

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

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

Rockingham County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Rockingham County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, July 2009). 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.

For 2013-2016, Rockingham County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Rockingham County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program and its stakeholders will prepare students to be successful lifelong learners. The program will draw on higher order thinking skills and incorporate the use of 21st century learning tools to enhance and differentiate curriculum, cultivate student potential, and encourage passionate learning in order to meet all students' unique social, emotional, and academic needs.

8/8/2013

El Programa de Estudiantes Intelectual y/o Académicamente Dotados y sus Participantes se encargaran de preparar que los estudiantes para que se conviertan en Aprendices Exitosos de por Vida. El programa se enfocará en habilidades de razonamiento de alto orden e incorporará el uso de herramientas de aprendizaje del Siglo 21 para mejorar y diferenciar el currículo, cultivar el potencial de los estudiantes e incentivar la pasión por el aprendizaje con el fin de satisfacer todas las necesidades sociales, emocionales, y académicas de los estudiantes.

MISSION STATEMENT - The Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program of the Rockingham County School System strives to identify and meet the unique educational needs of gifted students who come from all ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic groups. The cultivation of potential in this population must be enhanced through an appropriate match of differentiated services to individual needs as we strive to prepare the students for success in the 21st Century. The program encourages higher order thinking and problem solving while also addressing the social and emotional needs of the students.

Misión del programa de estudiantes con talentos académicos e intelectuales - El programa de talento académico-intelectual del sistema del condado de las escuelas de Rockingham, se esfuerza por identificar y cumplir con las necesidades educacionales únicas de estudiantes con talento académico que vienen de todo tipo de grupos étnicos, culturales y socioeconómicos. El cultivo de potencial en estos grupos debe mejorar a través de servicios diversos adecuados para cada una de las necesidades de cada alumno y así esforzarnos para preparar estudiantes exitosos del siglo 21. El programa fomenta maneras de pensar y solución de problemas mas avanzados al mismo tiempo que se toman en cuenta las necesidades sociales y emocionales de los estudiantes.

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

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$670426.00	\$284112.00	\$0.00	\$4000.00

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: According to the self-assessment, Rockingham County Schools has improved in this area; therefore, this is a maintained practice for the 2013-2016 AIG Plan. We will continue to ensure that school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community at large are aware of and understand the screening, referral, and identification processes for all grade levels.

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

Description: Staff development for all K-12 AIG personnel (AIG specialists, Identification/Placement teams, counselors, district Advisory Board, and school advisory council) will be provided at the beginning of the school year, and as necessary, prior to the identification testing window on the screening, referral, and identification process. A multi-media presentation will be used to train AIG specialists and other AIG personnel who, in turn, will share the presentation with each school in the district. The presentation will be posted on the AIG webpage of the district's website and the websites of the AIG specialists. Administrators, guidance counselors, and AIG specialists have electronic access to the AIG plan, procedures, and forms. Since there needs to be public access for all stakeholders, a hard copy of the plan will be housed at every school. Parent meetings are held annually or more often if needed, to inform parents of any changes. An AIG brochure is available at each school, the Parent Resource Centers, and different locations in the community. Brochures are provided to each family the first year of the plan cycle, and in subsequent years, parents of kindergarten students receive an AIG brochure. In a continued effort to provide on-going access and communication, the AIG Plan is posted on Rockingham County Schools' AIG website along with an open invitation for comments and questions in addition to being posted on each of the AIG specialists' websites. Also, an overview of the AIG Plan, including procedures and implementation of the different components shall be presented by the AIG specialist to the school staff within the first six weeks of school and will be on-going as needed. The AIG coordinator and/or program director will provide updates and an annual overview to the administrators.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - PowerPoint

- District AIG website
- School AIG websites
- Brochure – English and Spanish

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: The self-assessment indicates that Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program is doing well in meeting this practice. We will continue to use multiple criteria as described below to create a comprehensive profile for each student in the AIG Program. AIG services are provided and adapted to the learner's area(s) of AIG identification as stated in the DEP/IDEP. The AIG Department recognizes the importance of utilizing research-based and theory-based non-traditional and traditional measures. When utilized in tandem, a more complete picture is provided of the student's abilities and potential. We plan to continue to review this practice in future years, but for now, we will maintain our current practices. Traditional and non-traditional standardized measures will continue to be implemented in order to better identify giftedness among all our students; however, our district will look at research concerning the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT2) and other tests that are considered to be reliable measures in identifying under-served populations.

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

Description: Rockingham County School System delays the formal identification of students for the Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program until the end of 3rd grade when testing is more appropriate and accurate for predicting the need for advanced curriculum. When appropriate, students in kindergarten through 3rd grade receive enriched curriculum through classroom centers and accelerated materials even though they are not formally identified. Classroom teachers and the AIG specialist work together to meet the needs of these advanced students. In our program, for children in kindergarten through third grade, the most important factors are flexibility and nurturing. Many children have mastered some skills, but not all, at any particular grade level. They may have academic skills that are beyond their grade level but lack the social or emotional skills to deal with this challenge. The goal of our program, particularly at this level, is to provide opportunities to identify, nurture, and develop talents and abilities in the whole child and to spark new interests at a level that is appropriate for each student. Through informal assessment in the regular classroom, students who are achieving above the level of most of their peers in language and/or math will be cluster grouped for instruction. Even though formal identification begins in 4th grade, Rockingham County School System recognizes that some students develop cognitive abilities more rapidly than their same-age peers. K-3 students who demonstrate a strong need for differentiation through informal observation in the classroom may be referred to the Identification/Placement (I/P) Team for further screening. Indicators of a strong need for differentiation include:

- Reading two or more years above grade placement
- Performing in math two or more years above grade level
- Mastery of skills two or more years above grade level indicated by work samples completed at school.

The I/P Team will consider all of the above indicators in addition to the developmental and social and emotional needs of the student in order to determine the need for further assessment. To

qualify for formal placement, K-3 students must meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrate intellectual ability (98-99%) on an aptitude test
- Demonstrate knowledge (98-99%) on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.
- Meet a minimum of 46 on the K-2 Observation Inventory which is adapted from the work of Dr. Paul Slocumb and Dr. Ruby Payne in *Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty*.

The differentiated services for K-3 students who meet the requirements for AIG accelerated services are documented through an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP). The guidelines for subject or grade acceleration can be found in Standard 4, practice H. The regular classroom teacher in collaboration with the AIG specialist provides services for these students. Differentiation services will include cluster grouping, curriculum compacting, and classes with the AIG specialist. Identified third grade students are reevaluated and must meet the AIG criteria for continuous placement in the 4th grade.

Formal Identification: 4th Grade

The AIG Program identifies students in reading and/or math as moderate, strong, or individualized. The instructional services are aligned with the area of identification. Our goal is to provide a "globally competitive education environment in which all students can reach their highest potential," as stated in Rockingham County Schools mission statement. The AIG Program has six goals that correspond to the six AIG standards. See "Other Comments."

At the elementary level, the AIG specialists collaborate and consult with the regular classroom teachers to integrate the instructional programs and to ensure that AIG delivery of service is connected to classroom instruction by extending and enriching the NCSCOS. Some of the programs offered may include, but are not limited to the following: Math SuperStars, Accelerated Reader, Battle of the Books, Duke TIP Program, science and math fairs, WordMasters, and Continental Math League.

At the middle school level, students are subject-grouped according to their area and level of identification. Classes are based on the Standard Course of Study with appropriate rigor, extensions, and enrichment opportunities including curriculum compacting, above-level reading lists and materials, tiered assignments, and vocabulary development. Strategies may include small group discussions, cooperative groups, seminar discussions, debates, research and report writing, essays, and above-level independent reading.

At the high school level, course selection and special activities are available to all students on a self-selection basis. This self-selection process is supported through counseling and recommendations from teachers and school counselors. The focus of the high school AIG Program is the offering of Honors and AP classes in the core curriculum. Students are given the opportunity to participate in the International Baccalaureate Program. Various program options and opportunities provided at the high school level address the needs of AIG students. The selection of advanced courses and college-level courses, internships, mentorships, and online courses are possible opportunities for high school students to pursue advanced studies. Course descriptions communicate the course expectations and requirements. These descriptions are posted electronically on each high school's website.

The Cognitive Abilities Test is administered to all third and fifth grade students. This testing is part of the initial screening process to determine if further assessments are needed for possible AIG identification. Students will not be considered for the AIG program on a second testing of the CogAT within the same school year.

Students in grades four through twelve may be referred for possible AIG placement by administrators, parents, students, or teachers.

In order to qualify for moderate differentiation, at least one of the following test criteria and at least two of the last three criteria must be met.

- 85th percentile or higher on End-of-Grade test scores in reading and/or math
- 85th percentile or higher on cognitive testing (Verbal and/or Quantitative)
- 85th percentile or higher on cognitive testing (partial composite score of Nonverbal and Verbal and/or Nonverbal and Quantitative)
- Demonstrates proficiency in subject area
- Observable student behaviors documented on the Gifted Behavior Scale
- Student Motivation as shown in motivation portion of Gifted Behavior Scale OR teacher/parent recommendation with documentation that shows student interest

In order to qualify for strong differentiation, at least one of the following test criteria and at least two of the last three criteria must be met.

- 90th percentile or higher on End-of-Grade test scores in reading and/or math
- 90th percentile or higher on cognitive testing (Verbal and/or Quantitative)
- 90th percentile or higher on cognitive testing (partial composite score of Nonverbal and Verbal and/or Nonverbal and Quantitative)
- Demonstrates proficiency in subject area
- Observable student behaviors documented on the Gifted Behavior Scale
- Student Motivation as shown in motivation portion of Gifted Behavior Scale OR teacher/parent recommendation with documentation that shows student interest

In order to qualify for individualized differentiation in the AIG Program, four out of the following five criteria must be met with two criteria being the current test scores for placement in reading and/or math areas (EOG and cognitive testing):

- 98th or 99th percentile on End-of-Grade test scores in reading and/or math
- AND 98th or 99th percentile on cognitive testing (Verbal and/or Quantitative)
- Performance well above grade level (2 or more years)
- Observable student behaviors documented on the Gifted Behavior Scale
- Student Motivation as shown in motivation portion of Gifted Behavior Scale OR teacher/parent recommendation with documentation that shows student interest.

For grade acceleration policy, see Standard 4, Practice H.

The AIG Program of Rockingham County Schools utilizes both non-traditional and traditional measures in the screening, referral, and identification process of informally and formally identified gifted students. Some of the instruments/tools used to aid in student identification may include but are not limited to the following items.

Formal assessments/measures:

- Cognitive Abilities Test or other standardized aptitude tests
- North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests or other standardized achievement tests
- Grades
- Benchmark tests
- K-2 DPI assessments

- Reading 3D
- CASE 21
- STAR assessment

Since the best assessment is based on multiple measures that are both non-traditional and traditional, the data gathered should include classroom assessments that demonstrate evidence of superior work.

Some examples of non-traditional measures are:

- teacher and/or parent referrals with anecdotal notes accompanying the referral
- Project-based learning
- K-2 Observation Inventory
- Snapshot Assessment System
- Gifted Behavior Scale
- Student portfolio in a designated area
- Student Interest Inventory
- Anecdotal records
- Extra-curricular records

Identification/Placement Teams are in place at each elementary and middle school to make decisions concerning the needs of individual students. Students are recommended for placement in the program based on the multiple criteria presented to the I/P Team on the student's behalf.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - AIG folders containing identification information

- AIG 5
- AIG Plan
- K-2 Observation Inventory
- DEP/IDEP
- List of instruments
- Testing calendars

Other Comments: The partial Composite is used for 3rd and 5th grade students and for students in other grade levels who are given the CogAT. The partial Composite is not an average of the nonverbal and verbal or quantitative, but rather the partial Composite is figured using tables and charts in the Cognitive Abilities Test Norms Booklet. As a result of using the Nonverbal section in conjunction with the Verbal or Quantitative section, there has been an increase of approximately 5% in identified under-served populations for the AIG program.

Each fall the AIG specialists are to submit revised yearly plans for their schools. The plans are arranged according to the goals for our program and include the following sections and contents:

Goal 1: To implement identification procedures that are clear, equitable, and comprehensive and lead towards appropriate educational services.

- AIG Identification and Placement Committee
- Screening Pool Information – includes number in the pool, percent of under-represented students, percent identified for each grade level
- Numbers and Percentages of Identified Students – includes breakdowns by gender, ethnicity, and EC

Goal 2: To employ challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum and instruction K-12 to accommodate a range of academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

- AIG Service Delivery Options - Moderate
- AIG Service Delivery Options – Strong
- Service Plan for Moderates
- Service Plan for Strong and Individualized

Goal 3: To recruit and retain highly qualified professionals and provide relevant and effective professional development concerning the needs of gifted learners that is on-going and comprehensive.

- List of teachers with AIG certification
- Staff development planned – school and county levels
- Collaboration opportunities within school environment
- List of classroom teachers (grade levels) who serve gifted students and the type of training (none, some, endorsement, certification)

Goal 4: To provide 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.

- Community services or events
- Extracurricular activities or clubs
- Contests

Goal 5: To ensure on-going and meaningful participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the local AIG program to develop strong partnerships.

- Parent meetings
- Advisory council members and dates of meetings
- Partnerships with businesses, parents, and other stakeholders in the community

Goal 6: To implement, monitor, and evaluate 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.

- Annual review of goals and objectives
- Retention data of under-served populations

A copy of each plan is to be turned in to the principal and to the AIG coordinator. The AIG specialist keeps a copy also.

The AIG Department reserves the right to change the format of the AIG forms with the understanding that the same procedures and expectations for screening, referral, identification, and delivery of AIG services remain intact as stated in the body of the local AIG plan.

Practice C

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Although the AIG Program of Rockingham County School System strives to identify gifted students regardless of race, gender, and socio-economic status, additional alternative methods to assist in screening, referral, and placement of under-served populations shall be considered in order to narrow the gap of such populations at all levels. Some under-represented populations are more responsive to the AIG identification procedures than others. It is clear that there continues to be room for improvement in identifying giftedness in these students. As county-wide data indicates, the greatest need continues to be at the middle school and high school levels; therefore, this practice is maintained as a focused practice. Utilizing the partial composite of the CogAT has increased the identification of under-served populations; therefore, we will continue to incorporate it in the screening, referral, and identification procedures. As research is conducted and funding is available, additional screening measures may be implemented in order to provide appropriate services for under-represented populations.

Goals: - To work with principals for the opportunity to speak with faculties concerning cultural awareness and characteristics of giftedness, including minority cultures
- To strive to increase the diversity of students in gifted enrollment so that the AIG population is representative of the overall population of Rockingham County Schools

Description: Rockingham County School System is one in which student membership is diverse in ethnic groups including American Indian, Asian, African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Multi-racial. County statistics show that the ethnicity gap widens as students progress through school. The gap is marginal at the elementary level, but continues to widen at the middle and high school levels. Over 50% of RCS' student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch. Due to federal guidelines protecting students' rights, there is no data concerning the number of gifted students on free and reduced lunch; however, the AIG Program strives to identify candidates regardless of their economic status.

Nomination by a parent, teacher, student, or other community member with academic knowledge of student should be submitted to the school's AIG specialist. The Student Interest Survey by Delisle may be used in determining eligibility. The initial step in the screening process for formal identification is to review the entire population to determine which students need further assessment and/or placement in the AIG Program. The Cognitive Abilities Test and the third grade EOGs are used to screen all students at the end of the third grade. In addition to serving kindergarten students on a consultative basis, our AIG specialists visit the first through third grade classes for whole class instruction as well as providing flexible group instruction, thus the specialists already have some knowledge of student needs. Staff development and monitoring of students ensures that all students, including those from under-represented segments of the population, are considered for possible AIG services.

