decision making and executive skills used in planning and directing activities.

Swain County High School students, with the support of the guidance counselor, self-select advanced level classes and acceleration options such as college course work. Plans are in place to identify high school faculty members who will serve as academic advisors for AIG students in grades 9-12.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Class schedules
2. Yearly focus and plan
3. Daily lesson plans

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: Swain County is committed to developing collaborative efforts of all Swain County personnel to meet the needs of all students including AIG students. Personnel preparation is essential for providing a comprehensive program for gifted learners and implementation of the program for academically or intellectually gifted students. This need is met through early release days for all personnel to participate in professional development developed around key essential elements of learning and student development. Staff also select conferences and specific training opportunities that meet the needs of their individual growth plans.

- Goals:**
1. Establish a teacher leader team for in-district differentiation professional development
 2. Deliver training and in-class support for differentiation
 3. Provide resources for enrichment and extension of common core lessons

Description: Swain County
Professional Development
Preparation Plan K-12

All Teachers K-12, Special Education Teachers, AIG Teachers

- Examine and become familiar with the revised AIG Plan
- Characteristics of gifted learners
- Screening, referral and evaluation process
- Social and emotional needs of a gifted learners
- Curriculum differentiation
- Appropriate AP training / seminars
- Promote acquisition of media to meet the needs of gifted learners

Communicate to staff inservice professional development and conference opportunities:

- Offered through other education sources (such as those sponsored by the Western Regional AIG Coordinators Roundtable Group)
- Distance learning through universities such as UNCC and NCSSM
- Promote attendance at North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented and National Association for Gifted Children conferences

- Planned Sources of Evidence:**
1. Professional development opportunities offered during early release days that emphasize AIG
 2. Attendance at state/regional AIG professional development

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 Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Due to limited resources, Swain County Schools is not always able to place AIG students in

general education classrooms with teachers holding AIG add-on certification. The AIG specialist works with general education classroom teachers to develop learning opportunities to support the unique needs of AIG learners within their classrooms.

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

Description: Swain County has developed a general chart of responsibilities that outlines the "who" and "what" piece of AIG programming. This provides a framework of responsibilities. While there are few teachers with AIG add-on areas, the system would provide funding through professional development dollars for any teacher that requests to add this area to their license. Tuition reimbursement is available for two classes per school year for college/university work for all teachers.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Prior approval request for activities that add to teachers' knowledge of AIG
2. Request for funding for AIG add-on certification

Other Comments:

Practice E

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: To promote the growth and development of education in Swain County, all employees are expected to participate in activities designed to increase their job competencies and to foster the concept of a learning community. Professional development will be aligned with the Swain County Schools Strategic Plan and with individual School Improvement Plans.

There is a need for personnel to be more aware of the local AIG program goals and to strengthen knowledge and skills in order to enhance implementation of differentiation strategies which facilitate academic growth in gifted learners.

Goals: 1. Provide professional development that includes specific information about differentiation for AIG students to promote growth for these students
2. Provide professional development for reading strategies that align the district's 90% Reading Initiative with the AIG program goals

Description: Swain County aligns professional development with current system goals and state requirements. Each teacher develops a Professional Development Plan in collaboration with a building-level administrator; teacher-developed Professional Development Plans must align with district and school improvement goals. Administrators and teachers may also include goals to address individual needs for growth in professional practice.

In-district professional development is offered through various formats, including early release days throughout the school year. On these days, teachers are able to select various topics aligned with

district priorities for study with approval from the Director of Instruction. Sessions solely focused on AIG students may not always be offered, but the topics generally include areas that would help create differentiated learning for all students.

Additionally opportunities for professional development are offered and encouraged through the Western Regionally Education Service Agency. AIG Roundtables and AIG-related workshops are offered frequently. The AIG Coordinator, AIG specialist, and regular education teachers have all attended WRESA-sponsored activities for educators of AIG students.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Summary of professional development activities
2. Evaluation/feedback for PD activities related to AIG goals

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: Swain County teachers participate in continuous, job-embedded, high quality professional development that reflects educational best practice. The 21st century skills of information, technology and communications (ICT) literacy, global and cultural awareness, civic literacy, formative and authentic assessments, as well as learning for life in our times are modeled for students. Professional development needs are assessed, opportunities offered, and the process aligned from the classroom level (teachers' Professional Development Plans,) to our school improvement planning, strategic planning at the district level, and all the way to our North Carolina State Board of Education's priorities in order to meet the needs of students and teachers' own professional growth.

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

Description: Swain County is committed to developing collaborative efforts of all Swain County personnel to meet the needs of all students. Personnel preparation is essential for providing and implementing comprehensive programming for academically or intellectually gifted students by participation in activities designed to increase their job competencies and to foster the concept of a learning community.

