

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

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Alleghany 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, Alleghany County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:***

**Alleghany County Schools Vision for local AIG program:** Alleghany County Schools Vision for local AIG program: The Alleghany County School System's Academically or Intellectually Gifted Education Program is a part of a continuum of services that promotes and supports the academic achievement of all students while emphasizing appropriate educational opportunities for the academically/intellectually gifted child. The AIG program believes that students from all cultural and socioeconomic populations can exhibit exceptional abilities and is committed to providing an appropriately differentiated instructional program responsive to the abilities and needs of all gifted learners to prepare them to be globally competitive in the 21st Century. Over the next three years, members of the ACS Instructional team will actively work together to further strengthen our program at all levels to be more comprehensive, challenging, and effective as defined by Article 9B, guided by the North Carolina AIG Program Standards and reflected in nationally-accepted best practices in gifted education. This district level team will also work with school level AIG teams to build the program. Alleghany County Schools will focus on leveraging a high-functioning instructional team to help build teacher capacity in terms of pedagogy and best practices for gifted learners. Our AIG Coordinator will be a critical member of this district-level team as we move forward and transform our program. We believe that every teacher should have the tools, strategies and the

support  
to differentiate instruction and grow AIG students.

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

<b>State Funding</b>	<b>Local Funding</b>	<b>Grant Funding</b>	<b>Other Funding</b>
<b>\$71511.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

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## **Standard 1: Student Identification**

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

### **Practice A**

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

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

**Rationale:** Alleghany County Schools believes that all children can learn and should be challenged to their individual interest and ability/achievement levels to ensure success in school and in life. Of utmost importance is the development of a program where educational objectives, curriculum and assessment are aligned with student need and where instructional approaches match the learning styles of individual students. Basic to achieving this goal is to provide a classroom environment that promotes dignity and respect for gifted students from all cultures and demographic backgrounds. Academically or intellectually gifted students typically demonstrate intellectual and achievement related characteristics that distinguish them from their age and grade peers. The academically or intellectually gifted student often functions or is capable of functioning at significantly higher levels of performance, thinks with greater complexity and abstraction, and learns at a faster rate than his/her age or grade peers. 'Giftedness' can be demonstrated by high ability in a specific academic discipline, in various academic disciplines and/or intellectual areas. However, some gifted youth including, but not limited to those from culturally diverse or economically disadvantaged families with limited learning experiences, may not demonstrate their potential and may not be readily recognized as gifted. Students who are gifted, therefore, form a diverse group with complex intellectual, social and emotional needs. Gifted children and youth exist in culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged families, as well as in populations of students with disabilities.

Alleghany County Schools seeks to identify, based on a democratic review of all pertinent information gathered from multiple sources, students who think with more complexity and abstraction, and who learn/perform or show potential for learning/performing in academic disciplines at a significantly faster rate and/or higher level of proficiency than their age/grade peers. Through professional development, educators become knowledgeable about the characteristics of gifted students. Clear descriptions regarding identification procedures for all categories of giftedness are articulated and made available to all stakeholders. Identification procedures reflect special consideration for diversity in primary languages, cultures, economic and academic levels during the screening and selection processes. At all grade levels, AIG identification teams make equitable decisions using objective and subjective measures, specific to different student characteristics (abilities, intelligence, creativity and leadership) at screening, identification, selection, and placement levels.

Each school in the Alleghany district will utilize an AIG Site Team that works the district coordinator to make recommendations on student identification and placement, contributes to the decisions regarding AIG programming, and communicates these components to the staff. Information regarding the referral and procedures for identification is shared with personnel, parents/guardians, and the community-at-large.

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

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Revised plan posted online.  
Paper copies available to all stakeholders.  
Spanish translation of plan available upon request.  
BOE minutes  
School site AIG team meetings and minutes  
District level instructional team meeting schedules, agendas, minutes

**Other Comments:**

**Practice B**

Employs multiple criteria for AIG student identification, including measures that reveal student aptitude, student achievement, or potential to achieve in order to develop a comprehensive profile for each student. These measures include both non-traditional and traditional standardized measures that are based current theory and research.

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

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

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

**Description:** Alleghany County Schools adopts the North Carolina definition of giftedness to use in the identification of students and the provision of services. This definition describes giftedness as "having the ability or potential" for sustaining high levels of accomplishment, as compared to other students of similar age and circumstance. Key to this definition is the acknowledgement that gifted students are present in all cultural groups and across all economic strata. In this definition, being gifted is tied directly to the provision of differentiated services. Our district utilizes a comprehensive array of identification tools and procedures. The student placement process involves three phases:

student search, committee review and service options match. Each phase is guided by the needs of the student. A broad based sweep of the general population should occur at least once for students during each of these grade configurations: K-3 using teacher recommendation, K-2 assessment and/or EOG pre-test; 4-5; and 6-8 using a review of IQ test scores at the age level percentile of 87% or above and/or a review of End of Grade Test Scores at the performance Level 4 or 90% or above on standardized tests. The responsibility of gathering the screening information will be that of the district level Academically Gifted Coordinator or the principals designee.

Parents and teachers may also nominate students whose names do not appear in this screening pool. Supporting documentation such as work samples, grades and/or checklists should accompany these nominations.

Particular attention will be given to potentially gifted students from culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, or disabled populations during this process. A checklist of characteristics of diverse populations is found in the appendix.

#### Committee Review

The review committee for each school may include the classroom teacher(s) of the student, of the Academically Gifted coordinator, principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, and other appropriate members.

Information collected at the search stage by the Academically Gifted teacher should lead either to a nomination to the school review team or to a decision that the student does not require further review at this time. If the decision is made to "nominate" for review and further testing is recommended, parents should be notified for permission to test. If the decision is that the student does not require nomination/review, the Academically Gifted coordinator or designee will keep information on file for follow-up on that student who may qualify at a later date due to change in performance. To ensure rapid attention to placement needs, transfer students (especially those who had been identified for services in another district), will be referred to the Academically Gifted Review Committee by the classroom teacher.

#### Service Options Match

The committee will use multiple indicators in its decision making process. Each service delivery option matches the criteria for student placement decisions. The committee should use these criteria in determining appropriate student service matches. When determining appropriate service delivery options for gifted students, the Academically Gifted Review Committee should carefully analyze the students performance, as well as documentation concerning the students progress within the regular education program. In order to access a particular service delivery option, the student should (1) have demonstrated a need for the option, and (2) have met the criteria established for the option. The criteria are outlined in the appendix.

For any student who scores 99th percentile on a group or individualized intelligence test but does not meet any other criteria for the service options, the committee shall automatically review the individual for possible placement and a Differentiated EdAnecdotal Data

The AIG Review Team may also consider anecdotal data as it applies to the student since any one of the conditions present below might mask high performance. This data may not be used alone for placement but may be used in combination with other indicators to establish a student history.

Anecdotal data may be considered if the student has one or more of the following profiles:

- is disadvantaged socioeconomically (receiving free/reduced lunch, etc.)

- is an ESL student
- receives other Exceptional Children's Services
- has a current 504 plan
- has home responsibilities and/or employment that could interfere with learning activities
- has experienced trauma during the last year

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Individual student folders showing a variety of tools used for identification.

Revised referral form indicating multiple tools.

School based review team meeting minutes

Student AIG folders containing identification information

County AIG plan and survey

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

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

**Description:** The leadership of Alleghany County Schools will continue to examine characteristics of giftedness with teachers in all curriculum areas with special emphasis given to identification of characteristics within minority and low SES groups. We will use some or all of the following indicators in various combinations to determine those students who are gifted and in need of differentiated educational services:

- Gifted behavioral characteristics documented on acceptable checklists and scales, completed by

reliable sources

- Classroom performance recorded on progress reports, grade cards, and other official school documents
- Classroom observations completed by trained school personnel
- Documented recommendations from appropriate sources verifying exemplary achievement within and/or outside of school
- Demonstrated performance through academic products, contests/competitions, and other opportunities for exemplary achievement
- Standardized test scores: aptitude, achievement, intelligence and other tests
- Anecdotal information appropriately documented and verified

Multiple screening information for referred students (grades 3-12) is collected from all appropriate sources. If the screening pool does not reflect the minority population of the school, care is given to collect the names of the highest achieving minority students in the school for the screening. The screening process and periodic audits will ensure that equity and reliability exist system-wide. The English as a Second Language Program staff will assist with communicating the procedures in other languages.

The North Carolina End-of-Grade (grades 3-8) testing results are used in the screening portion of the identification process and are considered a part of the student's total profile. In grades 9-12, End of Course testing may be used in the identification of students. Once students have been screened and are determined to need further assessment, standardized testing, apart from the state testing, are used in the formal identification of students.