AIG specialists will continue to ensure that non-verbal measures are considered as well as verbal and quantitative measures of the CogAT. Analysis of the nonverbal component in conjunction with the quantitative and verbal components of the CogAT will help the I/P Team at each school to determine if students need additional screening and will help us in identifying under-served populations for the AIG Program. Students with a Nonverbal score of 90 or above and a Verbal score of 50-84 and students with a Nonverbal score of 90 or above and a Quantitative score of 50-84 will be placed in the

screening pool for further evaluation.

Since school psychologists assess students for the Exceptional Children's Department, psychologists will be asked to communicate confidential test scores to the AIG specialist/coordinator when the scores fall in the gifted range.

At the end of each school year, standardized scores for all students in grades four through eight are once again reviewed by the AIG specialists to determine if other students should be screened. In addition, the Identification/Placement Team can be convened at any time during the year when a student is recommended for screening. Although most of placements are determined in the spring and begin service the following fall, placements may be made at any time during the year according to the needs of the child.

Collaboration Around Student Achievement (CASA) meetings may be used as an additional screening tool. Classroom teachers should inform the school's AIG specialist when a potential candidate for the AIG Program is discussed.

The AIG Program will collect demographic data each year which will be disaggregated in order to determine which group(s) are under-represented in Rockingham County.

The AIG Department will provide ongoing education on the characteristics of gifted children from all populations, as well as traits that can obscure gifted behaviors. AIG specialists are expected to participate in CASA (Collaboration Around Student Achievement) and possibly conduct other staff initiatives to decrease stereo-typical perceptions of the gifted student and increase the awareness of atypical gifted learners.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Screening pool spreadsheet

- AIG headcount
- Screening, referral, and identification trends
- Nonverbal scores – should be reflected on pool spreadsheets and APEX AIG Application.
- Documentation of professional development participation and agendas

Other Comments: CASA (Collaboration Around Student Achievement) has much potential in helping to identify potential gifted students from under-served populations. Teachers meet to determine strategies that can be used to address issues concerning individual students. Issues may be lack of doing homework or underachievement of the gifted child. Because of scheduling issues, the AIG specialist cannot attend the CASA meetings for all grade levels, but the AIG specialists should receive minutes of the CASA meetings when the discussion involves an AIG student.

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: Establishing clear, consistent screening and identification procedures allows for more

reliable and fair identification of students. These procedures are currently in place in Rockingham County in order to ensure conformity across the county. The self-assessment indicates that overall consistency exists in the implementation of screening, referral, and identification processes of the AIG Program, and thus this is a maintained practice. The Rockingham County AIG program will seek to maintain this level of consistency and will continue to implement the processes for screening, referral, and identification consistently within the school system.

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

Description: Screening and identification procedures have been clearly outlined in the existing AIG Plan. This has led to consistent assessment procedures across Rockingham County. In surveys of stakeholders, the majority of respondents stated that they were knowledgeable about and comfortable with these procedures.

K-2 Observation Inventory, which reflects sensitivity to equal opportunity for all, is used for primary informal identification in grades K-2. In an effort to ensure that equal opportunity for referral is provided to all, in grades 4-8, all students' standardized scores are reviewed by both the AIG specialist at each school and the AIG coordinator. Every effort will be made to secure alternate individual assessments in a child's first language when necessary. The AIG specialists meet on a regular basis to review identification procedures and address issues that arise. Although most students are formally identified in grades 4-8, the same processes are implemented at all grade levels, K-12.

The initial step in the screening process for formal identification is to review the entire population to determine which students need further assessment and/or placement in the AIG Program. The Cognitive Abilities Test is given to all students in grades three and five. In the spring of each year, the End-of-Grade tests are used to screen all students.

The Identification and Placement Team at each school has a wide representation of educators including the principal or designee, a gifted certified teacher, a guidance counselor, the child's regular teacher, and other regular education teachers. Other specialists are invited as needed to address the specific needs of the student. This diversity helps to ensure that academics as well as social and emotional needs are addressed for all students presented to the I/P Team for possible AIG identification. At the present time, there is no separate I/P Team at each high school; however, there is a district high school advisory council which helps to ensure consistency at the high school level. Rosters of AIG students are sent from each middle school to the receiving high schools. Guidance departments work with the half-time AIG high school specialist as needed concerning placement questions.

The AIG Plan is posted on the district's AIG website. Additionally, the plan, procedures, and forms will be posted electronically for easy accessibility to the principals and AIG specialists. The Plan and procedures are posted for public viewing on the district AIG website. The AIG specialist or coordinator is and will continue to be available to answer any questions to ensure conformity.

Announcements concerning nominations and screening are publicized at appropriate times on the AIG district website and AIG specialists' websites. Many procedures and forms have been translated into Spanish. Other information will be translated as needed. Every effort will be made to provide translations into other languages as necessary.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - AIG Plan

- Entrance criteria for 4-5
- Entrance criteria for 6-8
- Screening Procedures
- DEP
- IDEP
- Timeline

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: Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program will continue to implement written policies and procedures to preserve and protect the rights of all students and their parents. The self-assessment results indicated this is effectively done; consequently, this continues to be a maintained practice.

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

Description: The AIG Plan, in its entirety, safeguards the rights of gifted students. For a short explanation of some of the forms that protect the rights of AIG students, see "Other Comments." Established procedures concerning identification and placement, re-evaluation, transfers, and procedures for resolving disagreements are clearly defined in the AIG plan. A flow chart of identification procedures is included in the plan. A "Permission to Test" form (AIG 9) is sent to parents/guardians before any individual assessments for possible AIG identification are administered. At the first DEP (Differentiated Education Plan) conference, parents are given an explanation of the program and types of documentation involved with AIG identification.

If a parent/guardian has a disagreement regarding the identification of his or her child as to the need for differentiated instruction and/or the appropriateness of differentiated instructional services offered, the parent/guardian is asked to follow the due process guidelines set forth in the "Procedures to Resolve Differences," AIG 11.

PROCEDURES TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES

A hierarchical procedure will be utilized to resolve differences between the parent/guardian of an AIG student and Rockingham County Schools regarding identification and/or the appropriateness of services. Parents/guardians are given a copy and are asked to sign a copy of the "Procedures to Resolve Differences." The AIG specialist will place the signed copy in the student's AIG folder.

ANNUAL REVIEW

At the end of the school year, the I/P Team will complete an annual review of each served student using available data from the current school year (EOG scores, any new aptitude test scores, grades, teacher input, etc.). In the sixth grade, a new Gifted Behavior Scale is completed by the child's teacher(s). A new Gifted Behavior Scale may be requested at any grade level if a child's placement is questionable or if a new one is deemed necessary. Since the CogAT is administered in 3rd and 5th grades, the most current score is used in placement and re-evaluation considerations. Reviews can be made at any time during the year as deemed necessary by parents or teachers. After the annual review is completed, the following paperwork should be completed and placed in the student's AIG folder:

- AIG 4 - Gifted Behavior Scale - A new GBS should be completed as needed and at end of 6th grade.
- AIG 5 – This form should be updated annually. The same AIG 5 may be used for grades 3-5. A new one should be completed in the sixth grade. The original AIG 5 should stay in the AIG folder.
- AIG 13 – Annual Review/Change of Placement
- Consent for Placement (AIG 10) - This form should be the last form in the student's AIG folder.
- Signed DEP
- Signed "Procedures to Resolve Differences"

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Because AIG guidelines are the same throughout our system, placements for students who transfer within the system are automatic. Any student who transfers from another system with appropriate documentation of participation in a program for academically or intellectually gifted services will continue in the appropriate AIG setting.

DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICES

To request that an identified AIG student be removed from the AIG program, the child's parent/guardian must complete the REQUEST FOR DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICES (AIG 16) indicating the reason for requesting the exit. Once a student or parent(s)/guardian(s) request removal from the AIG program, the AIG specialist will request a conference with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). When possible, a conference should be held within ten working days of the request to exit. Re-entry into the AIG program must be accomplished through the formal identification process as an initial placement. Should a student exit from program services, the process shall be accomplished in such a manner as to avoid adding undue pressure to the student or parent(s)/guardian(s). It shall be recognized that the purpose of AIG services is to best serve the academic and affective needs of the child.

AIG FOLDERS – (Green folders)- The folders are to be secured in the AIG specialist's file cabinet for easy access. DEPs will be easily accessible to both teachers and parents. A green card indicating that a student has an AIG folder is placed in the student's cumulative folder.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Re-evaluation data

- Procedures to Resolve Differences
- Signed documentation
- Student AIG folders containing written consent
- AIG Plan

- Flow chart of procedures
- Procedures for screening
- Procedures for placement
- DEP/IDEP
- AIG 6 (School Site Decision)
- AIG 10 (Consent for Placement)
- AIG 13 (Annual Review/Change of Placement)
- AIG 14 (Notice of Possible AIG Placement Change)
- AIG 16 (Parent Request for Discontinuation of Services)
- AIG 11 (Procedures to Resolve Differences)

Other Comments: The following is an explanation for some of the forms used to protect the rights of AIG students:

DEP/IDEP – (Differentiated Education Plan)/(Individualized Differentiated Education Plan)

This information will be shared with parents at a group meeting within the first three weeks of the start of school in grades 4-8. Parents will receive a copy of the DEP.

AIG 9 (Permission to test)

A "Permission to Test" must be signed by the parent/guardian prior to the administration of an individual test.

AIG 6 (School Site Decision)

This document gives details of the I/P Team's decision for placement in the AIG Program.

AIG 10 (Consent for Placement)

The parent/guardian must indicate if he/she agrees or does not agree for the student to participate in the AIG Program.

AIG 13 (Annual Review/Change of Placement)

The I/P Team completes an annual review of each served student using available data from the current school year (EOG scores, any new aptitude test scores, grades, teacher input, etc.).

AIG 14 (Notice of Possible AIG Placement Change)

If there is a placement change in the identification of the student, a parent receives this form along with a letter of notification.

AIG 16 (Request for Discontinuation of Services)

If a parent/guardian requests that his/her child be exited from the AIG Program, this form is completed by the parent in addition to an explanation for the request. Re-entry into the AIG program must be accomplished through the formal identification process.

AIG 11 (Procedures to Resolve Differences)

Practice F

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: AIG specialists maintain documentation that explains the identification process and service options for individual AIG students at each RCS school site, K-8. An annual review (DEP meeting) is conducted with parents/guardians at each elementary and middle school; however, currently there is no process in place at the high school level. Even though, the self-assessment indicates that this practice is mostly evident, we have chosen to make it a focused practice in order for procedures to be clarified and defined at the high school level.

Goals: - To clearly articulate plan of service delivery (DEP/IDEP) for identified high school AIG students

- To provide an opportunity for all parents/guardians of AIG students to participate in an annual review of program options
- To provide copies of the DEP/IDEP to parents/guardians, in addition to being placed in AIG student folders

Description: The DEP meetings are held each year within the first month of school at the elementary and middle schools, and provide an opportunity for the AIG specialist, I/P Team, and classroom teachers to explain to the parents/guardians the identification process and the service options that are available to the AIG student. An individual meeting may be arranged in order for individual concerns to be addressed. The AIG specialist and the I/P Team explain the procedures concerning the implementation of the AIG Program. The AIG specialist explains the identification process and AIG DEP. The DEP/IDEP documents the I/P Team recommendations for the student. The DEP/IDEP contains grouping options, content modifications, and enrichment options. Each of these items is discussed by the AIG specialist and/or the classroom teacher. The classroom teachers present the strategies, units and special projects that may be used in meeting the needs of the gifted child. The date of the meeting, an agenda, and a roster of the parents attending the DEP meeting and those of individual meetings should be sent to the AIG coordinator. Folders of identified AIG students are secured in the AIG specialist's file cabinet or the guidance office. These folders contain all documentation of any referrals and the screening and identification process for the identified student. An electronic DEP is has been developed which will be utilized in the 2013-2016 plan cycle.

At the high school level, the DEP meeting will be held on a date determined by the school's guidance counselor and the district high school AIG specialist. The high school AIG specialist will be responsible for holding parent meetings and creating a presentation explaining AIG at the high school level. High school DEPs document honors and advanced placement courses, IB Program, accelerated coursework, dual/concurrent enrollment, NCVPS, and early graduation options. High school counselors and the high school AIG specialist provide guidance and direction to the AIG students. High school students self-select their options.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Student folders containing documentation (DEPs/IDEPs/etc.)

- Annual parent meeting agenda/minutes
- AIG Plan

Other Comments: Every AIG specialist has access to a PowerPoint explaining the AIG Program. It is an individual choice whether he/she chooses to use it.

Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

Practice A

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rockingham County Schools encourages the development of curriculum that builds upon and extends the NCSCOS. Curricular accommodations in math and language arts, as well as other content areas as appropriate, occur in a blend of regular classroom settings and small group settings to provide continuous levels of challenge for all identified high ability students through differentiated curriculum instruction, content acceleration, or grade skipping. Advanced and Honors classes, as well as International Baccalaureate classes, offer further specialized instruction to address a range of high ability levels. According to the self-assessment, we have made strides in this area; consequently, this is a maintained practice.

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

Description: Our AIG Program's curricula and instructional practices follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. AIG specialists and classroom teachers are expected to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the AIG student not only in curriculum extensions, but also through enrichment and, when necessary, subject and grade acceleration. While the self-assessment indicates a confidence in how AIG students spend their time when assigned to various groups overseen by the AIG specialist, there are concerns about how students are grouped throughout the day in the regular classroom and with the amount of differentiation taking place in the regular classroom environment. Regular classroom teachers whose class enrollment includes AIG students should make adaptations of the curriculum to match learner characteristics and needs. Although the AIG Department continues to promote staff development on various strategies and programs on adapting the Common Core to the needs of gifted learners, we recognize the need for further training in understanding and implementing the new curriculum and connecting curriculum delivery to the characteristics of the AIG student. AIG specialists will work with teachers concerning appropriate differentiation strategies in each classroom so that all AIG students will receive rigorous instruction on a daily basis.

Within the elementary schools throughout the school district, accommodations for gifted learners in math and language arts are met through cluster groups, tiered assignments, curriculum compacting, flexible grouping, AIG resource rooms, and individual conferencing. All elementary schools are partnered with an AIG specialist to assist classroom teachers in enriching, extending, and accelerating the curriculum.

Curriculum differentiation and acceleration at the middle schools include subject grouping based on

ability, flexible classroom grouping, tiered assignments, curriculum compacting, independent studies, and mentorships.

Academic provisions at the high school level include, but are not limited, to the following:

- International Baccalaureate classes
- Advanced Placement courses
- Internships, mentorships
- Honors classes
- Dual enrollment at local community college
- Distance education/North Carolina Virtual Public School/School of Math and Science
- Independent study (based on student need and interest)
- Differentiated curriculum in pace, content, sequence, and depth
- Curriculum compacting and tiering

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Student work projects and assignments

- Student surveys
- DEP/IDEP

Other Comments:

Practice B

Employs diverse and effective instructional practices according to students' identified abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles, to address a range of learning needs at all grade levels.

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Our AIG Program's curricula and instructional practices follow and enrich the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Rockingham County Schools encourages the development of curriculum that builds upon and extends the NCSCOS. According to the self-assessment, we have made improvements in this area. Even though this is a maintained practice, we will continue to develop and utilize instructional practices that address student needs through identified abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles. By using various teaching strategies; addressing student learning styles; and modeling lessons, best practices in gifted education will continue to be implemented to help these students reach their highest potential.