School personnel receive support and training in the form of on-going professional development in the areas of characteristics and needs of gifted learners and appropriate instructional strategies. Gifted education knowledge and practices are disseminated, supported, and encouraged. The professional development plan aligns with the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) and North Carolina Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program Standards, the Swain County Schools Strategic Plan and the individual School Improvement Plans. Swain County is implementing the Common Core Standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics and North Carolina Essentials Standards for other curriculum areas. The focus is on improving North Carolina's education system to ensure that students graduate with the skills needed for success in college and/or a career.

The goals of professional development are:

To recognize the traits, attributes and behaviors of traditional and non-traditional gifted learners.

To incorporate the research based best practices in differentiation of curriculum and instruction by all teachers.

To implement curriculum modification to add depth and breath to the Common Core/NC Essential Standards curriculum.

To advance awareness of the learning and social emotional needs of gifted learners.

To increase awareness of gifted behaviors among under served populations including culturally diverse, learning disabled, underachieving, at-risk and/or socio-economically disadvantaged students.

Professional development for the AIG Specialist includes regional meetings, conventions, professional books, and webinars. These opportunities and resources are available from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the National Association for Gifted Children, North Carolina Association for Gifted and Talented and Supporting the Needs of the Gifted Organization, Council for Exceptional Children and others.

This system-wide program of professional development is sponsored by the Swain County School Board to provide a variety of relevant learning opportunities. In addition, each individual school designs and arranges training experiences to meet its own particular needs. Local expertise will be utilized to the fullest possible extent to meet specific professional development needs, and opportunities for follow-up and implementation of newly acquired skills will be provided.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Documentation of professional development accessed from professional associations and sources connected to academic or intellectually gifted learners.
2. Documentation of professional development with AIG related topics.

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The district already has in place numerous opportunities for teachers to collaborate. The AIG specialist will be included in those opportunities to further develop the general understanding of the AIG program and develop additional strategies for extension of the curriculum through collaboration.

Goals: 1. To increase communication between the AIG specialist and teachers serving the gifted learners
2. To determine common goals for the AIG specialist and general education teachers
3. AIG specialist will participate in at least one collaborative meeting with each grade level per month
4. AIG specialist will participate in at least one general collaboration meeting per quarter

Description: The responsibility for providing gifted services is shared by the regular education

teachers and the AIG Specialist through collaboration and consultation.

Differentiation is the foundation on which the gifted education program is based. Curriculum and instruction must be modified on a regular basis to address the widely diverse needs of gifted learners. Learners differ in important ways and must be engaged in instruction through different learning modalities, interests, and degrees of complexity. Through collaboration regular education teachers and the AIG Specialist share their expertise to better serve students.

Typically the primary responsibility of general education teachers is to use their skills to instruct students in curricula dictated by the school system or state. Typically the primary responsibility of the AIG specialist in the Swain County system is to provide experiences in conceptual learning; problem based learning; real-life simulation or actual experiences; high-level critical and creative thinking; creative problem solving, higher complexity of thinking; intelligent behavior and addressing social and emotional issues. In the AIG enrichment classes the individual learner's needs often dictate the curricula.

The intention of this collaboration is to combine expertise to best meet the needs of our gifted learners.

- Planned Sources of Evidence:**
1. Notes from collaboration meetings
 2. Jointly planned and implemented general education and AIG projects
 3. Evidence of AIG classroom extensions

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Programs and services for students in Swain County are clearly defined through the system's service delivery options. These options are defined as to setting, content, process and enrichment opportunities. The district has concentrated specific service options in grades 4-8. There is a need to explore ways to strengthen support for service options for students in grades K-2 and 9-12.

Goals: 1. Study the possibility of administering general screening assessments for AIG during second grade to facilitate earlier identification of AIG students
2. Establish a structure of support for high school AIG students

Description: Service and Learning Environment Options

Elementary Grades K-3

Early admission to kindergarten

Heterogeneous grouping in regular classroom

Flexible grouping within regular class setting

Technology supported learning

AIG Teacher as a resource and support for the classroom teacher

Across grade/team level grouping

Grade or subject level acceleration

After school enrichment programs

Elementary Grades 4-5

Differentiated Education Plan in subject of identified strengths

Heterogeneous grouping in regular classroom

Flexible grouping within regular class setting

Technology supported learning

AIG Teacher as a resource and support for the classroom teacher in the identified areas of strength of the student

Across grade/team level grouping

Independent Study, or Independent Instruction

Grade or subject level acceleration

After school enrichment programs

Enrichment classes led by the AIG Specialist focus on in-depth study of one or two subjects per year. Components of the enrichment classes include issues in social and emotional growth of the student. Areas addressed include 5 Traits of Competent Kids on understanding and accepting self as having learning differences. Also included is the use of The Gifted Kids Survival Guide on understanding the gifted label and dealing with common issues of many gifted children. Peer relationships and teacher-student relationships are also addressed.