AIG personnel, trained in the administration of various tests, complete this portion of the identification process for students referred to them. Once parent consent for testing is obtained, the diagnosticians will administer a battery of tests which may include:

- An aptitude test (OLSAT, COGAT, Stanford-Binet)
- A nonverbal aptitude test (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test)
- Achievement tests (MAT, Stanford Achievement, CTBS)

Assessment instruments reflect sensitivity to economic conditions, learning differences, and diversity of students so that equal opportunity is provided to all students. When testing is complete, results are presented to the AIG Review Team for consideration.

There are times when testing is required beyond that completed by the AIG diagnostician. For second language or ESL students, testing in their native language may be necessary, and school psychologists or ESL staff may assist with this testing. Students with disabilities may require testing to be completed by school psychologists. Still other students may be referred to the school psychologist for testing because of inconsistencies in student test scores.

If testing by professionals other than an AIG diagnostician is necessary, the AIG Review team will invite the school psychologist or ESL staff to a team meeting to discuss the specialized needs of the student.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Documentation will include, but not be limited to:

AIG rosters indicating identification of students from traditionally under-represented populations (Free

or Reduced lunch eligibility, ESL, twice exceptional)  
Screening, referral and identification trends  
Examples of parent referrals  
Samples of identification using non-traditional criteria  
Documented testing accommodations  
Specific program documents and descriptions  
District AIG plan and surveys

**Other Comments:**

**Practice D**

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

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

**Rationale:** The purpose of Allegheny County Schools' Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program is to

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

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

**Description:** Training on processes for screening, referral, and identification is inclusive of all certified staff in the school district. Following the district and school level process through the School based Student Assistance Team and the AIG Review Team, student documentation is forwarded to the district AIG Coordinator for review to ensure consistency among all schools.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** • Procedures are in place to ensure consistency and are communicated to all school employees

- Ongoing staff meetings (PLC's)
- AIG staff presentations and discussions
- AIG District Coordinator meets regularly with instructional leads in all schools
- Review of documentation of process
- Headcount accuracy
- Parent feedback

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

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

**Description:** Parents have an opportunity for input about their child's specific needs and are informed of the recommendations made by the AIG Review Team. There are several stages during the decision-making process in which parent permission is obtained and documentation is provided for parent review. At each stage parents are informed about the recommendations for the student's need for differentiated educational services:

#### PROCEDURES TO RESOLVE DISAGREEMENTS

According to Article 9B, governing the screening, identification and placement of students into services for the academically or intellectually gifted, a procedure for resolving disagreements between parents or legal custodians and the local school administrative unit shall be developed. A disagreement might arise when a child is not identified as an academically or intellectually gifted student.

If the student was self-nominated or nominated by a parent/guardian but not identified as needing differentiated services by the Academically Gifted Review Committee, inform parents/guardian of this decision by providing them the following:

1. Copy of Referral/Summary of Data Form
2. Copy of Due Process Procedures

If the student was identified, and the Academically Gifted Review Committee recommends a Differentiated Education Plan inform parents/guardian of this decision by providing them the following:

1. Copy of Referral/Summary of Data Forms
2. Copy of Differentiated Education Plan
3. Copy of Due Process Procedures

If parents have disagreements regarding nomination, identification, or service options, they are guaranteed the due process procedures on the following pages.

#### DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES

##### STEP I-Academically Gifted Review Committee

- A. Parent/guardian may make a request for a conference with the Academically Gifted Review

Committee to discuss the concerns about the recommendation.

B. Academically Gifted Review Committee reviews the students record and their previous nomination, identification, and service option decisions. The committee may gather additional information about the student from teachers and/or parents as needed. The Referral/Summary of Data Form may be updated.

C. Academically Gifted Review Committee grants the conference within five school days of request and responds to parent/guardian in writing within five school days of conference.

D. If the disagreement is not resolved at the Academically Gifted Review Committee conference, then proceed to Step II-Principal Conference (unless the principal of the school was on the AGRC).

#### STEP II-Principal Conference

A. Parent may make a written request within 30 days for a conference with the principal.

B. Principal reviews the recommendation with the Academically Gifted Review Committee chairperson.

C. Principal grants the conference within five school days of request and responds in writing within five schools days of conference.

D. If the disagreement is not resolved at the principal conference, then proceed to Step III-Appeal to AG Coordinator.

#### STEP III-Appeal to AG Coordinator Program Administrator

A. Parent/guardian may appeal principals decision in writing to the AG Coordinator within five days of receiving the response.

B. AG Coordinator reviews the grievance within five days of receipt of appeal.

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

If the grievance is not resolved at STEP III, then proceed to STEP IV-then proceed to STEP V-Appeal to the Board of Education.

#### STEP IV-Appeal to Superintendent

A. Parent/guardian may appeal decision of AG Coordinator to the Superintendent within five days of receiving the response.

B. Superintendent reviews the grievance with five days of receipt of the appeal.

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

In the event that the local grievance procedure fails to resolve the disagreement, then the state level grievance procedure would be implemented.

#### STEP VI-State Level Grievance Procedure

A. Parent may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B 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 an academically or intellectually gifted student, or whether the local plan has been implemented appropriately in regard to the child.

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 the parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes

#### TRANSFER STUDENT PROCEDURES

Students who transfer from other districts or schools with no prior gifted (AIG) identification must be enrolled and actively attending an Allegheny County Public School before the student may be nominated. The nomination/referral procedures will then be followed.

Students who transfer from other districts where they were identified as gifted (AIG) must meet Allegheny County Schools AIG identification criteria.

Transfer students who have been previously identified and served in gifted programs in other districts are only guaranteed a referral to the AIG Program in Allegheny County.

#### TEMPORARY AIG PLACEMENT OCCURS WHEN:

- All prior identification data from the previous district meets Allegheny County's AIG identification criteria. The student may be placed temporarily in the AIG program while informal indicators and performance data are collected in order to complete the identification process. Or,
- Prior identification data does not meet Allegheny County's AIG identification criteria, and the recommendation is for the student to be referred to determine AIG eligibility.

#### EXITING PROCEDURES at school request:

- Parent conference to review student performance data
- AIG Review Team recommendation for service no longer needed; temporary inactive status or remain active during reevaluation process
- Instructional Support Plan implemented for one full semester
- Documentation of implemented strategies reviewed
- Request for updated evaluation data

#### EXITING PROCEDURES at parent request:

- A parent may request in writing that their student be exited from the AIG Program without reevaluation.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Updated AIG forms; Student folder audits

Parent surveys

Handbooks

Documented parent communications

District plan including procedures to resolve disagreements

#### **Other Comments:**

#### **Practice F**

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

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

**Rationale:** Appropriate identification of gifted students is vital for providing rigorous instruction to meet their individual needs. Parents, being partners in their children's education, must be kept abreast of academic progress and placement for appropriate services. Currently AIG Committees meet once a year to review and evaluate students. Documentation is maintained and parental involvement is solicited. Parents are invited to attend conferences to plan services for their child. This meeting includes regular education and gifted educators so that a comprehensive differentiated educational plan can be developed for the student in question. Parents provide valuable information regarding the students outside activities, emotional needs, and opportunities for increased success of which school personnel may not be aware. The partnership between school and parent is critical for the continued success of our academically gifted students. Although improved communication of this documentation is considered a focus for improvement (Standard 1a), the actual documentation is completely evident.

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

**Description:** Alleghany County Schools believe that general education bears an integral responsibility to appropriately differentiate instruction for gifted students. The AIG Program Coordinator, classroom teachers and the school AIG team collaborate to address the needs of gifted students by providing additional resources, concept-based units of study, co-teaching/learning strategies and/or professional development in advanced differentiated instruction, high-end teaching/learning strategies and social-emotional issues of gifted students.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Invitations to conference; parentally signed DGEP's; folder audit summaries  
Annual parent meeting agenda and minutes  
District AIG plan and surveys  
AIG brochure  
Folder contains audit checklist

**Other Comments:** N/A

## **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:** Academically or intellectually gifted students enrolled in Allegheny County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program. AIG services are integrated Allegheny County Schools recognizes that the classroom climate must be conducive to and supportive of the characteristics of high-end learning as schools strive for academic excellence for all students.

Because academically or intellectually gifted students possess unique behaviors and characteristics, a qualitatively differentiated educational program, beyond the general educational offerings, is required to provide an appropriate academic experience that addresses these students' unique needs.

AIG services are integrated with the general education program, PK-12, where flexible grouping is used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual, social and emotional growth. Allegheny County School seeks to provide appropriate education opportunities through an array of service delivery options designed to provide a stimulating and challenging curriculum so as to ensure that student potential is developed.