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

Description: Differentiated curriculum developed by the gifted program and classroom teachers begins with North Carolina Standard Course of Study and seeks to modify content, process, product, and learning environment, with the needs of high-end learners in mind. While some teachers address the varied learning needs of gifted learners through diverse and effective instructional practices, it does not appear to be a common practice. Much of the focus continues to be on the low-performing student rather than addressing the right of every student to learn something new, if not every day, on a regular basis. To this purpose, AIG specialists will work with classroom teachers concerning appropriate differentiation practices so that all AIG students will receive rigorous instruction on a daily basis. The training will provide instructional strategies based on the needs, abilities, interests, and

learning styles of gifted learners.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - DEPs/IDEPs

- Supplementary instructional resources
- PETS (K-3)
- Pacing guides

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: The Rockingham County School's AIG Department has several research-based resources in which AIG specialists have been trained. The specialists are encouraged to use this array of resources in a manner that best fits the overall needs of the gifted population at their school(s). Since our self-assessment indicates that we are doing well in this area, the AIG Department will continue to implement a variety of research-based supplemental resources to create challenging opportunities for optimal student growth.

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

Description: Recognizing the unique educational needs of gifted students and striving to cultivate the potential that they have, we utilize research-based resources to supplement our instruction. Various differentiated curricular, instructional, and resource materials are made available to AIG specialists and classroom teachers that incorporate research-based models and methods. AIG specialists have received training related to the resources or programs listed below, and they utilize the materials and incorporate strategies that they consider a best fit for their students. Various research-based supplemental resource materials are available and based on individual school choice. Resources include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Jacob's Ladder – William and Mary
- Great Books – The Great Books Foundation
- Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) – Wolfe, Thomson, Merritt, Nichols
- 4MAT- McCarthy
- Building Thinking Skills – Parks
- Thinking Maps
- Habits of Mind – Costa and Kallick
- Revised Bloom's Taxonomy
- Paideia Teaching and Seminars/Socratic Seminars
- Marzano's Instructional Strategies
- How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms/Carol Ann Tomlinson
- Talents Unlimited/Calvin Taylor, Ph.D.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - PETS

- Jacob's Ladder
- Great Books

Other Comments:

Practice D

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Even though this was designated a future practice in the 2010-2013 AIG Plan, Rockingham County has made great strides with integration of 21st century content and skills in the last three years. The self-assessment data indicated that RCS has effectively addressed this practice; therefore, this is a maintained practice.

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

Description: For students to become effective citizens and leaders, it is imperative that Rockingham County classrooms provide rigorous coursework steeped in engaging instructional techniques. An awareness of global competition and real world environments must be present in lesson plan designs and unit creations at all grade levels with a focus on 21st century knowledge and skills. AIG specialists will continue to be intentional in their lesson and unit designs to ensure that 21st century knowledge and skills are an integral part of the curriculum. Rockingham County Schools provides a variety of opportunities for students to develop and practice 21st century real world skills. The system's technology resources are excellent which allows RCS students to develop skills necessary to compete in a global society. Every classroom, including those of the AIG specialists, has an Activboard, document camera, and a projector. The county implemented a 1:1 initiative at the high school level. All teachers have laptops and educators strive to include 21st century content and skills in the curriculum delivery. Many forms of technology such as Nooks, Chromebooks, and netbooks are available to students. All K-12 students have g-mail accounts. RCS schools has purchased rights to several educational websites which are available for student learning. With a focus on 21st century content and skills, students will be optimally prepared to advance successfully beyond their formative educational years on a global scale. Students must be provided with aspects of an advanced curriculum that is both relevant and meaningful, as well as differentiated, to meet their academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Lesson plans infused with 21st century skills

- Real-world learning through internships, course selections, mentorships, and community involvement
- Collaboration with instructional technology staff

Other Comments: www.21stcenturyskills.org

Practice E

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The self-assessment indicates that Rockingham County Schools is doing well in addressing this practice; therefore, this is designated a maintained practice. The school system has an abundance of data from various assessments such as EOG, EOC, CogAT, CASE 21, Reading M3, and CASA as well as the resources made available through the district's Department of Testing and Research.

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

Description: Research has shown that regardless of ability level, students should make academic gains if the curriculum and instruction are differentiated to meet the needs of the students. To ensure that classroom teachers are utilizing reliable, valid, and bias-free assessments, as well as using the results to drive their instruction for gifted learners, on-going opportunities through Collaboration Around Student Achievement (CASA) and grade level collaboration are provided for teachers to deepen their understanding of differentiating the curriculum for higher levels. By utilizing the data from on-going assessments and employing formative assessments, teachers can take advantage of the information to guide differentiation in the classroom environment as well as the pullout/resource room environment. As data becomes available, there should be a direct correlation between assessment results and classroom instruction and differentiation. Classroom teachers and AIG specialists shall use results from on-going assessments to guide differentiated instruction. Resources and data from the district's Testing Department and CASA meetings are resources that are available to help guide instruction and monitor progress. RCS' Testing and Research Department is diligent in providing statistical information that helps in assessing the needs of the students in the classroom, and the personnel make themselves available to discuss the data and classroom implications of the data. In order for growth to occur in gifted students, RCS' AIG Program recognizes the importance of differentiated instruction that is driven by data obtained from on-going assessments. Formative assessments are consistently used to evaluate student learning and adjust teaching strategies, but not necessarily used to differentiate classroom instruction. By working with teachers, leading staff development, and visiting classrooms, the AIG coordinator is able to encourage and monitor the use of appropriate differentiation and multiple assessment/evaluation tools. On-going assessment methods to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction include, but are not limited to:

- Formative assessments
- Case 21
- Local benchmark assessments
- Scholastic Reading Inventory/Lexile Inventory

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Data from benchmark tests

- Examples of formative assessments
- CASA (Collaboration Around Student Achievement) minutes/agenda

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: AIG students have specific social and emotional needs that occasionally mask their giftedness. Failure to understand and meet the social and emotional needs of gifted students can result in lack of growth and/or achievement. Curricular and instructional practices should be responsive to the needs of gifted learners in order to engage each child. The AIG Program in Rockingham County will seek to foster the social and emotional development of each child. Creating a greater awareness of the characteristics of gifted children will allow specialists and classroom teachers to serve students more effectively. The self-assessment indicated that there is a need to better understand the social and emotional needs of gifted students as well as to have more strategies to help AIG students; therefore, the RCS' AIG Program will use curriculum and instructional practices that focus on the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

Goals: -To be more aware of the social and emotional needs of AIG students in order to better meet their needs

- To research and identify programs that address social and emotional curricular needs
- To create a network of resources for support of social and emotional curricular needs
- To provide professional development on affective curricular and instructional practices that support the social and emotional needs of AIG students

Description: AIG students have needs other than academics. The schools in the district address the social and emotional needs of AIG students in varying ways and degrees; however, this needs to be done in a manner that is more intentional with a focus on instructional practices that support affective needs of AIG students. Our guidance counselors, who are also the testing coordinators for the schools, have been provided with limited professional development and with print resources to help them address these needs, but they need more training concerning social and emotional issues that AIG students encounter. At times, it seems to be difficult to recognize and respect the relationship between social and emotional needs and academic needs; therefore, opportunities to educate stakeholders concerning the social and emotional needs of the AIG student need to be embraced. AIG specialists incorporate instructional strategies that address social and emotional issues, and the AIG Department would like to see a stronger and more consistent emphasis on the social and emotional needs of AIG students. AIG specialists will complete an article review and/or book study on a text which addresses the social and emotional needs of gifted learners and will work within their PLC (CASA) to educate themselves and, in turn, teach others about the special social and emotional needs of AIG students. As budget permits, in the 2013-2016 plan phase, intentional opportunities for specialized training in the social and emotional needs of the gifted learner will be considered.

Additionally, research will be utilized in order to identify programs that address affective curricular needs and that will be beneficial in developing curriculum practices that address the social and emotional needs of gifted students. AIG specialists will work with guidance counselors and teachers to develop lessons or studies which will allow the stakeholders to explore social and emotional issues that affect gifted students. Professional development as well as print resources will be provided to help teachers recognize and support the affective component in the gifted learner.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Multi-media addressing social and emotional needs

- Agendas
- Resource guide

Other Comments: AIG specialists address various issues concerning the social and emotional needs as opportunities become available.

Practice G

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rockingham County School System begins formal placement of students for the Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program in the 4th grade. Formal identification is delayed until the end of the 3rd grade when testing is more appropriate and accurate for predicting the need for advanced curriculum. When appropriate, students in kindergarten through 3rd grade receive enriched curriculum through classroom centers and accelerated materials even though they are not formally identified. Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program has implemented a K-3 nurturing program based on "Primary Educational Thinking Skills." While this program has been well received, there continues to be a need for flexibility as specialists work with classroom teachers to extend and enrich the regular curriculum. The AIG specialist supports the classroom teacher through enrichment, resources, and collaboration in order to meet the needs of these young gifted learners. As a team, they encourage these little ones to strive for their full potential. Based on our self-assessment, we believe this area is well-developed, and we will continue to implement it as it presently stands.

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

Description: In our K-3 program, the most important ingredients are flexibility and nurturing. Many children have mastered some skills but not all at any particular grade level. They may have academic skills that are beyond their grade level but lack the social or emotional skills to deal with the challenge of being academically advanced. The goal of our program, particularly at this level, is to provide opportunities to identify, nurture, and develop talents and abilities in the whole child and to spark new interests at a level that is appropriate for each student.

The AIG specialist works mostly in a push-in and consultative format while occasionally working with small flexible groupings of students and provides support, enrichment, and resources for K-3 teachers and students at all elementary schools in Rockingham County. Small flexible grouping is used to meet the needs of students who demonstrate a need for more breadth and depth to the curriculum

and is encouraged when students are performing above grade level. Children flow from one group to another depending on mastery of skills in a particular concept. The push-in model is used in all elementary schools to help identify and nurture students with characteristics of high potential and giftedness prior to formal identification with an intentional focus on under-represented populations. AIG specialists provide support for gifted learners by working collaboratively with classroom teachers. In addition, AIG specialists provide lessons that incorporate critical and creative thinking skills to all K-3 classrooms in their schools. Scheduling, school choice, and other considerations dictate how much time each AIG specialist works in the classroom and/or with small, flexible pullout groups; however, the AIG specialist will rotate among all first, second, and third grade classrooms providing whole class instruction as presented in the PETS curriculum as well as addressing specific requests from the classroom teacher as scheduling allows. The AIG specialist consults with kindergarten teachers and will provide and model whole class lessons as necessary and upon request.

It is expected that students who are consistently performing six months or above most of their grade-level peers in reading and/or math, as determined through informal/formal assessments, be cluster grouped for enrichment opportunities in the appropriate subject area. Small flexible grouping should be utilized to extend and enrich the curriculum for all students, including under-represented populations who demonstrate high potential. The AIG specialist will work with the classroom teacher to plan appropriate differentiated activities. Materials have been provided at each elementary school to enhance instruction and enrich curricula for all students. A resource that is used by AIG elementary specialists is the "Primary Education Thinking Skills Program (PETS)". Rockingham County Schools' AIG Department supports the development of appropriate K-3 curriculum that extends the PETS program and fosters an environment that is conducive to the recognition of under-served populations. While all schools use this program, some schools and grade levels use it more consistently than others. In addition to PETS, other resources are utilized in a coordinated fashion to enrich and further develop aptitude skills as well as to cultivate the potential of under-represented populations. These include Junior Great Books and multi-cultural novel sets for reading, "Hands-On Algebra," GEMS math/science kits, and other math manipulatives for mathematics instruction. All schools have Sandra Parks' "Building Thinking Skills" materials that may be used as a resource for this age group. AIG specialists are to consult with any primary teacher who wishes to collaborate and/or use these materials. As the AIG specialists are presenting whole class instruction, they are modeling best practices in gifted education and providing follow-up plans to classroom teachers as appropriate. Classroom teachers should use this opportunity for student observation and team teaching with the AIG specialist. Whole group instruction at each grade level increases the number of poor and minority students exposed to enrichment opportunities. Rockingham County School System hopes to foster the recognition of potential in under-represented populations through the PETS program, whole class instruction, and flexible grouping.

The academic and social and emotional needs of high ability children are addressed in the classroom primarily by the regular classroom teacher and through consultation and collaboration with the AIG specialist, the school counselor, and other support personnel. Advanced and enriched differentiated learning experiences before the formal identification process begins may include:

- Consultation with school administration
- Consultation with AIG specialist
- Flexible grouping based upon ability and demonstrated need
- Cross grade subject grouping
- Team teaching among grade level teachers and specialists
- Curriculum compacting

- Acceleration
- Socratic seminars
- Curricular extension materials available through the AIG lending library
- Math extension and enrichment using math consultant materials and models
- Literacy and vocabulary development through district-wide reading strategies initiative
- Integrated technologies

Students who demonstrate a need for differentiation or individualization as evidenced by the K-2 Observation Inventory, and in conjunction with other data, should be referred to the Identification and Placement Team (I/P Team) for further needs assessment. The I/P Team should acquire and review information on the child, including performance data in the reviewed area(s), portfolio/work samples, and observation of motivation and interest.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Supplemental resources – PETS, Building Thinking Skills, etc.

- Schedules of AIG specialists
- Rosters/pools
- DEPs/IDEPs
- K-2 Observation Inventory
- Classroom observational data
- Examples of differentiation

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: Collaboration among AIG personnel and other professional staff, including exceptional children's personnel and others related to AIG students ensures student needs are met. In some situations, gifted students are twice-exceptional; therefore, it is important that all stakeholders involved in the education of the student be involved in planning and providing service delivery options that are best suited for the individual child. Even though AIG specialists currently collaborate with other professional staff as needed, the self-assessment results indicated that this is an area of need. Exploration of ways and methods that will improve collaboration among school professionals will be investigated. AIG specialists have regular meetings to plan and develop differentiated curriculum and strategies; however, opportunities to collaborate with other professional staff do not occur on a regular basis.

Goals: - To increase communication among all personnel concerning the development and implementation of differentiated curriculum and instruction for gifted learners

- To establish networks of educational professionals within and between schools
- To build a collaborative network between AIG specialists, ELL teachers, exceptional children's

teachers, and other professional staff

Description: While Rockingham County has a well-developed AIG Plan, the system struggles to provide requested support due to limited resources and time. Several factors determine the amount of time that an AIG specialist has at a school: number of AIG students, number of AIG certified teachers, school population, and county allotments. Most of our AIG specialists serve two or three schools, and several are part-time employees. For these teachers, flexibility is a necessity since collaboration should occur with the staff members of all schools served by the specialist. As a result, planning with other professionals is limited. Many of our schools have initiated extended collaborative planning sessions. As more schools adopt this approach, there should be additional opportunities for the creation of differentiated instruction with other professional staff. Various opportunities exist throughout the school system for collaboration through vertical planning, collaboration sessions, and regular planning. For collaboration to work, there must be intentional planning from both the classroom teacher(s) and the AIG specialist. By working with teachers, leading staff development, and making regular visits and observations, the AIG coordinator is able to encourage collaboration efforts and monitor the use of appropriate differentiation and multiple assessment/evaluation tools. AIG specialists shall collaborate with educational professionals within the school setting and work with classroom teachers concerning strategies and methods used to enrich, extend, and accelerate the curriculum. The AIG specialists are expected to share and model the different strategies and topics with all teachers of AIG students. AIG specialists will help the total school community by assisting classroom teachers with differentiation strategies, unit preparation, and understanding the characteristics of gifted learners. Specialists will be available for staff meetings and/or individual consultation with school professionals. Teachers and specialists will work with principals and AIG leadership to establish schedules which will allow AIG specialists to meet with classroom and exceptional needs teachers. District leadership will coordinate times for AIG specialists to plan, share, and learn from one another.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Planning notes

- Minutes from CASA
- Evidence of professional development offered by AIG specialists
- Minutes from AIG specialists' planning/sharing meetings

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: The self-assessment indicates that we are doing well in meeting this practice, and although documentation of differentiated curriculum instruction is available on all identified students, it is an area that needs revisiting, especially at the high school level.