Middle Grades 6-8

Differentiated Education Plan in subject of identified strengths

Cluster grouping in ELA and math; heterogeneous in other subjects

Flexible grouping within regular class setting

Technology supported learning

AIG Teacher as a resource and support for the classroom teacher in the identified areas of strength of the student

Across grade/team level grouping

Independent Study, or Independent Instruction

Across grade/team level grouping

Grade or subject level acceleration

Enrichment/Extension AIG Class as an elective

Grade 6: Required elective. Exceptions are granted for band and DEP specific

Grade 7: Strongly recommended one semester. Exceptions are granted for band and other DEP specific

Grade 8: Strongly recommended one semester. Exceptions are granted for band and other DEP specific

Academic competitions

After school enrichment programs

Emotional and social issues are focused upon in the elective classes with the AIG Specialist. These include peer relations, the student's various roles in society, adjustments to middle school and pre-adolescence, strategies in decision making, and creative problem solving. Manners and correct behaviors in various situations are read about, discussed, and practiced. In the eighth grade stress management and relaxation techniques are an integral part of the curriculum.

High School Grades 9-12

Differentiated Education Plan Advanced Learner Plan in subject of identified strengths

Heterogeneous grouping in regular classroom

Flexible grouping within regular class setting

Technology supported learning

AIG Program as a resource for materials for advanced classes

Honors Classes

Advanced Placement Classes

Dual enrollment at the community college

On-line distance learning

Enrichment programs in after school programs and extracurricular activities.

Academic competitions

Mentor Program

Refer to Appendix document "Service Delivery Options"

- Planned Sources of Evidence:**
1. An array of service options descriptions in K-12
 2. DEPs or Advanced Learner Plans in the area of identified strengths
 3. Group Learning Plans for the enrichment classes
 4. Student schedules
 5. Record of high school activities supporting AIG students

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: Swain County students are placed in programs and are served based on areas of gifted identification. Students are challenged to develop their individual strengths across curricula areas.

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

Description: Students in grades K-8 may be served in class through differentiated education plans for the identified areas of reading and/or math. These plans are developed collaboratively by the regular classroom teacher, the AIG specialist, and the parent. In Grades K - 5 students can participate in reading and math instructional groups based on their achievement levels as determined by on-going formative assessment, rather than groups based on age/grade parameters. In Grades 6-8, students are placed in homogeneous groups for reading and math instruction. Options for advanced courses are available to middle school students in math and sometimes in science. In Grades 9 - 12, students may self-select honors and AP courses based on areas of strengths. They may also choose acceleration through college and on-line course work.

- Planned Sources of Evidence:**
1. Swain County AIG plan
 2. Individual student DEPs
 3. Course selections and offerings for middle school and high school students
 4. Student profiles matched to service 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: AIG programs and services are integrated into the total instructional program. Options for students are sometimes limited due to the size of the LEA and funding restrictions. According to the current surveys for the AIG program review, there is a need to increase the awareness of how the AIG program connects to the total instructional program for all stakeholders.

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

Description: Students are placed in pull-out programs and flexible, subject groupings, along with some honors and advanced placement courses. At the elementary level, pull-out programs are designed to add student depth of special topics. Middle School electives provide time for the AIG specialist to provide enrichment for students selecting this elective. Scheduling in small LEAs presents difficulties in providing the number of honors and advanced placement options compared with other areas. Students are able to participate in NCVPS, and dual enrollment with Southwestern Community College is available. The number of Swain County students participating in honors and advanced placement offerings has increased in the past several years. Honors and advanced placement offerings are also increasing.

Planned Sources of Evidence:

1. Student course schedules
2. Honors and advanced placement offerings list
3. Numbers of AIG students selecting honors and advanced placement courses

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Based on survey results and self-assessment meetings, there is a need for a focused effort to provide information to all staff regarding the AIG program and the local AIG plan.

Goals:

1. Form AIG committee to assist with dissemination of information about the AIG program.
2. Develop link on system web-site for AIG information.
3. Make presentations to each school's staff regarding the AIG program and local plan.

Description: After the development of the AIG committee including representatives from each school, at least one principal, a school board member, parent, the AIG specialist and coordinator, the AIG specialist will review goals and initiatives from the state that will then be disseminated through this committee to each school site. The AIG specialist will also present updates yearly at district leadership meetings.