A comprehensive service delivery system for gifted and highly able students is outlined in three segments: elementary (PK - grade 5), middle (grades 6 - 8), secondary (grades 9 - 12). Differentiated services take place in a variety of settings and provides most positive effects when students are grouped for instruction. The effect of grouping for gifted students is most productive and effective when instruction is appropriately advanced, extended and/or accelerated or when challenging enrichment activities are offered.

**Goals:** Allegheny County Schools will shift the model from a pull-out, small group service delivery model, to an inclusive, comprehensive AIG services delivery model. AIG students will be provided access to AIG services within the regular classroom, as well as in extended learning opportunities at the school and district level, to insure increased access and immersion in applicable and appropriate differentiated curriculum. Extended learning opportunities will be developed, assessed and coordinated by the district-level AIG coordinator and will provide equity across the district, to all AIG students, all day, in every school.

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

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

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

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that in-class flexible clustering opportunities are afforded to highly able students grouped in heterogeneous classrooms. Content differentiation strategies that may be seen in general education classrooms include the following: instructional technology, integrated units, curriculum compacting, differentiated instructional units, literature circles, learning centers, interdisciplinary thematic units, Socratic seminars, tiered assignments, learning contracts. Inherent to the program's content are teaching/learning strategies that foster reasoning and problem solving skills. Students are expected to represent their thinking and solutions to tasks in speaking and in writing. In math students use diagrams, models and graphs to communicate reasoning skills. In effort to meet the needs of the gifted learner, specific tasks draw attention to deeper and broader concepts of various investigations.

Flexible pacing options place students at an appropriate instructional level, creating the best possible match between a student's achievement and instruction. A variety of settings where differentiated services are delivered include the following: the regular homeroom, another classroom, a resource room, or district-wide extended learning opportunities. In some cases, the settings may go beyond the school walls. The AIG program is based on a multifaceted view of giftedness, recognizing that students manifest

strengths in a variety of ways. Alleghany County Schools promotes a paradigm shift from thinking of a 'gifted program' to thinking of 'programming for giftedness', implying a more inclusive definition of giftedness that promotes a range of programming options which address student needs. A full continuum is planned that allows for the development of gifted potential while addressing the needs of students who demonstrate advanced skills.

The learning environment provides a variety of settings where differentiated services are delivered. The effect of grouping for gifted students is positive when instruction is differentiated to meet learning need. Flexible

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

their teacher(s).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In-class flexible clustering: Students choose or are assigned to a small group based on interest, ability or skills.

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

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

Cluster Grouping Within a Regular Class: A cluster group (4 to 10) of gifted students is assigned to a regular heterogeneous class. The teacher receives training and works with the AIG Coordinator and

school instructional specialist(s) to design appropriate, differentiated curriculum for this group.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Concurrent (Dual) Enrollment:** This option allows student to be enrolled in two levels of schooling at the same time. Students may remain at one level for much of their study and attend another level for a specific course or period of time. Typically used with coursework that is highly sequential (i

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Teachers with training, (advanced differentiated instruction, BIE training, ITF cohort, ASU Math Cohort, Model Classrooms, advanced degrees) serving AIG students, AIG Coordinator

District level instructional leadership PLC that includes AIG Coordinator

**Other Comments:** N/A

### **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:** Alleghany County Schools recognizes components of a high-quality, comprehensive curriculum that is appropriate for all students, including gifted and highly able students. A proactive

pre-kindergarten – 12th curriculum offers teachers and administrators opportunities for professional development in current, research-based practices and affords teachers planning time to develop and implement practices reflected in trainings.

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

**Goals:** To build teacher capacity through professional development, coaching and support, to appropriately differentiate instruction.

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

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

Curriculum content are engaging, motivating and interest sustaining.

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

Instructional strategies are varied with methods and materials that support active involvement.

Motivating instructional experiences are designed so that learned skills and content can be applied to creative problem solving activities. Appropriate levels of challenge address needs of a diverse population of learners.

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

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

Instructional materials that support teaching/learning are motivating and aligned with content goals.

Developmental level of resources are appropriate for students' varying achievement and ability levels.

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

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

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

(BIE) Problem Based Learning should be imbedded and evident as appropriate and applicable.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Intentional, inclusive programming PK-12

**Other Comments:**

**Practice C**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Description:** Advanced Differentiated Instructional Units: Differentiated units that incorporate individual learning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Technology-Enhanced Instruction - Computer-Based Learning/Computer-Supported Research: Instructional program used to both enrich the curriculum and remediate specific skill deficits—especially appropriate for gifted students having specific skill gaps, gifted underachievers, learning disabled, or those from culturally diverse backgrounds. Enrichment activities are challenging, problem solving and decision-making in nature. Appropriate services for gifted are accessed through a variety of web-based databases and apps.

Telecommunications -

\* Telecourses: Distance learning opportunities for high school and middle school students offered by LEARN NC and NC VPS. Specific course offerings allow students to attend classes and receive credit for courses not offered on site.

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Intentional programming, PK-12, as evidenced in ACS Plan.

Math foundations

Reading Foundations

Thinking Maps

Jacob's Ladder

Connected Math

Integrated Math/Core Plus Math

Envisions Math and Investigations

Letterland (PK-3) Examples of curriculum products

List of resources that include above grade level materials

**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:** It is the aim of Allegheny County Schools to eliminate the achievement gap. The NC Standard

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

**Goals:** Allegheny County seeks to develop teacher pedagogical capacity using a multi-faceted approach in order to build classrooms that are increasing rigorous, responsive and challenging for students.

**Description:** Allegheny County Schools' 21st century gifted education program provides technology to support appropriate services. The AIG program is designed to provide 21st century learning opportunities that promote the growth of skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for gifted students to reach their potential in a competitive global society. Educational professionals, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, direct focused effort in monitoring the progress of all students in order to ensure that all graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education, prepared for a productive life in the 21st century. By providing a safe and orderly environment, students are offered programs that require collaboration in performing tasks that reflect the most current, research-based practices. Curriculum is rigorous and relevant for all students. Professional development in advanced differentiated strategies and technology integration are in place moving forward to assure appropriate challenge for advanced learners in all areas; literacy skills that include reading, writing, speaking, computing, and solving problems are incorporated in all learning environments. A special directed focus is in place at the elementary level where the teaching of reading is

recognized as critical. The use of the latest technology is used by teachers to monitor student progress by web-based formative assessments and progress monitoring. Middle school and high school teachers will receive professional development to incorporate reading and writing skills in their delivery of more in-depth content-specific areas of instruction.

Nearly all teachers employed by Allegheny County Schools are highly qualified. Elementary teachers have a broad knowledge of all subject areas and offer a nurturing program of integrated study; middle and high school teachers skills reflect deeper levels of experience and expertise in one or more specific

content areas. Vertical alignment is assured by online curriculum maps accessible to teachers and administrators at school and system levels. At all levels, teachers of self-contained and discipline specific classes recognize and appreciate that all content is related and interconnected. Teachers are cognizant of and incorporate international relevance of the subjects they teach to promote awareness of 21st century global issues: financial, economic, business, entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, and health and wellness awareness.

Professional development is in place to help teachers design differentiated lessons that use current resources and instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. Teachers collaborate in professional learning communities enhance

student learning with plans that are sensitive to learning styles and cultural differences. The use of information and communication technology is inherent to the process; technology is used to learn content, think critically, solve problems, access reliable information, interact and collaborate in teams. Eliminating the achievement gap is the goal. Lessons are designed to strengthen social relationships, improve interactions with peers, develop leadership skills and interact with people from different cultures.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** List of resources that include above grade level materials, Intentional programming, PK-12, as evidenced in ACS Plan.

Reading Foundations

Connected Math

Integrated Math/Core Plus Math

Envisions Math and Investigations

Letterland (PK-3)

**Other Comments:**

**Practice E**

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

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

**Rationale:** In order for programs and services to align with student needs, gifted educational programs and services must be aligned with with the on-going assessments used to identify students and differentiate curriculum and instruction. Instruments must be sensitive to under-represented populations of students (English language learners, twice exceptional, low socio-economic income, minority, etc.); appropriately differentiated curriculum programs and strategies are offered to accommodate need for acceleration and enrichment, according to on-going assessment reports.