- Goals:** - To develop a DEP for use at the high school level
- To hold annual DEP meetings at the high school level

Description: Rockingham County Schools' Gifted Education Plan defines a comprehensive curriculum and service delivery plan that addresses the varied needs of academically or intellectually gifted students. At the elementary and middle school levels, a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) and the Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) are developed by a variety of stakeholders that includes the classroom teacher, AIG specialist, principal or designee, AIG district coordinator (where appropriate), Exceptional Children's teacher (where appropriate), Limited English Proficiency teacher (where appropriate), and the parent (where appropriate). The DEP/IDEP serves to communicate to all stakeholders the student's academic needs in a specific curricular area(s). In addition, the plan articulates components of the gifted program designed to enhance student learning. Annual DEP meetings are held and documented at the beginning of each school year. The purpose of these meetings is to explain the differentiated curriculum for each identified student. Located on the DEP are grouping options, content modifications, and enrichment options. Program service options will also be explained at the DEP meetings. Signatures of major stakeholders are evidenced and parent signatures are obtained when possible. At the high school level, a four-year plan has been used in the past. Rockingham County's gifted program recognizes the need for a student plan that articulates the differentiated curriculum and instruction services that match the identified needs of the high school (9-13 grades) student, and therefore; beginning in this plan cycle, a high school DEP has been developed and annual DEP meetings will be held at the high school level.

- Planned Sources of Evidence:** - DEPs
- IDEPs
- Service options for grades K-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12

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: Rockingham County Schools employs a full-time AIG coordinator who oversees the development and implementation of the AIG Program. The AIG coordinator must hold a state license in gifted education and have taught gifted students. The AIG program director is the administrator of the program and should have an overall knowledge of gifted law, behavior, and needs. Rockingham County Schools employs fourteen AIG specialists to serve gifted students at the school level in grades K-12 either through direct or consultative services. The AIG director and coordinator work collaboratively with school staff, administrators, AIG Advisory Board members, 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, the AIG-licensed 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: RCS is committed to ensuring that professionals responsible for providing services to gifted students have an appropriate base of knowledge and skills in order to design and implement a differentiated education plan of instruction based on student need. 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 program director with the assistance of the AIG coordinator directs the integration of the AIG Program into the scope of the K-12 program. This may be done through Central Office and principals' meetings, staff development opportunities, and collaboration with administrators and personnel. The program director does not have direct contact with AIG students; therefore, does not hold an AIG license; however, DPI recommends that the AIG director pursue an AIG add-on licensure. The AIG coordinator must be licensed in gifted education and have experience with teaching AIG students. This person oversees and monitors the local AIG Program with the assistance of the program director. Besides assisting in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the gifted program, the AIG coordinator helps in determining AIG budget needs, plans staff development, consults with teachers and principals, and communicates the program to parents and community. The AIG coordinator facilitates monthly meetings with the AIG specialists. The number of meetings may change according to need. These planning sessions deal with best practices in gifted education, research-based strategies, information on identification and placement, and the development of meaningful and effective lesson plans that strive to address the academic and affective needs of the

gifted learner. Monthly meetings also provide curriculum support and individual school support. The high school AIG specialist serves as a liaison with counselors and student data managers at each high school to ensure that information concerning AIG students is current and accurate. This specialist serves as a resource for teachers and, upon request, will counsel at-risk AIG students. In addition, the high school AIG specialist manages the Governor's School application process, oversees the high school Academic Challenge Competition, and monitors the dropout rate of high school AIG students.

The responsibilities of each specialist may vary depending on the school, its membership, and the needs of the staff and the students. Certain things are constant regardless of school demographics and numbers. Each specialist serves as support for the gifted learner, the AIG Program, and school personnel. Students identified as "strong" or "individualized" receive resource services every week from the AIG specialist. The AIG specialists are available to guide and give direction to classroom teachers who have AIG students as part of their class membership. AIG specialists are to be licensed in gifted education.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Personnel roster

- Personnel roles and responsibilities
- County AIG website
- AIG specialists' websites

Other Comments:

Practice B

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Our self-assessment results indicate that RCS' AIG specialists address the needs (academic, intellectual, social, and emotional) of our gifted learners; thus, this practice is a maintained practice. Gifted Program specialists address AIG issues in the schools, work with teachers in gifted curriculum, counsel gifted students who may be struggling at school, and facilitate off-grade level testing for possible student identification into the AIG Program.

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

Description: All AIG specialists are provided with resources that help them address the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners. These resources vary from year to year depending on the needs of the overall school system and individual schools. While a major focus is on higher-order thinking skills and critical thinking, other resources and staff development provide the AIG specialists with support in meeting the various needs of the gifted population. Lesson plans should reflect the processes, products, activities, strategies, and interventions used. The implemented curriculum is evaluated both formally and informally. The formal evaluation involves analysis of student growth through interim testing and through EOG and EOC scores. The informal evaluation is also very helpful to us as our AIG specialists meet to share instructional strategies and

discuss successes and problems.

In grades K-3, AIG specialists work primarily with whole classrooms using strategies that help to identify and cultivate potential. The specialists provide lessons that incorporate critical and creative thinking skills to all K-3 classrooms in their schools. Scheduling, time allotted to serve the school, and other considerations dictate how much time each AIG specialist works in the classroom and/or with small, flexible pull-out groups. In grades 4-5, each school has a pull-out resource program for students identified as strong and/or individualized. As with the services in K-3, the amount of time fourth and fifth grade AIG students are pulled out depends on scheduling, time allotted to serve each school, and other considerations. AIG specialists are responsible for providing grades for the student activities completed in the pull-out program. The classroom teacher should incorporate these grades into the student's class average. Elementary and middle school AIG specialists are responsible for teaching the Standard Course of Study while enriching and extending it to meet the needs of the AIG students. Students at the high school level self-select their courses with guidance from the counselors. Materials that promote critical thinking and higher-order thinking are provided to enhance instruction and enrich curricula for AIG students.

The social/emotional component continues to be an area of concern. Social and emotional needs are met through individual/group work with the AIG specialist or with school counselors; however, school counselors need additional training in order to adequately assist AIG students with their social and emotional needs. AIG specialists and guidance counselors are provided resources or have access to resources to help address social and emotional needs of gifted learners including those from special populations. Each AIG specialist will meet and work collaboratively with the school counselor to schedule a time for classroom visits geared towards social and emotional needs.

AIG staff development meetings are scheduled at the beginning of the year, and these meetings provide valuable time for the specialists to work together in developing differentiated curricula and programs. The regular meetings also serve to ensure that teachers of gifted students are kept abreast of differentiation strategies and ways to accommodate the strengths and needs of gifted children, both academic and emotional. The AIG specialists share this information with teachers at their schools through various methods and outlets. The specialists are challenged to find time to collaborate with regular education teachers regarding differentiated instruction. Many principals have implemented lesson plan formats that include a section for differentiation. By working with teachers, leading staff development, and making regular visits to the classrooms, the AIG coordinator is able to encourage and monitor the use of appropriate differentiation and multiple assessment/evaluation tools and help ensure a more supportive school environment.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - DEP

- IDEP
- Annual updates of school's AIG plans
- Observation of classes
- Professional development
- Bibliography
- Primary Program Service Options
- Elementary (4-5) Program Service Options
- Middle School Program Service Options
- Schedules
- Report cards

- Websites of AIG specialists /coordinator – county and school
- On-site visits/observations
- Lesson plans
- Essential questions

Other Comments: In order for the AIG Program to be most successful, a full-time AIG specialist is needed at each elementary school. This would allow the identified students to receive services every day. If funding were available for this to occur, it is reasonable to project that students would show increased growth on benchmark and EOG assessments.

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: This is a focused practice as there is a need, according to the self-assessment, to provide staff development both on-going and annually, in order to better equip personnel directly involved with gifted learners with the education and tools necessary to address the diverse needs of AIG students. AIG specialists have attended professional development to stay abreast of current trends in gifted education. As a district, opportunities for professional development for classroom teachers, EC personnel, counselors, and administrators have been lacking.

Goals:

- To provide professional development opportunities on gifted characteristics, social and emotional needs, and differentiation for school personnel involved in the AIG Program
- To have all teachers who work with AIG students, including classroom teachers, exceptional children's personnel, counselors, and school administrators, participate in annual professional development concerned with meeting the learning and/or emotional needs of gifted students
- To include more stakeholders in the planning, development, and delivery of appropriate professional learning opportunities for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services

Description: Rockingham County School System recognizes the importance and value of ongoing professional development. AIG specialists receive professional development on a regular basis and attend the state gifted conference. Our district started a local endorsement program during the 2010-2013 plan cycle. Through the endorsement classes, participants increased their understanding of the gifted learner as well as an understanding of differentiation and higher level thinking skills. This professional development increases the knowledge base for the participants, and although a number of personnel has taken advantage of the endorsement opportunity, the majority of county personnel involved in AIG programs and services have not received professional development designed specifically for the gifted population. The AIG endorsement sessions will be held once every two years and as funding is available.

In order to meet the needs of the gifted population, training will be provided at various levels. At the

school level, all school staff will receive an overview of RCS' AIG Plan which will include characteristics of gifted learners and an explanation of the role of the AIG specialist to the school. The Identification/Placement Team will receive training on multiple criteria, the screening/identification process, and the development and implementation of Differentiated Education Plans. AIG specialists will provide professional development on differentiated learning strategies for gifted learners to classroom teachers with gifted students as part of their class enrollment, and on-site collaboration between specialists and classroom teachers will be encouraged to promote differentiated strategies for classroom use. Professional development will be provided to AIG specialists on differentiated learning strategies, higher order thinking skills, underserved populations, social and emotional needs, and nurturing. In addition, AIG specialists should attend IEP conferences for students with dual exceptionalities and collaborate with counselors to support gifted students. The education of school administrators concerning the benefits of various options of instructional delivery such as flexible grouping, push-in/pull-out, and possible ability grouping for specific academic areas will be encouraged in order to ensure the most appropriate learning environment. School administrators will be notified when new AIG students are identified and, when possible, the specialist will assist administrators in placing each student in a suitable classroom.

All gifted students will be placed in a classroom with a teacher who has either AIG licensure or a local AIG endorsement when possible. If an AIG student is identified as strong or individualized, that student will be placed in a class with an AIG licensed teacher if one is available at that grade level.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Documented professional development activities

- List of educators who receive a local endorsement
- Documentation of professional learning opportunities
- Attendance rosters for professional learning

Other Comments: - The initial stages of staff development should include gifted characteristics, social and emotional needs of gifted child, and differentiation of the curriculum.

- Additional staff development time is provided for AIG specialists new to the program. The AIG coordinator visits with the new personnel more frequently to provide support and resources.
- Professional development experiences are evaluated formally through use of the SEA System (A System for Evaluating and Assessing Professional Development). Informal evaluation takes place through discussion of successes and failures as related to student achievement.

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 teachers with training in gifted education are better equipped to meet the specific academic and social-emotional needs of gifted learners; therefore, gifted students should be placed in classrooms with AIG certified teachers. Currently, Rockingham County Schools has an insufficient number of AIG certified teachers to place gifted students in appropriate classrooms. This practice is currently a site-based decision and varies among the different schools. For these reasons, the self-assessment data deems this as a focused practice.

Goals: - To increase the number of teachers with an add-on AIG certificate in order for additional teachers to be qualified in gifted education

- To focus on identifying highly qualified personnel whose responsibility is to provide instructional services to gifted students
- To continue to provide a local endorsement in gifted education at least every two years with available funds
- To place identified students in classrooms with AIG certified teachers when possible.
- To establish a procedure for principals to place students in classes with trained AIG teachers

Description: Educators with specialized training in gifted education content and strategies are more effective when delivering instructional programs to advanced learners. These teachers and support personnel require specific knowledge and skills to provide developmentally appropriate, differentiated, and challenging instruction in classrooms.

The AIG Department has developed a local endorsement plan that applies only to Rockingham County. The coursework will not transfer to other LEAs or count toward the add-on certification. This endorsement will consist of thirty hours of contact time (3 CEUs) with a focus on characteristics of gifted students, social and emotional needs of gifted, and differentiation for the gifted. The number of hours and CEUs are subject to change. The local endorsement will have a limited number of participants (30-40) and will be offered at least every two years if resources allow (money and personnel). Communication and explanation of the terminology "local endorsement" have occurred through various district contacts, announcements, and communiqués. Even though it is the recommendation of DPI that the terminology be changed, it is the belief of the district Advisory Board that a change in terminology would cause more confusion because of the intentional communication that has occurred concerning the terminology "local endorsement." Currently, the local endorsement is optional; however, in this plan cycle, we will consider making these courses mandatory for those teachers who are responsible for teaching gifted students in their regular classrooms.

The AIG Program recommends that, if possible, classroom teachers have AIG certification when the class membership includes AIG students. Few teachers actually pursue an add-on certification because there is no monetary incentive. The closest colleges and universities which offer gifted licensure are private schools and, therefore, are more expensive than state-supported colleges. Links to "Institutes of Higher Education" are posted on the AIG website. In recognizing the need for more AIG certified teachers, the AIG Program of Rockingham County will provide reimbursement, if funds are available, for the completion of an add-on AIG certification to applicants whose administrator has indicated a need for additional AIG teachers. This will be considered on an "as-needed" basis and as budget allows. Requests must be made to the principal prior to enrollment, who will then submit a request to the AIG program director.

While the AIG Program acknowledges the necessity of cluster grouping AIG students with trained personnel, some principals place students in all classes regardless of teacher training. The AIG Department will ask principals to give a rationale for placing students in K-8 classrooms where the teacher has no training as opposed to cluster grouping AIG students with trained teachers.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Copies of transcripts and receipts

- Website – information on colleges and universities offering classes in gifted certification
- District list of AIG personnel
- SEA System rosters
- Class rosters

Other Comments: The change in licensure requirements (July 2006) has been a challenge for our system. As a result of the July 2006 mandate, the number of AIG certified teachers in Rockingham County Schools has steadily decreased over the last years. Currently for the 2012-2013 school year, we have seventy-five regular education teachers who are certified in gifted education, fourteen AIG specialists, one AIG coordinator, five administrators, one central office personnel, and thirteen in various other positions.

Practice E

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The AIG Department adheres to the professional development philosophy of Rockingham County Schools: "We believe that continuous, high-quality professional development is essential to the nation's goal of high standards of learning for every child. Professional development is a continuous process of individual and collective reflection and improvement of practice. We strive to provide opportunities that are job-embedded and prepare our teachers to use 21st Century instructional tools." The self-assessment indicates that this practice is being addressed well; therefore, we will continue to align professional development with local AIG program goals and other district initiatives.