Planned Sources of Evidence:

1. Committee membership list
2. Agendas/minutes from committee meetings

3. Agendas/minutes from staff meetings

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Communication surrounding transition issues are strong in Swain County Schools. Specific school/district level processes are in place to provide students and families maximum support as students transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school. AIG must be an integral part of these transition activities.

Goals: 1. Provide overview of AIG program at Open House transition events.
2. Provide display table of resource materials and information for parents at transition events.
3. Use open house and general parent conferencing days to schedule AIG/DEP update meetings.

Description: Swain County believes that it is essential that families be afforded numerous activities and specific information as students transition from level to level. These activities include: grade level specific open houses, school tours, staggered enrollment days, and early communication about programs and student needs and goals. School counselors also support AIG students as they transition to new settings through scheduling conferences and discussion groups.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Announcements of transition meetings
2. Schedule of transition activities related to AIG

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: More collaboration with and involvement of all stakeholders would increase the depth of understanding of the Swain County AIG program and help develop better differentiation of programs and services.

Goals: 1. Develop AIG Advisory Committee (to include teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders) to meet twice yearly to provide input for programming issues and improvement.
2. Schedule AIG specialist to participate in Collaboration Meetings quarterly with EC teachers, other

specialists, counselors, and other support personnel to address issues related to providing high quality service options and support for AIG students.

3. Establish an AIG Parent Advisory Group.

Description: Through the development of the AIG Advisory Committee, Swain County will increase the knowledge of the array of services for Swain County students. An AIG Parent Advisory Group will also serve as a resource for the AIG program.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Agendas/minutes of Advisory Council meetings
2. LEA and school system websites
3. Record of participation in Collaboration Meetings

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: Swain County Schools has certified counselors in each school who provide support for AIG students and their parents. School counselors are knowledgeable of issues faced by these students and are available for individual/group instruction as well as to provide additional support through individual counseling.

Goals: 1. Include school counselors in PD activities related to AIG learners
2. Include school counselors in collaboration meetings between AIG specialist, regular education teachers, EC teachers, and other support personnel

Description: The degree to which AIG students' social and emotional needs are met strengthens their ability to think at higher levels. In response to that need, the Swain County AIG Program offers support to foster their development in this area. Educational planning for this development must stem from the characteristics of the children served and the special needs implied by those characteristics.

Strategies used in the AIG classes that address these needs include:

1. School counselors who provide a valuable resource for individual and small group counseling and grade level activities.
2. Specific units delivered in AIG enrichment classes address social and emotional needs of AIG students

More details around social and emotional development are included in Standard 2 - F.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Record of group activities offered by school counselors for AIG

students

2. List of materials/special reading materials provided to AIG students

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: Swain County Schools offers an array of options for acceleration. The options are organized by Level of Need within the learning environment and matched to content modification and enrichment options. Instructional strategies to meet the varying acceleration needs of AIG students are also suggested.

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

Description: Swain County's plan includes four levels of acceleration within and outside of the general learning environment.

Level I describes how the needs of these students can be met within the general education classroom and includes: heterogenous and flexible grouping and support through technology.

Level II includes the above modifications but adds the AIG specialist as a resource for the general education teacher.

Level III builds on the above options and adds across grade/team grouping and enrichment/extension through placement in the AIG classroom

Level IV is the highest level of differentiation and includes independent study and grade or subject level acceleration

Content modifications to match the above Levels include NC Standard Course of Study through advanced content units.

Enrichment opportunities include community service projects; enrichment programs such as Talent Search and New Century Scholars; and academic/enrichment competitions

The level of acceleration along with content modifications and enrichment opportunities are a team decision and based on each student's unique characteristics.

Refer to Appendix document "Service Delivery Options"

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Student individual plans indicating option selected

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: Swain County uses non-traditional sources to identify under-represented AIG populations. These include both formal and informal assessments. Normed tests of cognitive ability are administered district wide at grades 3 and 7. Additionally, referrals are sought through Native American Parent Group presentations, assessment information obtained by the EC referral process, and other traditionally under-represented pathways.

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

Description: Swain County Schools identifies students who are twice-exceptional and disadvantaged. The AIG population is reflective of those subgroups as well as the system's Native American population. Individual testing is available for our non-English speaking students.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Student data demographics
2. Testing information
3. AIG folders

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: Numerous extra-curricular activities are made available for all Swain County students, and AIG students are provided program specific information for their individual areas. Many extracurricular activities related to academic interests and acceleration are offered through the high school general education program.