**Goals:** Instruction driven by quality formative assessment will be evident in all classrooms.

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

Formative and summative data provides teachers with the ability to monitor what students know and how they demonstrate skills and comprehend content. Based on student performance, students are clustered in instructional groups and differentiated instruction is planned and delivered as reflected in the students' plans. Teachers and administrators use student, class, school and district reports to monitor progress; early intervention and enrichment activities become routine means of differentiating curriculum and instructional strategies for all learners.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Documentation/Examples of summative, formative, pre-/post-assessments, benchmark assessment data;  
Documented student readiness or diagnostic assessment results and trends;  
Use of flexible grouping, ClassScape  
mCLASS Reading (DIBELS and Reading 3D)  
Projects  
Seminars  
RTI in all schools  
Tiered Assignments

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice F**

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

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

**Rationale:** Alleghany County Schools recognizes that the social and emotional needs of gifted students must be met in order for students to positively adjust to the learning environment. Students who understand themselves and others function effectively and productively; they function appropriately in social environments and are able to express themselves in an appropriate manner. Research indicates that gifted and highly able students require academic provisions to meet social and emotional needs. These include, but are not limited to the following provisions: the opportunity to learn with others of similar interest and ability; an appropriate level of challenge in the regular classroom, and flexible pacing through the curriculum. Research also suggests that some gifted students struggle with heightened sensitivity, perfectionism, asynchronous development, peer relations, college and career planning. Some

gifted students experience emotional or behavioral challenges related to learning disabilities, under-motivation, under-achievement, depression or attention/focus issues. Twice-exceptional gifted students are recognized to have greater frustrations than their twice-exceptional peers because of the greater discrepancies between their abilities and disabilities.

**Goals:** In order to address the potential for academic underachievement, peer relationship difficulties, and other issues related to peer and adult relations, the social and emotional needs of Avery County gifted students will be an area of focus. Alleghany County Schools recognizes that, in order for learning to be maximized, gifted students' various social and emotional needs must be addressed and met by a variety of approaches. Approaches and strategies must be specific to the needs of high-potential students and be sensitive to culture, socio-economic status, and gender of these students. Teachers, guidance counselors, and other school-based professionals must collaborate, using best research practices.

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

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

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

Classroom curricular materials are sensitive to culture and gender.

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

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

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

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Student/Parent/Related personnel surveys/data,

Curriculum units/lessons which address the affective domain,

Agendas, meeting minutes and presentations addressing the social/emotional issues,

Flexible cluster grouping,

Subject/Grade acceleration

### **Other Comments:**

### **Practice G**

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

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

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

**Goals:** Allegheny County Schools recognizes that when high-ability children are identified in the early grades, an advanced differentiated education program designed to meet their unique needs will greatly enhance strengths and identify areas for potential growth. By meeting these students' challenge needs, a program is in place to ensure later school success and skill development. Experiences/Activities that involve rigorous curricular work at a very young age enhance opportunity for acceleration and enrichment in later grades. Student performance in rigorous activities, student work portfolios, teacher/parent recommendation and students' participation in probationary participation in accelerated activities providing opportunity for children to demonstrate high performance/ability will be used to to increase numbers of young children placed in the AIG program.

**Description:** Allegheny County Schools will provide, through enhanced professional development efforts, differentiated levels of instruction that promote opportunities for subject acceleration in the regular curriculum based on the students skills, abilities and learning needs. In addition, a critical thinking skill development of children will be enhanced through teacher professional development. As children begin to develop proficiency in critical thinking skills within differentiated instructional groups, the students' higher achievement learning patterns will become evident. A culturally relevant curriculum will be incorporated to ensure that students from various backgrounds are successful in the program. Ultimately, the mission is to establish increased rigor for all students with an emphasis on broadening academic experiences for minority/low-wealth populations at the elementary level.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Examples of differentiated lessons and resources;  
Data on patterns and trends,  
Enrichment and intervention opportunities,  
5-Star academically focused/oriented pre-k classrooms in all elem. schools with aligned literacy curriculum,  
Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum.

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

**Goals:** Alleghany County Schools will utilize an inclusive, collaborative, instructional team approach to maximize student achievement within the regular classroom.

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

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

Efforts toward the development of support staff, regular classroom teachers, AIG coordinator and administrators through additional professional development are encouraged, expected and supported. Excellence in pedagogy, as reflected in appropriate curriculum differentiation options for gifted students in the regular classroom will thereby be ensured. Enrichment activities will be implemented that emphasize critical and creative thinking and stress awareness of students' responsibilities to society. Each teacher, in collaboration with the instructional team and AIG coordinator will be better prepared to determine, implement and evaluate differentiation strategies. Alleghany County Schools AIG program is purposefully designed to provide learning opportunities that promote growth of skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for gifted students to reach their potential. Instructional programs will provide a steady challenge without frustration or excessive pressure.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Samples of differentiation resulting from schools and district

collaboration;  
Interviews with personnel,  
Common planning periods,  
PLCs  
Meetings to ease transition from each level to the next  
Increased focus on teacher professional development, particularly in PBL, technology integration and differentiation.

**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:** Alleghany County Schools' Gifted Education Plan defines a comprehensive curriculum and service delivery plan that addresses the varied needs of academically or intellectually gifted students. The Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) is developed by a variety of stakeholders that includes the parent, general education teacher, AIG Coordinator, principal, Gifted Education Program Director, Exceptional Children's teacher (where appropriate), Limited English Proficiency Program Coordinator (where appropriate). The DEP serves to communicate to all stakeholders the student's academic needs in a specific curricular area(s). In addition, the plan articulates all components of the gifted program designed to enhance student learning. Acceleration/Enrichment opportunities are included options. DEPs are reviewed annually; signatures of major stakeholders are evidenced. (Parents are invited to conference at least annually to review and update the DEP.)  
The DEP communicates the following components:  
The curriculum resources and strategies provided by general education to deliver the NC SCoS and the manner in which the curriculum is to be advanced/enriched for the AIG student.  
The DEP provides opportunities for expansion of general education services in the student's identified area of strength/giftedness.  
The DEP considers affective needs of the gifted student.  
The DEP addresses flexible cluster grouping arrangements.  
The DEP is reviewed at least annually and updated as needed. Signatures of all major stakeholders on the Summary of Student Eligibility/Documentation of Student Need and the DEP is required before an initial placement decision is finalized.

**Goals:** Alleghany County School will appropriately differentiate instruction for gifted students within the regular classroom and seek extended learning opportunities as appropriate.

**Description:** The match between student need and appropriate service delivery option(s), will be based on the

data gathered during the student search and the nomination process. Decisions of the AIG Identification Team will be documented. Parents and nominating teachers will be notified of the recommended student-to-service match and invited to participate in the development of an Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). The DEP articulates the goals and objectives of the service option(s), the service delivery implementation plan and the manner in which student progress will be assessed. As a minimum standard, an DEP, aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NC SCS) shall be provided in the areas of reading, writing and math. Strategies include extended thinking, applied thinking and conceptual thinking and, by nature, extend the NC SCS, are designed to provide appropriate content modifications in a learning environment conducive to advanced differentiated instructional practices. Special program options will be determined by the student's demonstrated abilities and/or performance, as well as the student's social and emotional needs. Regular education has an integral responsibility to appropriately differentiate instruction for gifted students. The AIG Coordinator supports and collaborates with the regular classroom teachers to address the needs of gifted students by providing additional resources, concept-based units of study, co-teaching and/or professional development in advanced differentiated instruction, high-end teaching/learning strategies and social emotional issues of gifted students.

#### Signatures

documenting participation in the development of the DEP will include: parent, AIG Coordinator, student's regular teacher and principal. Advanced differentiated services will begin immediately. DEPs are filed in each student's AIG folder. Copies are provided to the students' parents and teachers.

Special placement consideration will be given to culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, and disabled populations based on disaggregated data.

#### Annual Review:

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

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

Rising ninth grade students and parents attend a College and Career Ready meeting with high school personnel to discuss high school gifted education options. The educational plan outlined during this meeting allows for students to graduate with advanced courses, increased course credit and CTE certifications.

#### DEP's

Documentation from annual parent meetings,  
Various communications to various stakeholders

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Planning notes, agendas and minutes from school and district meetings

Interviews with related personnel

Samples of differentiation resulting school and district collaboration

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

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

The AIG Coordinator works collaboratively with the school staff, administrators, district level instructional support team and community members to create a system-wide comprehensive AIG program. All efforts are directed toward improving effectiveness of the program. Operating under the understanding that change is constant, teachers and administrators advocate for positive change in programming and lead and participate in implementing initiatives to improve student learning.

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

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Licensure documentation on file at the Alleghany County Schools Personnel office and the Department of Public Instruction for the district level AIG Coordinator  
General education professional development  
AIG licensed classroom teachers,

Locally endorsed (but not fully licensed) classroom teachers

**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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Alleghany County Schools believes that a comprehensive education plan for gifted students is only as effective as the AIG specialists that lead the program's design and implement the service

delivery plan. All professionals who are assigned to work with gifted students must possess the skill and requisite knowledge to implement the advanced differentiated program designed to respond to the students' academic and social-emotional needs.