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

Description: Linking system-wide efforts is vital in the effort to increase student achievement. Those involved in the AIG Program strive to coordinate the education of gifted students with other initiatives. Regularly scheduled staff development opportunities are provided for all AIG specialists. Staff development is on-going and based on student and staff needs. Staff development, open discussion, and sharing of resources and materials focus on the areas that show a need for improvement. AIG specialists participate in staff development opportunities that are geared specifically to the needs of their school as well as the AIG Program and LEA goals. 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. Adjustments in staff development are made when necessary. The AIG specialists are made aware of conferences and staff development locally and outside the county that relate to gifted education and the initiatives set forth by the school system. AIG specialists and principals inform stakeholders at the school level of opportunities available to them.

Data is disaggregated throughout the year to evaluate the academic growth of identified students. The AIG coordinator and AIG specialists should disaggregate the results of assessments to evaluate

the growth of identified students. Analysis of the data is a determinant in the types of staff development offered.

Rockingham County Schools is a member of the Piedmont Triad Education Consortium, a collaboration of fifteen K-12 public school districts and seventeen higher education institutions in central North Carolina. A variety of professional development opportunities is available to teachers and administrators that support the educational initiatives of the school system. Through SEA System, A System for Evaluating and Assessing Professional Development, all stakeholders can view professional opportunities offered in Rockingham County Schools, the Piedmont Consortium, and other options. All of these are geared to the goals of the LEA and the LEA Improvement Plan.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Rosters of meetings

- Agendas of meetings
- Follow-up minutes of meetings
- SEA System description and rosters
- Program with listing of sessions and attendees

Other Comments:

Practice F

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The self-assessment indicates we are doing well in addressing this practice. Rockingham County Schools will continue to ensure that 21st century skills, advanced levels of instruction, differentiated instruction, and best practices in gifted education are presented in professional development offerings.

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

Description: Professional development is an important component in gifted education. Effective staff development must provide a link to increased student achievement. (Joyce & Showers, 1995) Creating this link requires that staff development be "innovation-related, continuous during the course of implementation, and involve a variety of formal (e.g., workshops) and informal (e.g., teacher-exchange) components." (Fullan, 1990) Therefore, the most important goal of staff development should be that participants take what is learned in the staff development opportunity and implement it immediately and effectively within their classrooms. This goal increases the likelihood that students will benefit from the teacher's participation in the staff development. As more research is done and knowledge is gained, professional development offered will provide more continuity and greater alignment with state and national standards and those of the National Association for Gifted Children. 21st century technology skills have been incorporated successfully in classrooms through the use of ActivBoards, laptops, 1:1 initiative, county-wide Google platform, and the appropriate training.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Professional development offerings

- Piedmont Triad Education Consortium calendar
- Professional development activities related to state and national standards and 21st century skills

Other Comments: North Carolina Teaching Standards:

- Teachers demonstrate leadership.
- Teachers establish a respectful environment for diverse populations.
- Teachers know the content they teach.
- Teachers facilitate learning for their students.
- Teachers reflect on their practice.

Practice G

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: There are opportunities for the AIG specialists to collaboratively plan and share resources. Although collaborative opportunities with classroom teachers exist, they are spontaneous and often initiated by AIG specialists. As indicated in the self-assessment, there is a need for more intentional and purposeful collaboration at all levels, but especially at the middle and high school levels.

Goals: - To have AIG specialists continue collaborative departmental meetings on a regular monthly basis (and more frequently as needed)

- To have AIG staff continue to expand current collaboration efforts with classroom teachers, including individual, small group (CASA and grade level discussions), and entire faculty meetings
- To have the AIG director/coordinator work in collaboration with other district-wide leaders/directors to provide opportunities for collaboration between the AIG staff and other educational stakeholders
- To provide opportunities for collaboration with regular classroom teachers about the unique needs of gifted learners

Description: Opportunities to plan with other teachers vary from school to school depending on the type of planning that is initiated at the school level. There may be grade level meetings each day at the schools, but the AIG specialists may not be able to attend depending on whether he/she has classes scheduled during that time. After-school planning time is often more convenient in order to accommodate the various schedules. Some teachers use email, extended collaboration, workdays, and early release time as collaboration opportunities. As noted above, there are opportunities for collaboration; however, there is a lack of consistency. Options for greater planning and collaboration need to be examined on an individual basis while taking into consideration the number of schools served, amount of time allotted for each school, and other factors that may affect planning. As a result, positive changes in instructional strategies may occur within the classrooms. AIG specialists meet on a regular basis to refine and adjust their differentiated curriculum and instruction as it applies

to the professional development. The specialists agenda incorporates time to share lesson plan materials and ideas as well as time for planning district-wide activities and events. It also affords an opportunity to share newsletter items and time to share regional and statewide news. Time is also spent analyzing needs at various elementary schools and brainstorming ideas for meeting those needs. Additionally, after the specialists attend professional development, opportunities are provided to debrief new material learned, to share ideas about re-energizing practices that may have gone unattended, and to brainstorm strategies to incorporate new ideas into a variety of settings with gifted learners. Participants in these meetings are typically the AIG specialists for the specific grade levels (elementary, middle, and high), the AIG Program coordinator, and guest collaborators as needed. The elementary and middle school specialists collaborate with classroom teachers and other certified support staff in a variety of settings which includes individual, small groups (typically grade level or department/like groups), and additional meetings as needed. This past year, there have been opportunities for the AIG specialists to confer and collaborate with the instructional coaches. Our goal is to expand the collaboration opportunities.

Rockingham County's AIG Program will improve this practice by sharing new knowledge from professional development with other AIG teachers and regular classroom teachers and by incorporating professional development in Individual Growth Plan goals.

Planned Sources of Evidence: Grade-level meeting minutes

Rosters

Agendas

Documented meeting notes and agendas.

Blogs/wikis.

Specialist monthly meetings.

Other Comments: Regularly scheduled staff development sessions provide opportunities for AIG specialists to develop K-8 curriculum units. These lessons will be shared on the Google site. To provide activities that address the curriculum needs better, the AIG elementary specialists will begin meeting monthly in the fall of 2013 for the entire day. These meetings will provide AIG specialists time to develop enrichment and extension activities that can accommodate the academic needs of AIG students in the resource room and regular classroom. The AIG middle school/high school specialists will meet two consecutive afternoons every other month to develop activities. This schedule may change as needed. These meetings are put on the schedule at the beginning of the year and provide valuable time for the teachers to work together in planning for the development of differentiated curricula and programs. The regular meetings also serve to ensure that teachers of gifted students are kept abreast of differentiation strategies and ways to accommodate the strengths and needs of gifted children, both academic and emotional. AIG specialists share this information with teachers at their schools.

Standard 4: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

The LEA provides an array of K-12 programs and services by the total school community to meet the diverse academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

Practice A

Delivers AIG programs and services which are comprehensive of the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners across all grade levels and settings.

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The self-assessment data indicates that this practice is effectively addressed; consequently, this is a maintained practice. The Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Program of the Rockingham County School System strives to identify and meet the unique educational needs of gifted students who come from all ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic groups. Even though this is a maintained practice, the social and emotional component will continue to be addressed in an aggressive manner.

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

Description: The Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program of the Rockingham County School System strives to identify and meet the unique educational needs of gifted students who come from all ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic groups. Cluster grouping is implemented, however, not consistently. This practice is a site-based decision and varies among the different schools. Even though cluster grouping is a best practice in gifted education and the AIG Department in Rockingham County Schools asks principals to abide by this best practice, there is no guarantee that gifted students will be cluster grouped in classrooms with teachers knowledgeable of gifted learners.

Another area of attention is the social and emotional component. The AIG Department, guidance personnel, and classroom teachers strive to collaborate and provide appropriate guidance interventions to address the unique social and emotional development of gifted learners.

Regular education teachers who serve identified students are encouraged to pursue an add-on licensure. As funding is available, the AIG Department will supplement the cost of obtaining an AIG licensure. We currently provide tiered services for differing levels of giftedness, beginning with nurturing programs at the primary level.

While data results indicate we are doing well in this area, the feedback validates our belief that we need to reconsider program options for students at secondary levels. Beginning in the 2013 - 2014 school year, the AIG Program will more clearly define and articulate service delivery options offered at the high school level in order to ensure comprehensive services across the K-12 continuum.

The cultivation of potential in the AIG population must be enhanced through an appropriate match of differentiated services to individual needs as we strive to prepare these students for success in the 21st Century. The AIG Program attempts to do this through formal identification and the nurturing of

potential in possible candidates for the AIG Program. Currently, Rockingham County Schools does not have a specifically designated population as the nurturing group. Efforts are being made, however, to nurture and encourage students at all levels. In Rockingham County Schools, a continuum of services allows for individual students' needs to be addressed at all grade levels. In order to better match student needs and program goals, the following program and service options are available:

RESOURCE CLASSROOM

This service option is available for identified students in grades four through eight. The student may work with the AIG specialist on differentiated curriculum at regularly scheduled sessions or as needed. The assignments/activities completed in reading and/or mathematics extends the regular course of study.

WHOLE GROUP INSTRUCTION

Whole grade instruction is utilized to model best practices in gifted education and to target specific skills such as critical thinking. This is used primarily in grades K-3 but may be used at all grade levels.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

An independent study service option exists for a small percentage of gifted learners in grades four through twelve who demonstrate an exceptional need for acceleration or enrichment. The student may participate in an individualized, independent study while continuing his/her regular class activities. The activity is directed by the AIG specialist in collaboration with the regular education teacher.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

This service option takes various forms depending on the availability at each school. These services are not solely for AIG-identified learners. Extra-curricular opportunities may include academic competitions, academic clubs, visual and performing arts clubs, journalism opportunities (newspaper, yearbook), writing contests, science fairs, Duke University Talent Search Program for 4th-6th grades, Duke University Talent Identification Program for 7th-12th grades (TIP), service projects, and opportunities to participate in various clubs.

ONLINE COURSES

This service option is available to a student when the student has a need for academic acceleration that is not available in his/her school (or another school in the district, if appropriate) and whose needs for academic acceleration can be addressed through an online course.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

This service option is available to any student in a RCS high school. Students are permitted to enroll in community college credit courses at Rockingham Community College. Students in the dual enrollment program will be awarded college credit(s) upon successful completion of the course(s).

HONORS COURSES

This service option is available to all RCS high school students. Honors courses adhere to specific state standards designed to provide rigorous curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSES

This service option is available at the high school level for students ready for college level instruction.

Our high schools offer AP courses in some content areas.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAREATE

This service option is available at the high school level for students. The IB Diploma Programme (DP) is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education with final examinations that prepares students, aged 16 to 19, for success at university and life beyond. It has been designed to address the intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being of students.

GROUPING ARRANGEMENTS

* In-class Flexible grouping

This service option is used with all students. Learners have regular opportunities to be grouped by ability, readiness, or interest to fit the instructional focus and ensure peer academic support in a mixed ability classroom.

* Flexible grouping

This type of student grouping facilitates instructional planning and delivery, enabling teachers to address learning styles. Grouping may be in-class, across-grade level, or above-grade level for part of the instructional day.

* Cluster grouping

This grouping arrangement involves the assignment of groups of students having similar academic needs and abilities to a regular education, mixed-ability classroom. A cluster is made up of four to nine AIG-identified students. Clustering as a placement option places students with academic peers and allows the regular education teacher, with the ongoing collaboration of the AIG teacher, to differentiate curriculum and instruction for a group of informally/formally identified students. Principals will cluster group AIG students (4 to 9 students) who demonstrate a need for instructional differentiation in the appropriate area(s) of reading/language arts and/or math. The AIG Department recommends cluster grouping as defined in the School-Wide Cluster Grouping Model. This cluster grouping model takes into account the achievement levels of ALL STUDENTS and places students in classrooms in order to reduce the number of achievement levels in each classroom. The model facilitates teachers differentiation of curriculum and instruction for all students and thus increases student achievement. Cluster grouping allows the AIG specialist to share and model best practices in the enrichment, extension, and acceleration of the curriculum, specifically in math and language arts. Sharing and modeling is best done in a setting where AIG students are clustered in order to accommodate their learning needs and styles more easily. In addition, it is easier to support and nurture the unique social and emotional development of gifted learners when students are cluster grouped. When taken full advantage of, cluster grouping allows gifted learners to experience academic rigor at a level and complexity appropriate to their learning and provides a nurturing social and emotional environment.

ACCELERATION

Accelerated services may be utilized at all grade levels when it is deemed a best fit for academic and social and emotional needs of the gifted learner.

* Content Acceleration

In this service option, students who need accelerated instruction in one or more content areas are placed in classes with older peers for part of the day, usually specific to the area of identification. The student remains with his/her grade level class for most of the day.

* Grade level acceleration/grade skipping

The grade acceleration service option is appropriate for a small percentage of gifted students whose academic and social needs are substantially more advanced than their age/grade peers. The decision to implement this option involves the Identification/Placement Team, the student's current teacher, guidance counselor, AIG specialist, administrator, parent, and when possible, the prospective receiving teacher. The team gathers data using a research-based acceleration scale. Multiple factors are weighed, the team makes a recommendation, and the principal makes the final decision for grade acceleration/grade skipping.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - DEP/IDEP

- AIG 5
- Service options
- Notes from High School Advisory Council

Other Comments:

Practice B

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rockingham County identifies and serves gifted students in reading and/or math. The AIG Program and services are adapted to the learner's area of AIG identification as stated in the DEP and the various service options. AIG services are provided in the area(s) of identification, and AIG programs and services are aligned with each area of AIG identification. Most of AIG funding is directed toward AIG personnel, but as funding is available, resources are purchased to enhance the program, professional development is provided, and curriculum differentiation is supplemented. The self-assessment data indicated this practice is effectively addressed; consequently, it is designated as maintained.

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

Description: The Differentiated Education Plans (DEP) and Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEP) outline and provide a variety of options in areas of reading, math, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills as aligned with student eligibility data. This data, in regards to student performance, student achievement, student aptitude, teacher observation of the student, student interest, and student motivation, is collected on the Individual Student Eligibility Record (AIG 5) and analyzed to make an appropriate service delivery match for each student. The DEP and IDEP for students outline the most conducive learning environment and content modifications for each student. Through any and all learning environments, the AIG specialists provide support to students on an as needed basis. This support might include any of the following: nurturing support, counseling, tutoring support, or serving as a facilitator to ensure that the needs of the student are being met by working with other stakeholders. Additionally, AIG specialists provide support to classroom teachers in adapting, modifying, replacing, or enriching the regular classroom curricula and instruction to meet the unique needs of gifted learners and acquiring resource materials to meet the needs of the gifted learners.

The Cognitive Abilities test is administered to all third and fifth grade students to aid in AIG identification. Students in grades three through twelve may be referred for possible AIG placement by administrators, parents or teachers. The six AIG standards are reflected in the goals of Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program. Every elementary and middle school specialist completes an AIG School Plan that is specific to that school. The Rockingham County School System has incorporated system-wide initiatives for improving gifted education and the total quality of public education. The AIG specialists provide support to gifted learners and teachers of the gifted on a regular basis. This support may include, but is not limited to, the following: nurturing support, counseling, and/or serving as a facilitator to ensure that the needs of the student are being met by working with other service providers. Additionally, AIG specialists provide support to classroom teachers in planning and acquiring resource materials to meet the needs of the gifted learners. The AIG Program identifies students in reading and/or math as moderate, strong, or individualized. Formal identification begins in 4th grade. The instructional services are aligned with the area of identification. The curriculum strives to empower all students to compete globally as stated in Rockingham County Schools' vision statement. Each program level reflects the need for increasing levels of differentiation that correspond to the student's academic and affective needs. MODERATE represents "in class" modifications that are made to accommodate students displaying a need for differentiation in reading and/or math. The focus is on developing the student's potential. The responsibility for meeting the needs of these students lies with the regular classroom teacher; however, the AIG specialist may provide consultation and support to the regular classroom teacher. STRONG represents service options for students who have demonstrated a clear need for differentiated instruction one to two grades above their classmates. These services usually extend outside the regular classroom setting for reading and/or math services. INDIVIDUALIZED represents services that usually involve a great deal of modification of the content and/or the learning environment. While this level represents the smallest number of students, it reflects the widest range of individual differences. K-3 students are informally identified unless a student demonstrates a need for radical differentiation.