Goals: 1. Identify middle school and/or elementary school age-appropriate extracurricular options for AIG students
2. Communicate opportunities to parents

Description: Several programs exist within Swain County that provide AIG students opportunities to stretch their learning outside of the school environment. These include:

The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics - a residential high school designed to meet the needs of highly capable science and math students

Governor's School - a residential summer enrichment program for high school gifted students

New Century Scholars - a joint effort between Swain County Schools and Southwestern Community college to provide incentives in the form of scholarships to academically promising students

Talent Search - a program funded by the USDE and administered from Western Carolina University offering counseling and assistance to students to better understand educational opportunities and options

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Record of information presented to parents/students around extra learning opportunities
2. Students identified and participating in extra-curricular programs, services, and programs

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County Schools actively seeks partnerships with parents and the community. Numerous opportunities are provided to share with parents and families information concerning their child's academic, social and emotional needs and to match those with appropriate services. Annual DEP meetings have not been consistently completed. Recommendations from surveys and program review meetings indicate that AIG parents would like more information on an on-going basis related to the planned AIG activities for their children.

Goals: 1. Establish an AIG Parent Advisory Group to support the AIG program.
2. Provide communications to parents on a more consistent basis regarding AIG activities and community opportunities.
3. Host parent meetings or coordinate with PTO's to co-host events related to AIG resources.

Description: Communicating with parents is essential for understanding and implementing a successful K-12 instructional delivery program for academically and intellectually gifted students. Attending annual reviews to set goals and evaluate student progress keeps parents involved in the various AIG resources.

Information will be accessible through the websites for East, West and Middle schools. Also, parents are involved with the Parent Teachers Organizations on the campuses of the two elementary and one middle school.

Each spring the parents/families have the opportunity to review their child's schedule for the next school year and fine tune the choice of classes to best meet the student's needs.

Examples of parental and community involvement include:

- Annual review reports of student progress
- Field trips with parent chaperones
- Newsletters and/or information updates for elementary and middle school parents
- Quarterly Updates of program accomplishments and plans distributed to the administration and posted at the schools
- Web page accessible through the Swain County Schools web site to share information, resources, student activities, etc.
- Newspaper articles highlighting programs and accomplishments of AIG students
- Staff development such as characteristics of gifted learners, strategies for differentiating curriculum

and emotional/social needs of gifted learners

-Collaborative meeting between the AIG teacher and regular education teachers in the elementary and middle schools

-Parent involvement by assisting in enrichment activities, suggesting and providing resources, sharing expertise, and acting as advisors in certain units of study

Community Involvement

Linking the academic program to real world experiences to nurture students' aptitude, talents and interests will require extensive community involvement. Strategies to involve the community include:

-developing opportunities for mentorships and internships

-providing opportunities for appropriate field trips beyond classroom experiences

-collaborating with other public schools and schools of higher learning to develop electronic field trips / distance learning courses and workshops

-working collaboratively with other talent development programs within the schools system

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. AIG calendar and notices will be linked through the system webpage

2. Notices from the various schools distributed

3. AIG Program brochure

4. Notices and brochures available at system transition meetings elementary-middle; middle-high school

5. Schedule of parent and/or student opportunity to match student needs and school class choices

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Sharing information is essential for the AIG Program so that all stakeholders can effectively participate in supporting the educational opportunities for our AIG students. Survey and program review recommendations indicate that Swain County's AIG Program needs to develop and deliver a coordinated plan for sharing information with parents and families.

Goals: 1. A stakeholder group will be formed to meet at a minimum of twice yearly to discuss the AIG plan and any program updates; parents representation has already been recruited for this group.

2. The parents, school personnel, students and the community will become more knowledgeable of the AIG Plan and other basic AIG information.

Description: The AIG Plan will be made available to all stakeholders by having at least one hardcopy at each school campus kept either by the principal or guidance counselor. A copy will be available electronically on the AIG link of the Swain County Schools Website.

The AIG link will provide basic introduction to characteristics of gifted learners and the nomination process. A description of services available will also be detailed.

Nomination forms for the parents, students, and school personnel will be posted along with the flowchart of the nomination to place/nonplace decision.

The flowchart will be explained in detail so that the nomination through placement or nonplacement process is more clearly understood.

Other forms or information will be posted as available.

Appropriate AIG contacts will be identified on the system website so that stakeholders may provide feedback.

- Planned Sources of Evidence:**
1. AIG Program Manual/Local Plan
 2. Parent nomination form
 3. Student self nomination form
 4. School personnel nomination form.
 5. Flow chart
 6. Printout of emails concerning the plan.
 7. Agenda of the Orientation Meeting for upcoming sixth grade students.
 8. Webpage link

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: During the program review for AIG Plan revisions, parents were invited to participate via surveys and a face-to-face meeting. Parent survey completion was very low. Participation in the face-to-face meeting was encouraging, with eighteen parents attending and many recommendations for program revision discussed. There was a definite interest in forming a parent advisory group for next year; five parents volunteered to participate and provided contact information for organizing the group.