Licensed AIG teachers and specialists understand meta-cognitive processes of the AIG learner and appreciate the impact that external factors such as development, culture, language proficiency, socio-economic level, etc. affect the learning process. The AIG Coordinator assists teachers in designing lessons and locating and adapting resources to meet the needs of advanced students. The AIG Coordinator, along with the school level instructional specialist(s) and the classroom teacher collaborate to develop and apply strategies to ensure a rigorous and relevant program of study for advanced students.

**Goals:** Alleghany County Schools will maintain a licensed AIG Coordinator to lead the program. The AIG Coordinator will also participate as a member of the district level instructional specialists team.

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

- Collaborate with classroom teachers on referral process for AIG program;
- Facilitate meetings with parents and teachers to develop the Advanced Differentiated Education Plan;
- Articulate with school personnel characteristics of gifted children using assessment criteria and observations of learning behaviors;
- Develop the professional development designed to meet the unique academic and social-emotional needs of gifted students;
- Collaborate with teachers on integrating advanced learning activities for advanced learners;
- Evaluate student success using formative and summative data and adjust/modify curriculum where necessary;
- Model strategies and technique and coach teachers in the use of integrated gifted education methods and modifications;
- Collaborate with instructional specialists and teacher on activities to advocate for the needs of gifted learners and the resource materials required to meet those needs;

Facilitate the programming, including flexible cluster-grouping options in heterogeneously or homogeneously grouped classrooms;  
Provide and/or plan academic services that are specifically designed for the identified academic needs of gifted students:  
Participate in ongoing professional development for the advancement of gifted education;  
Communicate with parents regarding services and opportunities for gifted children;  
Lead discussions with parents and teachers on developing the DEP's.

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

**Other Comments:**

**Practice C**

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

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

**Rationale:** In order to assure the quality of Alleghany County Schools educational personnel, the school system is committed to providing an ongoing and comprehensive plan for professional development. The district considers professional development a key feature of its plan for expanding options for gifted/advanced students and crucial for successful implementation of the gifted program. Efforts toward the development of AIG licensed professionals, general education teachers, support staff, Exceptional Children's personnel, counselors, and school administrators through ongoing personnel preparation in gifted education is encouraged and supported. Excellence in pedagogy, as reflected in appropriate curriculum differentiation options for gifted students in the general education classroom is thereby ensured. Moving forward, our teachers are expected to assume new roles within the school and will be able to appreciate and teach children from diverse backgrounds by offering a culture-sensitive, differentiated, technology-rich, 21st century curriculum on an ever-expanding curricular base of knowledge. Provisions for professional development with inherent provisions for influencing teacher effectiveness is paramount.

**Goals:** Appropriate and specific professional development will be offered for teachers and school administrators; counselors and exceptional children's personnel are invited/encouraged to attend. Professional development will be focused on advanced differentiation strategies, problem-based learning strategies and technology integration best practices and will be delivered, for the most part, through the district level instructional support team and will be personalized for individual teacher needs as much as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

Delivered in an appropriately differentiated, personalized manner so as to address needs of various levels of

expertise and experience among participants;

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

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

- \* Expand teachers' backgrounds in content areas

- \* Infuse rigor throughout the curriculum

- \* Increase investigative, problem-based learning opportunities

- \* Increase methods of differentiation and strategies appropriate for gifted students,

- \* Generate enthusiasm for programs that provide differentiated learning opportunities for a wide range of student abilities and needs, and

- \* Contribute to an overall purpose of renewal and revitalization throughout the total school program.

Upcoming Professional Development topics include:

- \* Curriculum Differentiation and Designing Tiered Lessons

- \* Critical and Creative Thinking

- \* Creative Problem Solving

- \* Higher Order Thinking and Questioning Strategies

- \* Using Technology to Differentiate Instruction

- \* Problem Based Learning (Buck Institute Training)

- \* Instructional Coaching

- \* New Schools Project Coaching

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Professional development opportunities available to various stakeholders,

Documented professional development participation,

Local endorsement,  
Results from surveys, professional development based on surveys from stakeholders,  
AIG Coordinator professional development,  
PLC discussions based on formative, summative and EVAAS data,  
Instructional Support Team collaboration

**Other Comments:**

**Practice D**

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

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

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

**Goals:** In order to provide effective services for meeting the unique needs of gifted learners, Alleghany

County Schools will focus on identifying highly qualified personnel whose responsibility is to provide instructional services to gifted students. In order to assure the quality of educational personnel, the school system is committed to providing an ongoing and comprehensive plan for staff development. Alleghany County Schools considers staff development a key feature of its plan for expanding options for

the highly able students it serves and crucial for successful implementation of the Gifted Education Program. Professional qualifications guide the hiring practices of personnel who are assigned to work with gifted and highly able students.

A focused and deliberate effort is in place to create a large pool of teachers who can skillfully educate AIG students.

Over the next three years, Alleghany County Schools will work to match AIG students with regular classroom teachers who have the following qualifications;

- 1)AIG certification
- 2)AIG advanced degree
- 3)Participation and ultimate completion of the ITF Master's program with ASU
- 4)BIE training (Buck Institute)
- 5)Alleghany County Model Classroom (Technology)

**Description:** Educators with specialized training in advanced pedagogy, content and strategies are more

effective when delivering instructional programs to advanced learners. These teachers and support personnel require specific knowledge and skills to provide developmentally appropriate, differentiated and challenging instruction in classrooms. Ongoing professional development is required to update and keep abreast of new research in gifted education.

One of the goals of Alleghany County Schools program for gifted students is to develop and support a

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

The purposes of staff development include:

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Roles and responsibilities clear for AIG personnel and general education teachers,  
District list of licensed AIG and teachers meeting local endorsement criteria  
Documented professional development participation,  
AIG student class assignments/class rosters,

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

**Goals:** Allegheny County Schools revised vision for AIG students is to provide integrated gifted education services within the general education program, with support from the AIG Coordinator and the school and district instructional specialist team.

**Description:** Professional development opportunities are aligned with other district initiatives and are designed to increase effectiveness of all educators. Increasing student learning is the focus. Sessions are planned to reflect relevant knowledge, research-based skills and strategies that offer a variety of

differentiated options in order to meet the needs of varied learner profiles. An ongoing, systemic process, professional development is an integral component of the school district.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Schedule, agenda, participation logs, sign-in sheets, etc. of professional development offerings aligned with AIG goals;  
District professional growth plan reflects needs of gifted learners;

**Other Comments:** N/A

### **Practice F**

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

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

**Rationale:** High-quality professional development opportunities, aligned with state and/or national teaching standards that include 21st century research, skills and content, are necessary to ensure that goals set by school improvement teams are met. Continuous improvement for advanced students, reflected in school improvement plans, are inherent to professional development designed to enhance learning for all students.

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

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

**Description:** Alleghany County Schools promotes professional development opportunities that include

the following tenets:

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

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

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Documented alignment with an use of NAGC/CES professional development standards, NC teaching standards, NC AIG licensure standards; Related programs, schedules, presentations, ACS district PD Plan, Advanced technology training- podcasts, voice embeded technology, online PD, moodles, NC SCOS enhanced by AIG professional development, New Teacher Evaluation Model, NTE inclusive of 21st century skills w/ related professional development.

**Other Comments:**

**Practice G**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8/7/2013

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Examples of resources produced through collaboration,  
Documented meeting notes and agendas,  
PLC meetings,  
AIG emails,  
Collaborative planning sessions,  
Instructional Support Team meetings.  
ACS AIG Plan incorporated into School Improvement Plans

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

**Goals:** Alleghany County Schools will provide services primarily through a push-in, classroom delivery model, rather than primarily a pull-out service delivery model, that includes flexible clustering, differentiation and building teacher capacity.

**Description:** A comprehensive service delivery system for advanced, gifted and highly gifted learners is outlined in two segments: elementary (PK-8) and secondary (9-12). A service delivery plan is divided into two major sections that address the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners across all grade levels and settings: academic development and talent development. Service options are presented in three areas: learning environment, content differentiation, and talent development/enrichment. Academic development includes different learning environments, grouping options, and content differentiation strategies that are appropriate for a variety of learners. The learning environment describes the variety of settings where the differentiated services will be delivered. The effect of grouping for gifted students has been found to be positive when instruction is differentiated to meet learning needs within the curriculum. Flexible clustering describes the purposeful grouping of students that is used to facilitate the teaching of students at their demonstrated readiness level. Such instructional grouping should be flexible within and between individual classrooms or within and between teams and should enable students to move in and out of groups based on their needs and performance. Students may be placed in a group based on their ability and/or performance or they may be placed in an option on a trial basis based on the recommendation of their teacher(s). Flexible pacing options are provisions that place students at an appropriate instructional level, creating the best possible match between a student's achievement and instruction and allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills. A variety of settings

where differentiated services will be delivered include: the regular homeroom, another classroom, or through district wide STEM days, provided throughout the school year. In some cases, the settings may go beyond the school walls, including internship and apprenticeship experiences, and may also include simultaneous college enrollment.