AIG identification is available for all students exhibiting exceptional abilities and exists in all ethnic, geographic, and socio-economic groups. Criteria for identification include the following:

- Aptitude test
- Achievement test
- Student performance
- Motivation
- Gifted Behavior Scale (teacher observation instrument)
- Student interest

Currently the Differentiated Education Plans (DEP) and Individual Differentiated Education Plans outline a variety of options in the areas of reading, math, critical thinking skills, and problem solving skills as aligned with student eligibility data. This data, which includes student performance, student achievement, student aptitude, teacher observation of the student, student interest, and student motivation, is collected on the Individual Student Eligibility Record (AIG 5) and analyzed to make an appropriate service delivery match for each student. The DEP and IDEP for students outline the most conducive learning environment and content modifications for each student. Differentiated lessons are aligned with the pacing guides, curriculum guides, and the individual school improvement plan. The AIG Plan for Rockingham County Schools is supported by, and connected to the following system-wide initiatives and programs:

- North Carolina Standard Course of Study
- District AIG Advisory Board
- AIG school advisory councils

- Formative assessment to guide instruction
- School Improvement Plans
- 21st century classrooms and instruction
- Balanced literacy instruction

At the elementary level, the AIG specialists collaborate and consult with the regular classroom teachers to integrate the instructional programs and to ensure that AIG delivery of service is connected to classroom instruction by extending and enriching the NCSCOS. Some of the programs offered may include but are not limited to the following: Math SuperStars, Accelerated Reader, Battle of the Books, Duke TIP Program, science and math fairs, WordMasters, and Continental Math League.

At the middle school level, students are subject grouped according to their area and level of identification. Classes are based on the Standard Course of Study with appropriate rigor, extensions, and enrichment opportunities including curriculum compacting, above-level reading lists and materials, tiered assignments, and vocabulary development. Strategies may include small group discussions, cooperative groups, seminar discussions, debates, research and report writing, essays, and above-level independent reading.

At the high school level, course selection and special activities are available to all students on a self-selection basis. This self-selection process is supported through counseling and advisement from teachers and school counselors. The focus of the high school AIG Program is the offering of Honors and AP classes in the core curriculum. Students are given the opportunity to participate in the International Baccalaureate Program. Various program options and opportunities provided at the high school level address the needs of AIG students. The selection of advanced courses and college-level courses, internships, mentorships, and online courses are possible opportunities for high school students to pursue advanced studies. Course descriptions communicate the course expectations and requirements. These descriptions are posted on-line under "High School Registration" on the district website.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Activboard flipcharts

- Lesson plans
- DEPs/IDEPs
- K-12 service options
- AIG 5 for individual students

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: As the self-assessment indicates, the AIG Program integrates the LEA's instructional practices and policies into the AIG Program and services thus this is a maintained practice. Linking system-wide efforts is vital in the effort to increase student achievement and meet the social and

emotional needs of gifted students. Those involved in the AIG Program strive to coordinate the education of gifted students with other system initiatives at the school and district level which is basic to the success of an integrated program. The AIG Program and services are adapted to the learner's area of AIG identification through the DEP and the various service options. 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: The focus of both system-wide goals and the AIG Program goals is on meeting student academic needs, expanding technological skills, and increasing performance so that students can reach their highest potential in "a safe and dynamic globally competitive education environment," as stated in the Rockingham County Schools mission statement.

The Rockingham County School System has instituted the following system-wide initiatives for improving gifted education and the total quality of public education in Rockingham County:

- School improvement process and plans
- Staff development plan
- Local technology plan
- Local system option testing
- Character education programs
- Community educational opportunities for high school

Academically or Intellectually gifted students enrolled in Rockingham County Schools are served through an integrated K-12 gifted education program where flexible grouping is used to ensure that highly able and gifted students reach their full potential and experience intellectual and emotional growth. Rockingham County Schools provides appropriate educational opportunities through an array of service delivery options designed to provide a stimulating and challenging curriculum in order to ensure that student potential is developed. Instructional programs provide a steady challenge without frustration or excessive pressure. Instructional technology, integrated units, curriculum compacting, differentiated instructional units, literature circles, learning centers, interdisciplinary thematic units, Socratic seminars, tiered assignments, learning contracts, etc. are content differentiation strategies that may be seen in regular classrooms throughout the system.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - DEPs/IDEPs

- K-12 service options
- AIG 5 for individual students
- Acceleration policies and procedures

Other Comments: The Rockingham County School System has instituted the following system-wide initiatives/programs for improving gifted education and the total quality of public education in Rockingham County:

* North Carolina Standard Course of Study – The SCOS is implemented throughout the system. The gifted program provides differentiation and enrichment to the prescribed curriculum.

- * AIG Advisory Board/AIG Advisory Councils – Members include representatives (staff and parents) from all school levels and from areas other than those affiliated with the gifted program.
- * Guidance – The AIG coordinator and AIG specialists are working to strengthen ties with the guidance departments in order to meet social and emotional needs of students and to focus more attention on underachieving gifted students. One of the goals of the AIG Department is to provide opportunities for joint staff development.
- * Closing the Gap – Efforts are in place to try to reach students from under-served populations through nurturing and screening processes.
- * School Improvement – Differentiation is a part of the school improvement process.
- * Technology - AIG specialists are given opportunities to update their personal technology skills as well as techniques for teaching children in the use of technology.
- * Curriculum – The AIG coordinator is a member of the Curriculum and Instructional Support Committee for the county. The coordinator shares AIG information with other members and keeps abreast of curricular issues and staff development through these meetings.
- * Staff Development – The AIG specialists and other AIG certified teachers frequently serve as workshop facilitators within the county. Topics have included differentiation, inquiry-based science, math probability, writing, successful strategies based on Marzano's research, etc.
- * Parent Resource Center – One of the Parent Resource Centers is located near the AIG office. A close relationship exists between the two programs. Materials can be shared, and parents frequently stop in at both locations.

Practice D

Informs all teachers, school administrators, and support staff about delivery of differentiated services and instruction for AIG students, regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program and plan.

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Information concerning the AIG Program and plan is disseminated through emails, staff meetings, grade level meetings, and district and school websites. The self-assessment results indicate that there is consistent communication; therefore, this is a maintained practice.

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

Description: In order to inform all educational professionals of the Rockingham County Schools' AIG Plan, differentiation services, and regulations related to gifted education, district leadership and AIG specialists will facilitate informational sessions and/or professional development. The Rockingham County AIG Plan will be shared with each educational professional across Rockingham County within

the first month of school. A printed copy of the plan will be provided to each school site for the professional library in addition to being available electronically on the AIG website. The AIG Department will inform stakeholders of current research, trends, and methods of differentiation. DEPs will be made available to and shared with teachers of gifted students to ensure differentiation of instruction. Specifics about the AIG Program are available at each school through the AIG brochure, county handbook, AIG specialist, Identification and Placement Team, school counselor, regular classroom teachers, and AIG specialist's webpage. Administrators, guidance counselors, and AIG specialists have electronic access to the AIG Plan, procedures, and forms. The AIG Plan is posted on the district AIG website and each specialist's website. The "Home Page" of the district's AIG website includes Article 9B, vision and mission statements, and the AIG Program Standards. There are "Quick Links" to "FAQ," "AIG Services," and the "AIG Program Brochure." Each AIG specialist has a webpage with a link directly from the district's AIG website. Information about the school's AIG services and instruction are posted on his/her website. Each school's AIG website may vary in content but all must be consistent in the following:

- Welcome Page with a link to the district's AIG website, AIG mission and vision statements, and an invitation for comments and suggestions concerning the AIG Program.
- School (name of the individual school) AIG Program – There should be an explanation of how the program works at this particular school – inclusion, enrichment, content, Advisory Board, I/P Team members, etc.
- Student/Parent page – This may be one page with student and parent information on the same page or there can be a separate student page and parent page. The following items may be included on the webpage, but not limited to: expectations for students, grade scale, assignments, study tips, links, parent tips, activities taking place in the AIG classroom, curriculum maps, pacing guides, novel studies, etc.
- Schedule of the AIG specialist– Actual schedules may be posted, but the percentage of time employed and the percentage of time or hours at a given school should be posted.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - District AIG website

- AIG Specialist's website
- Surveys
- Presentations to faculty/staff
- Presentations to principals and department heads

Other Comments:

Practice E

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Communication among and between teachers and schools as students move from elementary into middle school has been successful as indicated by the self-assessment results; however, a need for thorough and consistent communication continues to exist as students transition from middle to high school. Based on both the self-assessment data and discussions held within the high school/middle school advisory councils and the district Advisory Board, this practice continues to

be a focused practice during the 2013-2016 cycle.

Goals: - To hold informational meetings in the spring for all rising 9th grade AIG students
- To provide rosters to all high school teachers whose class enrollment includes AIG students

Description: Communication among elementary and middle school AIG specialists as well as among middle and high school AIG specialists is necessary for continuation of services at key transition points. Although strides have been made in communication, especially from elementary to middle grades, a need for thorough and consistent communication continues to exist as middle school students transition to the high school level. When an AIG student transitions from elementary to middle or middle to high, he or she will encounter many challenges. The program's expectations may become more challenging at each level. The structure and the complexity of the environment also affect the success of the student. Some students may experience difficulty during these key transition points. In an attempt to alleviate these difficulties and to ensure a smoother transition for the students, increased communication among the AIG specialists as well as classroom teachers is necessary to address the academic and social/emotional needs of our gifted students. At the elementary and middle school levels, administration and personnel of feeder schools and the receiving school have taken steps in addressing continuity across grade levels and key transition points. Most of the middle schools have "step up" days where students visit the receiving school and students have a chance to talk with the teachers including the AIG specialists. Many times the middle school AIG specialist will visit the feeder elementary schools so students have a chance to ask more in-depth questions. Through the use of Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) and/or Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEPs), communication among and between teachers and schools as students move from elementary into middle school has been successful. Beginning in the 2013-2016 cycle, there will be student opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of expectations and services available at the high school level (rising 9th grade AIG students) through student and parent meetings.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Notes from meetings
- Class schedules of gifted students
- Dates of "step-up" days
- Dates of visits of AIG specialist to feeder schools

Other Comments:

Practice F

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The self-assessment data indicates that RCS addresses this practice effectively; thus, it is designated as maintained. The AIG specialists and classroom teachers collaborate on an on-going

basis in order to provide continuous and challenging instruction for the AIG student; however, opportunities for face-to-face collaboration is limited due to schedule conflicts and the amount of time the AIG specialist serves the school. As a result, collaboration may take place electronically through Google docs and/or email. Some of the principals utilize vertical team planning and extended team planning to ensure effective continuation of AIG services. Through extended collaboration and vertical team planning, opportunities are provided for collaboration and involvement. As additional initiatives are developed to address more collaboration and involvement, greater continuity and involvement should be seen among regular education teachers, exceptional children's teachers, other specialists, instructional staff, parents/families, and administrators.

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

Description: Rockingham 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. Differentiated Education Plans or Annual Reviews for gifted students are developed or reviewed by the Identification/Placement Team. The I/P Team members, typically comprised of general education teachers, the AIG specialist, principal, guidance counselor, Exceptional Children's teacher (where appropriate), and the Limited English Proficiency teacher (where appropriate), sign the Differentiated Education Plan or Annual Review documenting all stakeholders' involvement and participation. At times and when appropriate, the student meets with the team and participates in the process. Collaboration and involvement in creating and providing differentiated programming and services occurs through several avenues such as grade level/vertical team/extended collaboration planning as well as communication via email and Google docs. The use of Google docs provides a more consistent avenue for collaboration. The DEP/IDEP is a collaborative effort between the AIG specialist, the Identification and Placement Team, and classroom teachers. It is a requirement that Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) meetings be held within the first three weeks of the start of school. At the DEP meetings, parents are given an opportunity to ask questions, make comments, and/or volunteer. Also, there is an open invitation on the school's AIG website for opportunities to become involved in the student's education. Because of scheduling conflicts among the classroom teachers, AIG specialist, other resource teachers, and sometimes parents, intentional opportunities for collaboration and involvement are a necessity.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - DEPs/IDEPs

- Survey results
- District AIG website
- Documentation of meetings with related personnel
- Collaborative planning time
- AIG specialists' websites

Other Comments: Examples of parent involvement may include but not limited to the following:

- Participate in DEP and IDEP meetings annually, or more often as needed

(parents)

- Participate in AIG Plan development and evaluation
- Participate on AIG advisory councils at school level
- Volunteer in various capacities such as with field trips, Battle of the Books, Academic Challenge Competition, MathCounts, etc.
- Serve as guest speakers
- Allow students to serve internships with them
- Provide scholarships such as the Rotary Scholarship, the Tri-City Automotive Group's Excellence in Academics Scholarship, the FNB Southeast Scholarship, etc.
- Sponsor contests such as writing contests through the Rockingham County Public Library system, and essay, poster, and public speaking contests sponsored by Rockingham County Soil and Water Conservation, etc.

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: The Rockingham County School System strives to create an environment in which the distinct social and emotional needs of gifted learners at all ages are understood, valued, nurtured, and supported. As the self-assessment indicates, the AIG Program addresses the social and emotional component of giftedness; however, these needs are addressed on a limited basis. In our program evaluation, this area was a practice needing significant improvement. As a result, this is a focused practice because there is a lack of understanding from the majority of stakeholders concerning the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

Goals:

- To provide more focused school counseling services targeting the AIG population
- To utilize the AIG specialist as a counseling resource
- To provide resources to counselors

Description: 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. When programs are in place where emphasis and focus is placed on the social and emotional needs of gifted students, learning is maximized. In order for our gifted students to fully realize their academic potential, it is imperative that we address their social and emotional needs. Often it is assumed that these students are survivors and do not need interventions. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The AIG Department must work collaboratively with other school personnel to ensure that the affective domain of these students is effectively addressed. We will collaborate with counselors, regular education teachers, and families to address the social and emotional needs of AIG students by:

- Referring students to school counselors who have been trained to address the unique social and emotional needs of gifted students
- Beginning each academic year with activities that promote discussions of the challenges of being gifted
- Encouraging regular classroom teachers to be cognizant of social and emotional issues that may be

present in their students and to refer these students to school counselors when appropriate

- Offering parent workshops on the social and emotional issues facing gifted students
- Providing resources for counselors, teachers, and parents to help them better understand the social and emotional issues facing gifted learners

Cluster grouping allows students of similar achievement/ability levels and 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 counselors work with teachers to ensure a positive and productive collaborative learning environment, behavioral issues are kept at a minimum. For highly gifted students with significantly advanced academic social-emotional needs, opportunities for subject and grade acceleration are offered. Early entrance to kindergarten and dual enrollment are included in policies and procedures for qualifying students.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Related professional development opportunities

- Communications with guidance counselors, students, teachers, and parents
- DEPs/IDEPs
- High school counselors assist with rising AIG student registration

Other Comments: The AIG coordinator and AIG specialists confer with guidance counselors in addressing the needs of our gifted students. The counselors may be of assistance in addressing social/emotional concerns, acceleration issues, career counseling, test interpretation, and parent conferences. Each Identification and Placement Team includes a guidance counselor; thereby, the counselor has valuable input, especially in matters of acceleration and related counseling. Due to the large amount of time that counselors have to devote to coordinating local, state, and national testing, the AIG Department, in conjunction with the Guidance Department, will be developing strategies to meet student needs with the available time and resources.