- Goals:**
1. Form an AIG Parent Advisory Committee to provide specific feedback for program improvement.
 2. Include questions related AIG program feedback in the district-wide annual surveys for parents and teachers.

Description: A countywide AIG Committee will be established and will meet biannually. The

committee will review the county's AIG Program and plan and may offer suggestions for improvements or changes. Minutes of these meetings will be taken. This committee will reflect the diversity of the identified AIG students. This committee will be composed of the Program Administrator, the principals from the four schools, teacher representatives from each school, parent representatives of each school and the AIG Specialist. Others may be added as needed.

A separate Parent Advisory Group will be formed to provide feedback and assist with AIG program implementation initiatives.

Annual surveys of AIG students, school personnel and parents will be conducted for feedback on the current plan and ideas for improvement to be considered.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. List of members of the county AIG Committee and Parent Advisory Committees
2. Minutes of the meetings
3. Written copy of the survey
4. Results of surveys

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Gifted children need strong, responsible advocates, and parents can make a difference. Swain County Schools attempts to provide parents and the community with specific information about AIG programs. Involvement of parents/families is an important component of the AIG Program. Parents are provided numerous opportunities to learn of opportunities for their gifted students. Through website information, brochures and meetings with the AIG specialist, parents are informed of opportunities for enrichment. From the parent stakeholders' meeting, there was a request for more consistency and frequency of information specific to AIG activities.

Goals: 1. Improve disbursement and sharing of information in a more efficient and timely manner between the school and parents/families.
2. The AIG specialist will prepare regular communications procedures for sharing information with parents, including
a. Introductory letters at the beginning of the school year
b. Regular newsletters throughout the school year announcing upcoming units of study and enrichment opportunities, both school-based and community-based
c. Updates on student accomplishments

Description: Opportunities for enrichment classes and programs are distributed throughout the school year. Brochures on these activities are provided to students, and many Swain County students take advantage of them. With better publicity and specific website information, more would

be aware of the events and may avail themselves of these opportunities. This information will be posted on the school website and/or via electronic and print newsletters.

Connect-Ed is a phone connection system that alerts parents of any available opportunities. Many AIG students and families use email as a means to communicate. This allows and encourages communication between the system and parents. Presentations will occur in the fall of each year at each school open house to notify parents of upcoming yearly events.

Enrichment Events:

Duke Talent Search: targets 4th/5th and 7th graders. Brochures are distributed annually. Some students take advantage of this opportunities.

Local school events with the AIG Program, publications, information, resources and contacts with various organizations or business focusing on the gifted are shared on this site also.

When the need arises these sources will be posted in native languages.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Enrichment announcement brochures
2. Numbers of students participating in activities
3. Open house agendas and presentations

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County Schools seeks to build partnerships based on mutual respect and common purpose to benefit the AIG students and programming. Numerous opportunities currently exist for parents and the community to be involved with schools and students. Swain County will continue to strengthen and build of those existing opportunities.

Goals: 1. Develop a list of community programs and resources that support enrichment activities for students
2. Provide guest speakers for parent meetings related to accessing resources for AIG students

Description: The recognition and development of the AIG students and their special abilities should involve the active, engaged support of parents both at home and in school. Many experience academic, social, and personal problems when they do not receive suitable encouragement from society and their families.

The AIG Email Connection will involved parents/families but keeping them in formed of opportunities

for their gifted child. A parent from each school will be on the county-wide AIG Committee. Throughout the year parents volunteer to assist with special projects or to be chaperones on field trips.

Parents/families are encouraged to be an active member of the PTOs in the elementary and middle school which in turn generally supports the identified gifted learners.

Parent representatives from each school are involved in the Swain County AIG Team. They are involved in the biannual review of the current AIG Plan. As opportunities arise parents will be invited to be participants or contributors.

Community members are invited to be guest presenters/speakers in the various AIG classes. For example the SRO of the middle school has taught students about fingerprinting; the County Manager spoke about what services are provided by local taxes; and the Juvenile Officer shared the courts responsibility with juvenile offenders and the consequences of unlawful actions.