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

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

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

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

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Specified array of service options K-12

DEP's

Student identification profiles matched to service options

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice B**

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

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

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

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

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

**Goals:** Allegheny County Schools will integrate gifted education services into the regular classroom and provide additional support through the AIG Coordinator and the school and district instructional support team.

**Description:** Allegheny County Schools integrates the gifted education program within the whole school environment through collaborative strategic planning by educators, parents and community members to ensure total school improvement. The planning processes that include programs and services, program goals and resources are aligned with the system's mission statement and core beliefs. Aligned with system and school improvement goals, AIG budgetary decisions are based on program needs. Planning sessions among general education teachers, administrators and gifted educators provide guidance on directing time, funding and personnel resources toward building and delivering a program that is purposefully focused on advanced student learning.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Specified array of service options K-12  
Student identification profiles matched to service options  
State 034 funds matched to AIG services  
Alignment of local AIG plan to district strategic plan

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

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

**Description:** Strategies for the teaching/learning process are designed to respond to the unique needs of students.

As educators become aware of the strengths and needs of students, an academic program that responds to the unique learning styles of students is built that delivers a curriculum outlined in the NC Standard Course of Study. Differentiation of curriculum and instruction is paramount in an educational program that seeks to address, meet and challenge each individual's potential. Academically or Intellectually gifted students enrolled in Allegheny County Schools are served through an integrated gifted education program. AIG services are integrated with the regular education program, PK-12, where flexible grouping is used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual and emotional growth. The Revised Standard Course of Study provides a curriculum base on which to build a framework for expanding and/or enhancing curriculum for academically gifted and other academically able and motivated students. It is the intent of the integrated program to link and align instructional strategies and assessment instruments with students' talents and needs. The classroom in which thinking is encouraged is one where questions are valued, intellectual challenges are welcomed, and one in which education is viewed as a process of teaching what is known and, perhaps more importantly, a process of searching for solutions to what is unknown. All students are afforded educational experiences that encourage them to find problems and speculate on possible solutions. The critical thinker must be awarded time to deliberate, think of alternate solutions to given problems, weigh evidence and ultimately articulate and defend a logical conclusion. Enrichment activities are implemented that emphasize critical and creative thinking and stress awareness of students' responsibilities to society. Each teacher, with guidance and direction from the AIG Coordinator and school instructional specialist, are better prepared to determine, implement and evaluate differentiation strategies. Allegheny County Schools AIG Program is purposefully designed to provide learning opportunities that promote the growth of skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for gifted students to reach their potential. Instructional programs provide a steady challenge without frustration or excessive pressure. Allegheny County Schools continues to integrate the AIG program within the whole school environment through collaborative strategic planning by educators, parents and community members to ensure total school improvement.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Grade level, cross grade level, multi-disciplinary collaborative planning;  
Students' instructional schedules;  
Policies and procedures for acceleration and grouping with academic/intellectual peers stated in ACS Plan,  
Flexible clustering,  
Inclusion,  
Advanced differentiation,  
Enrichment,  
Acceleration.

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

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

**Goals:** Alleghany County Schools will clearly articulated the expectation of differentiated services and integrated instructional delivery for all AIG students to all stakeholders.

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

A school level AIG Team will use student data to identify those students who require advance differentiated services and guide the development of the overall program. Placement decisions must be made to reflect the appropriate advanced differentiation service option that will match the student's needs. The AIG Coordinator will monitor AIG students' progress and ensure a student-services match. Annual reviews of students will include evaluations of student performance in the program. The AIG Coordinator and, where appropriate, the Exceptional Children Program Director and/or the LEP Coordinator, assess progress toward the school system's goal of equitability. Curriculum and assessment studies and student success as indicated by normed testing data are used to analyze appropriate service delivery to all students.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Agendas, minutes, from collaborative planning meetings;  
Agendas, minutes, from district and school focused on stakeholders and personnel;  
Communications to related stakeholders and personnel;  
District and school web sites, newsletters,  
BOE presentations,  
Agendas,  
Website,  
Presentations to faculty/staff,  
Presentations to Instructional Support Team

Presentations to principals and department heads,  
PLCs

**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:** Effective communication among and between teachers, schools and central office administrators is essential to the success of the AIG program and the services it provides. A plan to articulate the aligned and integrated services ensures seamless transitions between grades and schools so as to provide for continuation of services, PK-12. A proactive approach with the intent of transitioning advanced differentiated plans for identified gifted students further ensures continuation of services. Teachers collaborate proactively by providing and receiving academic and social-emotional information on students so as to better understand and plan for student success. Misconceptions are eliminated; a base of understanding is established. Program goals and long- and short-range plans can be developed in advance with better a understanding of students' performance levels and needs for potential growth.

**Goals:** The AIG Coordinator will establish and communicate a systematic transition procedure to ensure continuation of services.

**Description:** Alleghany County Schools is directed in its efforts to communicate the many and varied learning styles and characteristics of gifted students within a school population, PK-12. A firm commitment to meeting the needs of advanced students is continually being reinforced in the schools. Effective communication among and between teachers and schools is critical when planning programs that address students' strengths and needs. Throughout the year, teachers and building administrators communicate to align program content with specific student need. At transition points, opportunities for pedagogical dialogue is planned within professional learning communities so as to reduce/eliminate misconceptions, misunderstandings and confusion with students transferring from one grade to the next, or from one school to another. In a sensitive and respectful environment, discussions are open and remain confidential; student learning profiles are shared to promote and insure continuation of the PK-12 service delivery program.nt to meeting the needs of advanced students is continually being reinforced in the schools

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Consistent AIG services among all schools,  
Agendas, minutes from district and schools focused on services,  
Student and parent communications, meetings at key transition points,  
Transitional meetings (PK toK, elementary to middle, middle to high school)  
Stakeholder communication

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

**Goals:** Alleghany County Schools will fully engage the AIG Coordinator, regular classroom teachers, administrators, parents and the school and district instructional support team in collaboration to develop, evaluate, enhance, and support AIG programming and services.

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Documentation of meetings with related personnel,  
DEPs/IDEPs,  
Documentation of parent/school partnerships,  
ACS and school websites,  
Related personnel schedules and rosters,  
Collaborative planning time,

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice G**

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

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

**Rationale:** In order for gifted students to reach their full potential, social and emotional needs must be purposefully included in programs and services for this population. A proactive support structure is established when school systems make provisions for affective services.

**Goals:** Alleghany County Schools is committed to providing a system-wide program that addresses the social and emotional needs of gifted students. Counseling services must have a school-wide emphasis evidenced by all certified and non-certified school personnel who work with gifted students be aware and able to address the unique social and emotional needs of these students. Services must include parent information sessions so that parents are also made aware of the unique characteristics of gifted populations and are thus better inclined to support the efforts of the school

**Description:** Alleghany County Schools recognizes that the social and emotional needs of gifted students warrant a program supported by counselors, general education teachers, gifted education specialists, parents/families. School-wide differentiated services, including designed especially for these students that address particular social and emotional needs provide opportunities for students with common interests, abilities and motivation to work together on appropriately challenging tasks. Flexible grouping, flexible pacing and flexible use of SIOp strategies are inherent to the program allowing for the dynamic make up of groups and curriculum. Because the district's population is becoming more ethnically diverse, sensitivity to cultural, language and socio-economic diversity becomes increasingly important. Counseling interventions that address issues related to diversity must be explored and delivered. Counselors collaborate on teams with certified and non-certified personnel who work with gifted and highly advanced students to address and resolve issues that may arise due to differences in cultural background, language and socio-economic levels. Flexible grouping allows students of similar achievement/ability levels, common interests/passions to work together for a portion of the school day/week. Research is clear: gifted and high ability students' learning increases significantly when offered opportunities to work with intellectual peers. When guidance personnel work with teachers to ensure a positive and productive collaborative learning environment, behavioral issues are kept at a minimum.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Related professional development opportunities;  
Intentional and purposeful student programming and instruction;  
Communications with guidance counselors, students, teachers, parents

**Other Comments:**

**Practice H**

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

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

**Rationale:** A variety of service delivery options ensures that student need is matched with appropriate service option(s). Differentiated services within and across a variety of settings where instruction is appropriately advanced, extended and/or accelerated promote student success.