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: The self-assessment data indicates that Rockingham County Schools is doing well in addressing this practice; consequently, this is a maintained practice. The AIG Department has procedures in place that address the needs of highly gifted students who may benefit from accelerative instructional placement options. A variety of service delivery options ensures that student need is matched with appropriate service options. A comprehensive service delivery system that includes accelerative instructional and placement options offered when appropriate evidences are presented and designed to provide a stimulating and challenging curriculum maximizes learning.

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

Description: System-wide guidelines provide clear step-by-step procedures for acceleration that address the needs of individual learners and provide the appropriate educational environment for gifted learners. When evidenced through aptitude, achievement, or IQ testing data that a student needs accelerative instruction or placement options, the regular education teacher, AIG specialist, and/or guidance counselor will review work samples, portfolio entries, and advanced course work to articulate and implement best practices for gifted learners.

When a child demonstrates unusually rapid progress through the established curriculum in a particular subject area, the teacher will extend curricular experiences even if the experiences are generally defined as belonging to the next grade level. This extension may require that a student be accelerated into a different classroom for part of the day. When outstanding achievement is evident across all subject areas, consideration will be given to advanced grade placement.

At the high school level, the coursework addresses this issue since students self-select Honors courses, AP courses, International Baccalaureate courses, and various online opportunities.

The final decision concerning acceleration rests with the principal according to North Carolina General Statute § 115C 288. Powers and duties of the principal states, "To Grade and Classify Pupils – The principal shall have authority to grade and classify pupils. In determining the appropriate grade for a pupil who is already attending a public school, the principal shall consider the pupil's classroom work and grades, the pupil's scores on standardized tests, and the best educational interests of the pupil. The principal shall not make the decision solely on the basis of standardized test scores."

While in many instances enrichment is encouraged, in other cases, acceleration through the regular curriculum is necessary to meet the child's needs in the classroom. K-3 students who demonstrate an extensive need for differentiation through informal observation in the classroom should be referred to the Identification and Placement Team for further screening. When subject or grade acceleration is needed, an IDEP is developed. The parent is part of this process. If grade level acceleration is considered, the AIG Department recommends the use of the Iowa Acceleration Scale (Assouline, Coulangelo, Shoplik, Lipscomb, and Forstadt). As a research-based guide, the IAS looks at the whole child by using a question format and rating scales to assist the I/P Team when determining and implementing a grade-skip.

Parents or school personnel may initiate the consideration of subject/grade advancement. The input of the family will be considered before decisions are made. Parents may ultimately deny a recommendation for acceleration. Before subject/grade acceleration is considered, certain minimum intellectual and academic scores must be in evidence.

Program implementation may include but is not be limited to:

- Resource support
- Curriculum compacting
- Cross grade-level grouping
- Independent study
- Differentiated learning centers
- Seminars

SUBJECT ACCELERATION

While in many instances enrichment or an individualized program may be appropriate, there are cases where subject acceleration is necessary to meet the child's needs in the academic environment. Indicators of an individualized need for differentiation are listed below. A student may not demonstrate all of the following depending on the area for which subject acceleration is being considered.

- Reads two or more years above grade level with a corresponding comprehension level
- Performs in math two or more years above grade level
- Demonstrates mastery of Standard Course of Study two or more years above his/her age peers
- Indicates through work samples completed at school, a mastery of two or more years above grade level
- Performs at an exceptional level in area being considered for subject acceleration
- Consistently generates and applies abstract reasoning ability
- Routinely produces independent work consistent with the above indicators

Subject acceleration is determined on an individual basis. A student who is being considered for subject acceleration should be exhibiting characteristics consistent with the individualized level of differentiation for that subject. If minimum requirements are met and the I/P Team recommends subject advancement, the principal will make the final decision at the school level regarding subject advancement. Parents may ultimately deny a recommendation for acceleration. Before subject advancement is considered, certain minimum intellectual and academic scores should be in evidence. A recommendation for special consideration may be taken to the I/P Team if the student scores 96/97% on an achievement AND aptitude test when meeting all other criteria.

Minimum Requirements for subject acceleration (reading or math):

- 98th to 99th percentile on achievement testing in area of acceleration (reading or math)
- AND cognitive testing in area of acceleration (Verbal or Quantitative)
- Performance two or more years above grade level in area of acceleration with demonstrated mastery as shown by on-grade-level grades of 98-99%
- GBS score between 113-124
- Motivation - Taken from the Gifted Behavior Scale with a score between 32-36

Students will not be considered for the AIG Program on a second testing of the CogAT within the same school year.

WHOLE GRADE ACCELERATION

While in many instances subject advancement, enrichment, or an individualized program may be appropriate, in some cases, grade level acceleration is necessary to meet the child's needs in the academic environment. Indicators of an individualized need for differentiation are as follows:

- Reads two or more years above grade level with a corresponding comprehension level
- Performs in math two or more years above grade level
- Demonstrates mastery of Standard Course of Study two or more years above his/her age peers
- Indicates through work samples completed at school, a mastery of two or more years above grade level
- Performs at an exceptional level in all curriculum areas
- Consistently generates and applies abstract reasoning ability
- Routinely produces independent work consistent with the above indicators

Whole grade acceleration is determined on an individual basis. A student who is being considered for

whole grade acceleration should be exhibiting characteristics consistent with the individualized level of differentiation. If minimum requirements are met and the I/P Team recommends whole grade advancement, the principal will make the final decision at the school level regarding grade advancement. Parents may ultimately deny a recommendation for acceleration. Before grade advancement is considered, certain minimum intellectual and academic scores should be in evidence. A recommendation for special consideration may be taken to the I/P Team if the student scores 96/97% on an achievement AND aptitude test when meeting all other criteria.

Minimum Requirements for grade acceleration:

- 98th to 99th percentile on achievement test (reading and math)
- AND 98th or 99th percentile on cognitive testing (Verbal and Quantitative)
- Performance two or more years above grade level in all subject areas with demonstrated mastery as shown by on-grade-level grades of 98-99%
- GBS score between 113-124
- Motivation – Taken from the Gifted Behavior Scale with a score between 32-36

Students will not be considered for the AIG program on a second testing of the CogAT within the same school year.

Please note: Even though there is valid research to support whole grade acceleration, it should always be approached with caution. It is recommended that a trial period be arranged of at least six weeks. During this trial period, the school's guidance counselor should schedule sessions with the student in order to assess the student's social and emotional progress. The child should be aware that if the trial period is not a success, he or she will return to the original placement. It is important that in such a circumstance the child should not be made to feel that he/she has "failed." The possible damage to the child's self-esteem following difficulties with inappropriate grade advancement suggests that this option be used only after all other enrichment/special grouping has been explored.

The following stakeholders will be involved in the subject/grade acceleration decision:

- Student – Interview with the school's guidance counselor
- Parent – Written recommendation with completed survey (refer to AIG 4a - 4c)
- Classroom teacher – Written recommendation from the classroom teacher with documentation
- Guidance counselor – Input concerning the student's social and emotional development provided
- Identification/Placement Team – Members of the team include the AIG specialist and general education teachers including the student's classroom teacher(s), guidance counselor, and administrator. The I/P Team will review the documentation and student data.
- Principal – North Carolina General Statute § 115C 288. Powers and duties of principal states, "To Grade and Classify Pupils – The principal shall have authority to grade and classify pupils. In determining the appropriate grade for a pupil who is already attending a public school, the principal shall consider the pupil's classroom work and grades, the pupil's scores on standardized tests, and the best educational interests of the pupil. The principal shall not make the decision solely on the basis of standardized test scores."

Planned Sources of Evidence: - The written procedure for acceleration

- Minutes and agendas from related meetings
- Documentation of counselor/student support
- Samples of documentation in which the Iowa Acceleration Scale was implemented for grade acceleration policy
- I/P Team notes

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program recognizes that this continues to be an area of concern; consequently, we will research and implement programs that will provide better services within budget constraints. We will continue to provide services for all identified traditionally under-represented AIG populations in order to afford every opportunity to those who may not overtly demonstrate their academic or intellectual abilities. As a result, this practice was determined to be a focused practice based on both the self-assessment data and discussions held among stakeholders.

Goals:

- To hold discussions and collaboration sessions between the English as Second Language lead teacher and AIG coordinator and other stakeholders to expand intentional programming for traditionally under-represented populations as funding is available and to consider how second language gifted learners can be identified
- To foster a culturally responsive and supportive learning environment as well as provide intentional programming to these students

Description: The AIG Program provides services to any K-12 AIG student who shows the need for academic differentiation including intentional services for traditionally under-represented AIG populations, culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional. The AIG Plan will be followed in determining those students who demonstrate a need for such services. Instruments that may be used but are not limited to the following:

- Gifted Behavior Scale – based on Renzulli-Hartman Scale focusing on gifted behaviors
- Cognitive Abilities Test or other standardized aptitude tests
- North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests or other standardized achievement tests
- Snapshot Assessment System – McRel (for "Migrant, Language-Minority, and Mobile Students")
- Teacher Observation Instrument for primary students

Students in kindergarten through second grade are observed using the K-2 Observation Inventory for primary informal identification. This procedure reflects sensitivity to equal opportunity for all. RCS' Nurturing Program consists of whole class instruction in grades one through three and extends beyond to those students who may not be identified as AIG but who are achieving or have potential to

achieve at substantial levels of performance. In grades 4-8, all students' standardized test scores are reviewed both by the AIG specialist at each school and by the AIG coordinator in an effort to ensure that equal opportunity for consideration is provided to all. Every effort will be made to secure alternate individual assessments in a child's most fluent language when necessary. As we identify gifted learners from traditionally under-served populations, the AIG specialists will help guide the I/P Team at each school to make careful placement decisions that will meet students' needs in appropriate and intentional ways.

Rockingham County's AIG Program will maintain this practice in the following ways and will research and seek out resources that will further address the cognitive and affective aspects of the under-served populations that may be used in the identification of under-served populations.

- Utilize test data to create screening pools
- Conduct model lessons (in K-2 classrooms) to note high ability performance
- Collaborate with guidance counselors, ELL specialists, and classroom teachers in identifying high ability learner
- Use multi-cultural literature to promote awareness
- Use multiple criteria for placement consideration
- Use the nonverbal partial composite of the CogAT
- Use PETS curriculum and Building Thinking Skills
- Extra-curricular programs and events

Every effort will be made to continuously improve the identification of our under-represented populations.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - DEPs/IDEPs

- Data relating to under-served populations
- Procedures for using nonverbal partial Composite

Other Comments: We use a partial composite score (nonverbal and quantitative or nonverbal and verbal) of the Cognitive Abilities Test to help identify under-represented populations.

Practice J

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Much progress has been made in meeting this practice in the past three years; consequently, this is designated as a maintained practice. Extra-curricular programs and events that enhance and further develop the needs and interests of AIG students are offered at all elementary, middle, and high schools in Rockingham County.

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

Description: Well-designed extra-curricular activities play an important role in the lives of AIG

students and serve to encourage students to explore their creative, academic, and social potential. Skills and talents that might otherwise go untapped have much potential in being developed through extra-curricular programs and events. The extra-curricular activities offered by the AIG Program and the AIG specialists create a higher level of personal responsibility and facilitate personal and academic growth in areas of interest. Higher-order thinking skills from the Revised Blooms Taxonomy are incorporated in the competitions. The AIG Program sponsors an Academic Challenge Competition (ACC) for the five county high schools. In the fall of 2013, ACC will begin its 15th year of showcasing the academic talents of Rockingham County students. Its format is similar to the "Quiz Bowl" that was formerly run by the public libraries. ACC is an extra-curricular activity that provides an arena for the application of knowledge. Its aim is to promote academic excellence and integrity through friendly competition and mutual respect. ACC is a community effort with the judges, emcees, timekeepers, and scorekeepers volunteering their time. Five matches are held each year. Each of the five high schools serves as host for two of the meets. In May, a banquet is given in honor of the students who participated in ACC. Tri-City Automotive Group sponsors the banquet and provides one scholarship to a senior from each of the high school teams and the AIG Department provides trophies, medals, and pins.

All of the four middle schools participate in the Battle of the Books Competition which is sponsored by the AIG Program. AIG specialists are involved with the implementation of the competition through coaching the teams, serving as assistant coaches, and undertaking other responsibilities. The county holds its competition in March, and the district winners represent the county at the regional competition. T-shirts and a lunch are provided for the participants. The winning school receives a trophy. Besides the Battle of the Books Competitions, one middle school participates in MathCounts and another middle school competes in Robotics.

Each of the AIG specialists at the elementary level provides at least one extra-curricular program/event/club/community service yearly for each of the schools he/she serves. These activities reflect the needs of the AIG students at the individual schools, and therefore are not consistent across the county. Some elementary schools offer after-school clubs for AIG students such as Chess Club, Gardening Club, SET Club, Origami Club, or Scrabble Club; however, these are not offered at every school nor are they offered from year to year. One elementary school sponsors a school newspaper while another one hosts a morning news show. Another elementary school competes in the Elementary Battle of the Books Competition. Service projects, such as the Lions Club Eyeglass Project, allow students to experience how their time and effort benefit others in need. One of our elementary schools collected 350 pairs of eyeglasses for this cause. In the past, AIG students have sponsored a Veterans' Day Assembly and afterwards, honored the veterans with a reception. It was a community event where the National Guard brought different types of trucks, the ROTC from the local high school participated in the program, and a community member brought displays of World War II airplanes and paraphernalia. Several grocery stores provided fruit trays, food, and drinks for the reception. These clubs and service projects encourage teamwork and leadership skills as well as responsibility and discipline. In addition to helping teach real world skills that encourage life-long interests, extra-curricular activities allow kids to boost their self-esteem as they learn to perform in something they enjoy. They may find friends that share their common interests and also meet kids from other backgrounds.

AIG education does not exist as an isolated fragment, and the natural link AIG education has to all programs must be utilized. AIG students may participate in opportunities available. The list below is not all inclusive.

- Summer enrichment opportunities
- Rockingham Community College classes (must be 16 yrs. old)
- Summer Ventures in Science and Mathematics (rising 11th and 12th grade students)
- Local honors programs
- Governor's School
- North Carolina School of Performing Arts
- Summer camps
- Summer programs at universities (TIP, etc.)

Co-Curricular/Enrichment Opportunities:

- Battle of the Books
- Science Fair
- All State Band
- District Band
- District Middle School Band
- North Carolina Honors Chorus
- High School Quiz Bowl
- Duke TIP Program
- Community Theater
- All-State Chorus

There are several factors that may play a role in the delivery of extra-curricular activities and events such as the needs of the school population, amount of time the AIG specialist is at the school, someone who is willing to co-sponsor, and the scheduling of extra-curricular activities.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Provide pictures, video, newspaper coverage as documentation for at least one extra-curricular program/event/club/community service for each of the schools he/she serves

- AIG district website with a link for student opportunities

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: There is regular communication through Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) meetings, parent conferences, letters, brochures, and the district/AIG specialists' websites. Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program is committed to establishing strong partnerships with all stakeholders. The self-assessment indicates we are doing well in addressing practice 5a; therefore, we will continue to maintain and strengthen relationships with stakeholders and work towards establishing stronger partnerships that support the academic, intellectual, and the social and emotional needs of gifted learners.