- Planned Sources of Evidence:**
1. Email connection
 2. Membership list of the Swain County AIG Team
 3. Newspaper articles
 4. Photographs and notes taken from guest speakers in AIG classes and parent meetings

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: Swain County Schools has developed a written AIG plan in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy using the 2010-2013 plan as a basis for review and revision. The plan was submitted to the local Board of Education for approval and submitted to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

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

Description: AIG PLAN OUTLINE

Plan overview including program vision
Self-Assessment Results for Six Program Standards Areas
Written descriptions for all practices within the Six Program Standards Areas
 Rationale
 Description of current program
 Goals for improvement
 Sources of evidence
Appendix of Reference Documents
The Gifted Learner: A Definition and Multiple Indicators of Giftedness
Identification of Students for Differentiated Services
Step I: Nomination and Screening Process
Step II: The Referral and Eligibility Process
Step III: Placement, Service Options Match and Development of
 Differentiated Education Plans
Decision Making Process Flow Chart
Service Delivery Options for Grades K-3, Nurturing the Young Gifted Student
Service Delivery Options for Grades 4-5
Service Delivery Options for Grades 6-8
Service Delivery Options for Grades 9-12
Appeals Procedure for Parents/Guardians Students
Professional Development

The plan was submitted for local Board of Education review and approval at the July 8, 2013, board meeting.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. AIG plan
2. School Board minutes
3. Board signature page

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: Swain County monitors the AIG Plan implementation annually with involvement of district personnel and the AIG specialist.

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

Description: The implementation of the AIG plan is monitored periodically. This occurs through meetings with the AIG coordinator, the AIG specialist, and school principals throughout the year. Meetings address program needs and implementation satisfaction. The AIG specialist or AIG coordinator attends regional round tables and state level meetings and presentations for updates on legislation and any changes to state policies. The AIG Advisory Committee will review the plan annually for needed revisions.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. AIG plan
2. Minutes of revisions
3. Analysis of test data
4. Teacher/parent surveys
5. Attendance at regional roundtables

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: Completely evident - all necessary documentation to support the use of funds is maintained at the central office level.

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

Description: AIG funds are budgeted at the district level by the AIG coordinator. THE AIG coordinator and the AIG specialist discuss yearly program goals and needs to develop a budget

reflecting those priorities. Program budgets, budgets amendments, purchase orders and other supporting documents are part of the system-wide annual audit. Program funds are used exclusively for services for students who qualify for AIG.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Budgets
2. Amendments
3. Purchase Orders

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 drop-out data are available system wide and included in data notebooks. This data is used as a source to help school develop school improvement plans.

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

Description: Swain County student data has always been analyzed by subgroups including AIG. Our goal has been to analyze student performance and growth for all subgroups. In general, our AIG students have not made the growth in achievement that we would like. EVAAS will provide an additional resource to facilitate the analysis of student growth for all groups, including AIG.

Although much progress has been made toward decreasing the dropout rate in our district, the issue continues to be a concern for Swain County Schools. The system has not analyzed the AIG high school students as to drop-outs but realizes that should be a next step for the program. The inclusion of a high school contact for AIG as well as the addition of a data manager position for the high school will help to facilitate the analysis of this and other data.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Data notebooks provided to schools containing specific student EOG/EOC scores with scores for AIG students disaggregated
2. Drop out data; analysis for AIG students

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 Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County is a small rural system located in the far western part of North Carolina. Our primary minority population is Native American. Swain County monitors representation of this and other under-represented populations through annual analysis of data.

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

Description: Swain County will more effectively analyze annually all AIG student information to ensure that representation reflects the demographic/ethnic system data. A wide variety of assessments, attributes and cognitive information is used to identify AIG students. The variety of sources are involved in the nominating/screening procedures in terms of types of data that can indicate giftedness. This information provides under-represented populations many avenues to identification.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Demographic information for AIG students
2. AIG data compared to system demographics
3. Samples of identification using non-traditional criteria

Other Comments:

Practice F

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Completely Evident - all data maintained at the central office level by the Director of Human Resources

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

Description: Credential information is on file at the central office level. Principals and staff members are notified concerning their renewal cycle and professional development credits. Credits earned are recorded at the central office and submitted to DPI at the appropriate times.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Employee personnel files including license, renewal information, professional development credits earned, and other required documents maintained and current in the employees file in central office.

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: At present this practice is minimally evident; the group has been temporary and established as needed, but not maintained as a regular advisory group.

Goals: 1. Establish an AIG advisory committee to meet at least twice per year.
2. Members to include: teacher from each school, parents representing each school, AIG specialist, AIG coordinator, high school counselor, principals, community member and a board of education member.