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

**Description:** Our current service delivery array includes inclusive supports, resource pullout, project based learning, NCVPS offerings, and grade acceleration where appropriate. Some students achieve remarkably well and may need subject or grade advancement, in addition to other differentiated services. For these students, a case study is prepared using specific criteria for subject and grade advancement. This service option may be used at any grade level; however, students contemplating early high school graduation must meet the North Carolina graduation requirements. This option requires careful consideration.

Criteria for Grade Acceleration:

- Aptitude (IQ) percentile: 98% Total Battery NPA
- Achievement: 98% as measured on standardized achievement test
- Performance: work samples, portfolio
- Teacher Inventory and Recommendation
- Motivation Inventory
- Social/emotional assessment completed by school psychologist

These measures are combined with AIG and regular education teacher recommendation and submitted to the school principal who then may provide his/her own written recommendation. If an AIG student requires subject or grade acceleration or parents of an AIG student requests acceleration, the AIG teacher and school must follow the procedure outlined in the local plan. If, however, the request is for a student not identified as AIG, the school may use the AIG procedure but is not required to do so. Principals or school-based committees may have other procedures in place for such a request, but generally they seek advice from the AIG Program.

AIG teachers must adhere to the following procedures for AIG student acceleration requests:

- Request a written statement from parent requesting subject or grade acceleration
- Check records to determine if the student has achieved at maximum class performance in the subject for more than one year (if subject acceleration) or all subjects for more than one year (if grade acceleration). If the student has not met these criteria, the AIG teacher should request a parent conference to share that information and conclude the acceleration procedure at this point.
- If the records indicate that the student has met the class performance criteria, the AIG teacher will discuss the request with the site principal.
- After obtaining the parent statement, the AIG teacher will request recommendation letters from both the student's classroom teacher and the principal to accompany their own AIG teacher recommendation
- Submit packet to school psychologist for assessment of social/emotional appropriateness
- After the psychologist completes this review, the AIG Review Team will meet with the psychologist, student, parent and principal to discuss the results and social/emotional development. At this time the AIG Review Team should make a recommendation to the school principal who will determine

grade placement.

- Submit to principal and superintendent for final approval

#### Non-Acceleration Procedures

If a student does NOT meet the acceleration criteria, the AIG teacher should follow these procedures:

- Complete documentation to denote "No Acceleration Recommended"
- Send the parent a copy of the decision with due process procedures
- Place a copy of acceleration documentation in the AIG record for the student

#### Acceleration Procedures:

If the student meets the acceleration criteria, the AIG teacher will follow these procedures:

- Complete a DEP with the parent and obtain parent signature for subject or grade level acceleration
- Place copies of the Acceleration packet in the front of the AIG record

Begin serving the student on the advanced grade level or in the advanced subject level.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Acceleration options available and processes clearly communicated

Use of appropriate acceleration measures

Minutes and agendas from related meetings

#### **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:** An inclusive AIG

placement process ensures that full academic potential for students from all cultural/ethnic groups and from all socio-economic levels is recognized and fostered.

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

**Description:** Alleghany County Schools offers AP coursework and dual enrollment options to all students. Our district has made specific effort to address the needs of first generation college students.

N/A

N/A

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Student data disaggregations and trend analysis

DEPs

Identify under-represented populations through K-3 nurturing process  
Utilize WIDA standards for differentiated instruction  
Identify assessment for non-English speakers

**Other Comments:**

**Practice J**

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

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

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

**Goals:** The AIG Coordinator will work collaboratively with schools to design a consistent, appropriate program for each grade level that identifies extra-curricular/extended learning opportunities that will enhance student learning. These activities will be determined and communicated prior to each school year.

**Description:** AIG students will have access to consistent, equitable above and beyond opportunities throughout the district. This plan will be developed annually during the summer and communicated to parents in the fall of each year.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Logs of student participation in extra-curricular programs, service learning, etc.  
Extended opportunities calendar of events

**Other Comments:**

## Standard 5: Partnerships

The LEA ensures on-going and meaningful participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the local AIG program to develop strong partnerships.

### Practice A

Develops partnerships with parents/families and the community that are intentional and meaningful to support the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of AIG students.

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

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

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

**Description:** Input is solicited through parent surveys, meetings and annual reviews. School system employees provide information to parents and community members through newsletters, newspaper articles, brochure, handbooks and web page availability.

The DEP is developed to communicate the service(s) in which the student will be involved, the learning environment where the service(s) will be offered, the content modifications that will occur for the student, and the array of special programs available to enhance the student's learning. The DEP is updated and reviewed with the parent annually or when program changes are needed for the student. Curriculum developed according to the above guidelines is used in the services provided.

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

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

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

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Agendas, minutes, presentation at related meetings, work sessions; Parent/family and community surveys/communications;

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice B**

Shares with stakeholders, including all students' parents/families, information regarding the local AIG program, the local AIG plan, and other policies relating to gifted education.

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

**Rationale:** Alleghany County Schools recognizes that clear information with regard to program goals, the AIG plan and other policies is a critical aspect of gifted education programming. Articulated information regarding the program's strengths and areas of need shared with all stakeholders results in greater advocacy for gifted services. Research clearly indicates that effective communication is critical to the success of any program.

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

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Publically posted local AIG plan through a variety of media

**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 Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

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

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

**Description:** Stakeholder feedback was solicited prior to the revision of the plan (stakeholders are comprised of parents/community members, students, gifted and general educators, building administrators, central office administrators, special area teachers, and therapists). Feedback indicated that Allegheny County Schools needed to revise the plan in areas around program quality, program equity among schools, and maximizing student service time. (AIG..all day, every day).  
Moving forward, the same processes and feedback will drive future improvements to the program.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Invitations to serve on various committees  
List of AIG committee members and representative roles  
Surveys  
Minutes of meetings

**Other Comments:**

**Practice D**

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

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

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

**Goals:** Allegheny County Schools will provide access to information in parents' native language.

**Description:** Gifted program services and opportunities offered to advanced students are based on best-practice research. Programs are monitored and offerings are updated regularly to reflect current initiatives. Every effort is directed toward matching program offerings with student interest and need. Formal and informal communications, verbal and written/text communications articulate program initiatives and services as they become available. Annual review meetings, held at least yearly, provide ongoing, scheduled opportunity to inform parents/families, by phone or face-to-face of programs, initiatives, services, learning opportunities, etc. available to students on an ongoing and scheduled basis.

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Variety of communication methods  
Translated documents and events  
Interpreter calendar/memos

**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:** Community volunteers, IHE's, business and industry partnerships as well as other resources available regionally and via the web, broaden educational programming for AIG students as well as support for the AIG program.

**Goals:** Alleghany County Schools recognizes the value of partnerships with parents/families, institutions of higher education, local businesses and industry, and other stakeholders within the community. Although district outreach initiatives are currently in place, a focus on strengthening bonds with the local college, university and community businesses would establish greater opportunities for broader perspectives, shared areas of specific expertise, volunteer time with students. Assurances that the needs of gifted and advanced students are thus addressed and met through high-quality program offerings

**Description:** AIG programming is discussed in formal, scheduled meetings as well as informal meetings to seek input, make adjustments/modifications in curriculum and instructional strategies so as to promote and maximize student learning. In addition, student, parent and teacher, and community surveys designed to provide perspectives on general and gifted education programs are initiated at least annually.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Participation in community agencies and organizations  
Guest speakers at meetings and professional development offerings  
Brochures, newsletters

**Other Comments:**

## Standard 6: Program Accountability

The LEA implements, monitors, and evaluates the local AIG program and plan to ensure that all programs and services are effective in meeting the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

### Practice A

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

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

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

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

**Description:** Allegheny County Schools AIG Program began in response to the requirements to the North Carolina Creech Bill legislation. In its commitment to excellence and quality services for students, the AIG program has continually evolved to reflect the current best practices in the identification, instruction, and support of gifted students.

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

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

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Allegheny County Schools AIG plan and review approved by board

Outline of process for continual improvement  
Board Agenda

**Other Comments:**

**Practice B**

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

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

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

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

**Description:** In order to ensure fidelity of implementation for all AIG program components, program policies and procedures are articulated clearly. Periodic professional development sessions reiterate and reinforce current legislation and state policies and ensure common understanding and interpretation. Stakeholders monitor procedures and practices for compliance and identify areas where procedures and practices are in need of strengthening. The AIG Coordinator participates as a member of the district level instructional team. She monitors school level compliance and fidelity and utilizes the instructional specialist team as a vehicle for communication and feedback to the program.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** School-based programming audits  
Disaggregation of EOG and EOC test data  
Data reports, patterns and trends analysis  
Parent/Teacher/Student surveys  
Adherence to Article B

**Other Comments:**

**Practice C**

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

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

**Rationale:** Effective and efficient budgetary operations are critical components of the AIG program and plan, without which the program could not operate. Funds for specific operational expenditures are identified and aligned with program goals in order to ensure that program objectives and student

performance outcomes are achieved. Activities, resource materials, personnel requirements are aligned with a budgetary timeline and monitoring scheme designed to manage expenditures needed to deliver a quality and policy-compliant program.

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

**Description:** The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the Alleghany County School system recognize the importance of allocating funds for AIG Program services and expenditures. The AIG budget is one of the most critical components to support the efforts of gifted education programming. Budgets are prepared by the Director of Elementary Education in conjunction with the Director of Personnel and Director of Finance. All budget expenditures are allocated to accomplish the program's goals and objectives, reflecting integration with the total school curriculum. The budget aligns completely with the program's gifted services, and is monitored regularly for accuracy and accountability. The overwhelming majority of AIG funds are used or funding AIG certified teacher positions. Our LEA goes through an annual financial audit and no findings of error have been found.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Annual budget summary  
Teacher licensure reports from HRMS  
Contracts for professional development  
Receipts for materials and curriculum purchases

**Other Comments:**

#### **Practice D**

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

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

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

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

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

analyzed in order to ensure an appropriate service match.

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

N/A

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Dissaggregation of EOG and EOC test data  
DEP's  
Drop-out data including AIG students

**Other Comments:** N/A

### **Practice E**

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

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

**Rationale:** In order to increase access of gifted students from typically under-represented populations, statistics must be monitored to ensure equity of access.

**Goals:** 1. Collect Data regarding referral and identification trends based upon demographics and subgroups  
2. Analyze enrollment data of upper-level coursework  
3. Survey stakeholders  
4. Revise evaluation protocols to eliminate bias

**Description:** Members of the district and school leadership routinely monitors the AIG child count to examine representation and retention of under-represented populations.

Alleghany County Schools will tighten its monitoring of various subgroups represented within the gifted education program. Through a collaborative effort with student services, the gifted education program will also monitor those students who may choose not to enroll in a rigorous course of study. The AIG Coordinator will assist teachers in examining data from their individual schools to compare the enrollment of the diverse gifted learners within the rigorous course of study and provide data reports to the district leadership on the representation of diverse gifted students in rigorous courses of study.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Data regarding referral and identification trends based upon demographics and subgroups  
Enrollment data analysis of upper-level coursework  
Agendas and minutes of staff development offerings, AIG meetings, work sessions  
Surveys of stakeholders  
Evaluation protocols

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

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

**Description:** Collaboration between Allegheny County Schools Human Resources Department, administrators, and the AIG Coordinator ensures fidelity in maintaining and monitoring the credentials of teachers instructing AIG students. The personnel department maintains current records on each employee and encourages additional certifications in all areas including AIG.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Licensure reports from HRMS  
Professional development records  
Summary reports of use of 034 funds  
Headcount data

**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 Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.**

**Rationale:** Forms an advisory group of parents/families of AIG students representative of diverse populations in the program, teachers, and other administrators who meet regularly to review all aspects of the local AIG program and make recommendations for program improvement.

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

**Description:** Steering committee members are invited each year to provide meaningful participation into AIG plan development. The AIG steering committee, comprised of a diverse population, meets to review and develop the local plan. The steering committee, AIG staff and other school personnel

meet regularly and make recommendations for program improvement.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Agendas, minutes and presentations from work sessions, district meetings

Invitations to serve, membership on committees

Surveys of stakeholders

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice H**

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

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

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

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

**Description:** Alleghany County Schools and the AIG Program staff fully recognize that stakeholder feedback is an integral part of the program development cycle. All schools and the AIG program are accountable to our constituencies, ensuring that all resources are effectively and efficiently expended. Summative and formative evaluations, such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, parent meetings, and online email links are established and disseminated. The data collected from these evaluative measures are utilized in informational meetings as well as in making changes in specific program components. In some instances, the data has provided justification in eliminating and/or implementing specific practices. Formative feedback provides exceptional guidance in establishing program goals and determining program strengths and weaknesses. The summative data assists stakeholders in determining the success or need for modification of current program components.

The Alleghany County Schools Steering Committee, composed of various stakeholders, serves as a fair and impartial group of evaluators, providing weight to all voices from diverse positions and roles. Stakeholders may include parents, gifted students, Central Office Administrators, gifted facilitators, classroom teachers, building principals, and others in the community. The steering Committee also analyzes and attributes data outcome to AIG Program services and procedures.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Data from surveys, interviews, etc.

Data gathered from DEP meetings

**Other Comments:**

### **Practice I**

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

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

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

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

**Description:** The Alleghany County Schools AIG Program employs evaluative procedures at various intervals to substantiate and/or modify program identification, curriculum service delivery models, and other program components. Through theoretical-based study, each program component has been planned, revised, evaluated, and monitored for effectiveness and impact on student academic performance and social/emotional growth.

AIG strategies and standards are incorporated into the District Strategic Plan. Staff actively participates in regional roundtables designed to improve implementation of AIG plan implementation.

Based on the Alleghany County Schools mission and philosophy, the AIG Program goals, policies and procedures reflect best practices for gifted students. North Carolina EOG/EOC test scores, benchmark scores, grade performance, AIG performance, AIG administered tests, portfolio submissions and numerous other indicators are collected and reviewed as indicators to assist with program improvement.

On the school level, the AIG Review team serves as an essential source of feedback. At the district level, the leadership team serves as a "checks and balances" team. Monitoring and adjusting is often imperative at the district level. Testing and placement data are examined to ascertain the nature and compliance of placements, providing insight into the number of students who fall below acceptable performance levels and require academic advisement.

The AIG Steering Committee continuously reviews, revises and adjusts the implementation of the AIG program. To ensure a rigorous and relevant curriculum, research-based materials are utilized at each level of service.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Review comments by DPI noted and returned to ACS

Explicit plan revisions based upon feedback

Steering Committee agenda and notes

Leadership Team meeting agendas and notes

**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:** The Alleghany County Schools Gifted Education Plan and the program that is defined therein is accountable to the stakeholders that it serves. Specifically and purposefully designed programs and services ensure funding sources and the stakeholders that the plan addresses ensure that resources are efficiently and effectively spent and that the educational initiatives and strategies are of the highest quality reflecting current, best practices. Evaluations are facilitated by individuals with experience and expertise in the area of gifted education. Findings are disseminated to the public in the form of media releases, open meetings, and website postings as information is gathered.

**Goals:** 1. Provide evaluation information to Alleghany County Board of Education  
2. Present findings to district and school level leadership  
3. Make evaluation results available to public upon request.

**Description:** ACS Leadership will provide yearly program impact presentations to our board of education. We will utilize a variety of modes of communication: newsletter, website, media coverage, memos, etc

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Utilization of a variety of modes of communication: newsletter, website, media coverage, memos, etc. Presentation to board members

**Other Comments:**

**Practice K**

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

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

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

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

**Description:** The Alleghany County Schools AIG Program reflects the state policies and procedures governing the administration of gifted education programs and services. The Alleghany County Schools Local Plan, approved by the local Board of Education and reviewed by the NC Department of Public Instruction, remains in compliance in all program components. Screening, testing, and identification procedures are reviewed annually to ensure equity, consistency, and best practices. School-based AIG decisions are monitored by the AIG Review Committee and the Director of Student Services. Team minutes are required at each AIG Review Team meeting as a means of documenting discussions and decisions. There is oversight between the school and district level to protect the rights of all students who may qualify for screening, testing, and/or placement in the AIG Program.

The policies, procedures and practices outline specific components that protect the rights of all AIG students. Monitoring by individuals who have expertise in the area of gifted education ensure that regulations are implemented and compliant. The district plan, updated and revised at least every three years at a system level, looks at fairness and equity issues relating to student screening, referral and identification processes, program management and services at each grade level, student outcomes and assessment processes, student grouping procedures, professional development, counseling and guidance services, funding sources, and program evaluation needs.

**Planned Sources of Evidence:** Due process procedures written and shared through a variety of media

Documentation of complaints and subsequent LEA responses and changes

Interviews with parents/guardians and school personnel where disagreements have occurred.

**Other Comments:**

**Glossary (optional):**

**Appendix (optional):**

CRITERIA FOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OPTIONS 6-8.docx (*Appendix*)  
CRITERIA FOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OPTIONS 9-12.docx (*Appendix*)  
CRITERIA FOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OPTIONS K-5.docx (*Appendix*)