Description: Swain County Schools will establish an advisory committee composed of parents, teachers from each school, the AIG specialist and AIG coordinator, principals, and a community member. The high school counselor and/or AIG contact will be included to help guide rigorous course selection for high school students. This committee will meet at least twice annually - fall and spring - to review the AIG plan and process. Any needed plan revisions will be made at that time. A major function of this committee will be to disseminate information about Swain County AIG and guide future program development. The committee will also develop the yearly AIG survey. Results will be shared and discussed within the committee.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Committee membership
2. Agendas
3. Meeting minutes
4. Survey results

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County seeks input from various groups through formal and informal surveys. These surveys do not always focus directly on AIG, but parents are aware of appropriate contacts. Their concerns are addressed in a timely manner. A specific AIG survey will be developed by the AIG Advisory Committee. Results from this survey will be shared with stakeholders. Any identified concerns will be addressed, and appropriate strategies developed.

Goals: 1. Develop a specific AIG survey to gather input from families and staff as to the effectiveness and direction of the AIG program for program revision years.
2. Include AIG-related questions on annual parent and educator surveys.
3. Identify concerns based on AIG survey.

Description: The AIG Coordinator, working with the stakeholders committee, will develop an AIG survey to gather information about satisfaction of parents and staff with the organization and direction of the AIG program. From this survey, strengths and weaknesses will be identified. The AIG plan will

be revised based on this information to increase stakeholder satisfaction with the process, plan and goals.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Surveys developed and implemented
2. Concerns identified from surveys
3. Revision of AIG plan to reflect concerns

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Swain County's AIG plan and program are reviewed and revised as required by NCDPI and when local goals and priorities shift. Data provides a framework for program development and revision.

Goals: 1. Incorporate on-going stakeholder input for program planning and revisions.
2. Include other data sources, such as drop-out and failure rate data at the high school level, to guide program revision.

Description: Swain County analyzes all programs based on the most current date - objective and subjective - to guide program development. The goal is for all students to be successful learners and maximize their potential. AIG data is also analyzed based on course enrollment and EOC/EOG scores.

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. EOC/EOG data
2. Course enrollment information including AP/Honors classes
3. Survey results - general and AIG specific
4. Drop out and course failure rates

Other Comments:

Practice J

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Although AIG data is included in general information available to at all the schools, data specific to AIG should be shared with all stakeholders in order to promote a great understanding of and support of the AIG program.

Goals: 1. Share data analysis for AIG program with stakeholder groups.

his designee.

Step IV. The parent/guardian may then petition the administrative law judge for a contested case hearing.

SWAIN COUNTY SCHOOLS ACADEMICALLY and INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED STUDENTS.

Step I. AG Team Conference

A. Parent/Guardian may make a request for a conference with the AiG Team to discuss the concerns. (A written request is required. Please keep written request for documentation.)

B. School-Based Committee (known as SBC) and the AIG Team, reviews the student's record and their previous referral, identification, and service option decisions. The committee may gather additional information about the student from teachers and parents as needed. The Individual Student Profile may be updated.

C. The AIG Team and SBC grant the conference within 10 school days of request and responds to the parent/guardian and principal in writing within 5 school days prior to conference.

IF THE DISAGREEMENT IS NOT RESOLVED AT THE AIG/SBC TEAM CONFERENCE, THEN PROCEED TO STEP II—APPEAL TO AIG COODINATOR/EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR.

Step II. Appeal to AIG Coordinator

A. Parent/guardian may appeal the AIG/SBC Team's decision in writing to the AIG Coordinator within 10 days of receiving the response.

B. AIG Coordinator shall review the grievance within 10 days of receipt of appeal.

C. AIG Coordinator responds in writing to the parent/guardian and principal concerning the outcome of the review within 10 school days.

IF GRIEVANCE IS NOT RESOLVED AT STEP II, THEN PROCEED TO STEP III – APPEAL TO SUPERINTENDENT.

STEP III. Appeal to Superintendent

A. Parent/guardian may appeal in writing the decision of the AIG Coordinator to the Superintendent or his designee within 10 days of receiving the response.

B. Superintendent reviews the grievance within 10 days of the receipt of the appeal.

C. Superintendent responds in writing concerning the outcome within 10 school days to the parent/guardian and principal.

IN THE EVENT THAT THE LOCAL GREIVANCE PROCEDURE FAILS TO RESOLVE THE DISAGREEMENT, THEN THE STATE LEVEL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED.

STEP IV – State Level Grievance Procedure

A. Parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of chapter 150 B of the General Statutes. The scope of the review shall be limited to:

- whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as a high achiever or an academically gifted student.
- whether the local plan has been implemented appropriately in regard to the child

B. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains finds of fact and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on all parties, and is not subject to further review under Article of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

Refer to Appendix documents: AIG Forms

Planned Sources of Evidence: 1. Due process procedures written and disseminated

Other Comments:

Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

AIG Plan Appendix.pdf (*Appendix*)

Board Approval Document.pdf (*Local Board Approval Document*)

Final Version AIG Plan.pdf (*Other Forms*)