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

Description: School and home share some common goals for the emotional, social, and academic growth of our AIG students. Both want AIG students to develop their gifts, talents, and creativity; to attain social skills, a good self-concept, and a lifelong love of learning, while acquiring knowledge, and problem-solving skills that extend beyond the basic level. To achieve these goals, it is imperative for parents and educators to become partners and for the AIG Program to be not only consistent in communication but also persistent. Parent partnerships are formed through participating in the school's AIG advisory council and volunteering in various capacities such as field trips, Battle of the Books, Academic Challenge Competition, MathCounts, and other events. In addition, parents and community leaders serve as guest speakers, and at times, allow students to serve internships with them. The AIG Department encourages participation in these events, sponsors and conducts parent meetings at the school level, and provides news articles informing the community about AIG activities. The AIG director or coordinator may speak at community events about the AIG Program. Both the district website and the websites of the AIG specialists are updated on a regular basis. The AIG Program will partner with the Migrant and ESL departments to provide translations of the AIG brochure and certain forms and procedures as well as providing translations upon request. Partnerships have also been formed with businesses to serve as sponsors for service projects, clubs, and competitions. Our goal for the 2013-2016 plan cycle is to encourage and build lasting partnerships that will strengthen the gifted program in the Rockingham County School System and to investigate opportunities to form an AIG parent advocacy group.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Websites

- Brochures – English and Spanish
- Surveys
- AIG Advisory Council agendas and minutes
- Documentation of meetings and school-related activities

- Documentation of partnerships

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: Communication concerning the AIG Program and plan and its policies is necessary for the needs of the AIG students to be met. Currently, there are processes that are in place to facilitate the sharing of information, and as a result, the self-assessment data indicates that this practice be designated as maintained.

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

Description: As the district Advisory Board reviewed the data from the various stakeholder surveys, it is clear there is a good deal of information relayed to parents and families. Information concerning the AIG Program and Plan and its policies is shared in a variety of ways: newsletters, the RCS district website, individual AIG specialists' and school websites, transitional meetings, annual AIG parent meetings, and presentations to stakeholder groups. The district website is a useful resource for the AIG student, parent, classroom teacher, AIG specialist, and all interested stakeholders. The AIG Plan is posted on the district AIG website. Also, each specialist will post the AIG plan on his/her website. The websites contain much useful information that is helpful in addressing questions that may arise. This site contains information about contests and awards as well as links for parents, students, teachers, and subject-area information. In addition to web-based communication, an English and Spanish brochure is provided to all students. Paper copies are available at various locations throughout the county, at all schools, and at the Parent Resource Centers. This brochure helps those in our population who have limited or no access to a computer or the Internet.

Parent meetings are held in the fall of each year to discuss the Differentiated Education Plans. The middle and high schools hold their parent meetings in conjunction with other school activities. At the elementary level this meeting is typically held in conjunction with the school's Open House Program to ensure maximum participation and attendance of parents. Additionally, members of the AIG staff are available to speak to parents and community groups about various aspects of educating gifted students. Parents and students have an opportunity to receive clarification on procedures and policies and to ask questions. Each school has an open door policy, and parents may arrange a conference at any point during the year with the AIG specialist and/or the AIG coordinator. Parents may find additional information that is specific to their child's school by viewing the website of the AIG specialist. In order to address the need for more communication at the high school level, the high school AIG specialist posts a high school newsletter once a semester on the high school website and holds a district high school advisory council in the fall and spring.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Websites of the AIG specialists
- District AIG website

- Newsletters and other media articles

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: The Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program is committed to promoting and increasing parent and community involvement in the local AIG Program. Self-assessment data indicates that involvement with all aspects of the AIG Program has increased over the last three years; therefore, this is a maintained practice.

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

Description: Rockingham County Schools 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. The rationale for this decision is based on the belief that all stakeholders and the community can provide valuable information and insight into the development of the AIG Program and Plan. A district AIG Advisory Board, a district high school advisory council, and advisory councils at each elementary and middle school are in place to ensure the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG Program and Plan. Stakeholders represented are parents, teachers, administrators, central office personnel, school board members, and members of the community. Suggestions from each Advisory Council are submitted to the district AIG Advisory Board. Students and/or parents participate in DEP and IDEP meetings annually, or more often as needed. The AIG website and school-based websites and/or AIG newsletters provide information regarding the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG Program and Board of Education approved plan. Community members and parents volunteer in various capacities such as with field trips, Battle of the Books, Academic Challenge Competition, and MathCounts. Parents, students, certified teachers, and administrators participated in a comprehensive survey that served as an important component in the evaluation of the AIG Program. The feedback assisted in developing and making necessary revisions to the existing plan.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Survey results

- Suggestions from Advisory Councils and other stakeholders
- Minutes from Advisory Board and Advisory Councils

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: In our program evaluation, this area was one of the practices needing continued improvement. Efforts have been made to communicate with all parents/families, but there continues to be a language barrier for the non-English speaking families, especially Hispanic. As a result, this is a focused practice because communication in native languages needs to be addressed.

Goals:

- To use translators when possible to relay information to parents in their native language
- To work with the county ESL director and lead teacher to publish newsletters in other languages as needed
- To provide stakeholders with information concerning available opportunities in their native language when necessary and as budget allows

Description: When necessary and as budget allows, RCS will keep parents and students informed of current opportunities for AIG students in their native language in order to encourage student growth and to provide innovative programming to support development - academically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. Even though, Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program informs parents, families, and the community of opportunities available to the AIG student, communication has been mostly in English; however, attempts are made to have the information translated into the family's native language. A request for parent input in the plan revision is on the district website in both Spanish and English. An AIG Program brochure is available in English and Spanish at all the schools and at various locations in the community. It provides information about the AIG Program to the parents/families and the community at large. Additional copies are available at the AIG office at Booker T. Washington Learning Center. A translator may be provided for informational meetings and parent conferences if a prior request is made. Information is provided to parents so they can help their gifted child develop his/her talents and gifts. The AIG district website, which is maintained by the AIG coordinator, offers a wealth of information for parents, students, and community on the AIG child. The types of information include websites for various subjects, parent links, student links, summer enrichment opportunities, contests, college information, and awards. Each AIG specialist maintains his/her website to communicate information about the program and inform parents about opportunities available for their child that is specific to the school.

Planned Sources of Evidence:

- District website
- AIG specialists' websites
- Translated documents

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: The AIG student is better served when all possible resources are available to him/her. These resources include utilizing community support to enhance and enrich AIG services to the students. Rockingham County Schools seeks to form 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. Rockingham County Schools is in need of additional support and involvement from community stakeholders concerning the AIG Program and its implementation. As a result, this practice was determined to be a focused practice, based on both the self-assessment data and discussions held within the district Advisory Board and advisory councils' meetings.

Goals: - To encourage and build lasting partnerships that will strengthen the gifted program in the Rockingham County School System including local industry, local businesses, institutes of higher education, local clubs and affiliations

- To seek speakers from local business and industry to illustrate to students the need for their continued involvement in the future of the community
- To form a committee to help initiate more collaboration and dialogue to aid in the development of partnerships

Description: Rockingham County Schools believes it is imperative that we promote initiatives that foster community and parental involvement to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services. Even though we presently support and encourage parent/community participation, our self-assessment indicates we need to be more intentional in seeking community support of the AIG program. A major goal of this plan cycle is to form a committee to help initiate more collaboration and dialogue to aid in the development of 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.

The State of North Carolina provides gifted funding at 4% of the Average Daily Membership. In 2012-2013, Rockingham County Schools had 21% of the ADM identified as academically or intellectually gifted. There is no federal funding for gifted education. Monetary and service oriented support from local partnerships would provide for additional initiatives and programs to enhance the curriculum and provide recognition for academics. Business leaders will be encouraged to serve on the AIG Advisory Board where they will receive information on the current needs of Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program. Another way to encourage partnerships is to make community and business leaders aware of the needs through individual contacts or letters. The leaders need to be informed as to ways their businesses can potentially benefit from these partnerships.

In the past, the AIG Program has received support from local businesses and community leaders in sponsoring a Garden Club, Disney World trips, and Veteran's Day events. There are currently two ongoing partnerships in existence. Tri-City Automotive Group sponsors the Academic Challenge Competition (ACC) for all five high schools. A banquet is provided in honor of the students. Community leaders, school board members, the superintendent, assistant superintendents, directors, parents, and students are invited. In addition to the banquet, Tri-City Automotive Group provides a scholarship to one senior participant from each of the five high schools. McMichael Family Foundation sponsors students attending Governor's School by providing the full tuition costs for each student. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) in many of our schools supports the enriching and

extending of the curriculum through the purchase of academic competitions such as WordMasters and Continental Math League. We hope to continue these partnerships in addition to forming new ones by soliciting and encouraging purposeful dialogue with businesses, clubs, and stakeholders.

Presently, Rockingham County does not have a PAGE chapter (Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education), but parents and educators are encouraged to start a chapter. PAGE "emphasizes the collaboration among parents, teachers, school administrators, higher education professionals, and other community members that is necessary to advocate successfully for gifted children." Information may be found at the following web address: <http://www.ncagt.org/nc-page/about-page> .

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Newspaper articles

- District AIG website
- Event programs
- Documentation of community partnerships
- Award and recognition presentations at county-wide competitions/initiatives
- News articles
- Awards and recognitions from outside agencies

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: Rockingham County Schools has developed a written AIG Plan describing the local AIG Program in accordance with state legislation and policy. The plan is approved by the local Board of Education and submitted to the State Board of Education for review and comments. The local plan was developed in accordance with NC AIG Program Standards under the leadership of the director and the coordinator of the AIG Program in Rockingham County Schools. The self-assessment data indicates that this practice is well-developed, and thus designated as maintained.

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

Description: The NCDPI website states, "An LEA's policies and practices regarding its local AIG program are developed through the writing of a local AIG plan. This AIG plan is approved by the local board of education and submitted to State Board of Education/DPI for comment. DPI assists LEAs with their local AIG program and plan but does not approve local plans. Per state legislation, AIG plans must be revised every three years by the LEA."

The written AIG Plan addresses the six standards and fifty-one practices of the North Carolina AIG Program Standards which were adopted in July 2009. Since the AIG Standards address the whole child, the needs of the AIG students are best served when the written AIG plan is aligned with the NC AIG Standards. The AIG Plan gives guidance to create, facilitate, and initiate many educational opportunities for highly capable students through acceleration, enrichment, and continuous motivation by providing an array of service delivery options to meet the diverse needs of AIG students. The AIG Plan outlines the identification process, service options, and delivery of services for AIG students in grades K-12 (formally and informally identified). The AIG Program desires to evaluate, refine, and redefine practices, procedures, and policies to support the system and its stakeholders. The AIG Plan must reflect the identification and services of gifted learners, and align program and system goals and initiatives.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Rockingham County Schools' AIG Plan
- State review of plan

Other Comments: The AIG plan is posted on the district website.

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: AIG Program leadership, district Advisory Board, and advisory councils monitor the implementation of the AIG Program to ensure compliance with the current legislation and state policies. Feedback collected from surveys and self-assessment data indicated that Rockingham County Schools is doing well in meeting this practice; therefore, this will be a maintained practice.

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

Description: The AIG Advisory Board, which consists of school personnel, parent representatives, and member(s) of the Rockingham County Board of Education, helps monitor the implementation of the AIG Program and Plan through regular meetings and surveys. The Advisory Board also makes decisions related to program design, implementation, and updates. The Advisory Board includes minority representation that mirrors the demographics of the county. In addition, input is received from advisory councils from each elementary and middle school as well as the district high school advisory council. The AIG coordinator reviews DEPs/IDEPs/appeals/all identification records and utilizes survey results from students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Informal evaluations also take place through regular meetings of the AIG specialists. Monthly meetings are scheduled during the year. By meeting periodically, those involved in the implementation of the program will be able to assess progress continuously and to make suggestions related to program design and implementation. Near the beginning of each school year, AIG specialists turn in revised yearly plans for their schools. These plans are kept on file in the AIG office and are updated as necessary. The information in each plan aids greatly in evaluation of the overall program. The implementation of the AIG Plan is monitored through a three-year summative evaluation as mandated by the state. Annually, student identification and placement, student services and options, and student achievement resulting from these services are reviewed.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Log of classroom visits

- Data reports
- Surveys to principals, teachers, parents, and students
- DEPs/IDEPs
- Documentation of consistent county-wide identification procedures

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: According to the self-assessment data, this practice is designated as maintained because state funds are used and monitored by the AIG Program director and the AIG coordinator according to state guidelines. The budget process involves the cooperative efforts of the AIG director, the AIG coordinator, and the administrative assistant.

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

Description: 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. Rockingham County Schools AIG Program will maintain this practice by maintaining a record of purchase orders, hiring AIG licensed teachers, purchasing research-based materials, and allocating funds for salaries, materials, professional development, and technology. Budget items are adjusted according to the needs of the plan implementation, and all state and locally allocated funds are accounted for in the AIG Program budget. A full-time coordinator is employed to help plan, write, implement, and monitor the AIG Plan/Program as well as plan and present staff development, serve as a consultant for administrators and teachers, communicate the program to parents and the community, and serve in other capacities as called upon. Also, the coordinator facilitates the efforts of the specialists to ensure that the AIG Program is being implemented as stated in this document. Approximately 95% of the state budget is spent in salary requirements which leaves 5% to cover substitutes, workshop expenses, travel for itinerant teachers, travel for academic competitions membership dues, instructional/office supplies, Academic Challenge Competition, Battle of the Books, and technology equipment. Local funds are allocated for four AIG specialists' positions and the benefits associated with each position. This commitment on the part of the system helps greatly in the accomplishment of our goals and objectives and the implementation of the AIG Program; however, it continues to be very difficult to meet the diverse needs of the gifted population with the money that is allotted on the state and local levels.

At the K-3 level, AIG specialists work primarily with whole classrooms using strategies that help to identify and cultivate potential. Materials are provided at each elementary school to enhance instruction and enrich curricula for all students. In grades 4-8, the AIG specialist at each school collaborates with teachers of AIG students to help nurture the potential of both teachers and students. Each school has an AIG resource library and there is also a county wide resource library; both have proven to be important resources in meeting of needs of AIG learners and their teachers.

Various contests and competitions are held county-wide. Some are sponsored by the AIG Program while others are sponsored through community partnerships. Tri-City Automotive Group sponsors our Academic Challenge Competition for the high schools. McMichael Family Foundation sponsors the tuition to Governor's School for those students who are accepted.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Annual budget statement

- Inventory of purchased items
- Contracts for professional development
- Teacher licensure

- PRC 034 funds

Other Comments: In Rockingham County, we have twenty-four K-12 schools, an Early College, and an alternative school (SCORE). Approximately 21% of our Average Daily Membership is identified as academically or intellectually gifted. In order for the new standards to be addressed and see resulting changes in the classroom, it is imperative that the AIG Program be funded at a level that will preserve existing programs and provide growth for 21st century skills.

Practice D

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The self-assessment indicates that we are doing well in this area; however, there continues to be areas of needed improvement; thus, the rationale for this practice to be designated as focused. It is important that AIG student performance growth be monitored and shared with school AIG programs in order to assess the individual needs of the AIG student. Although we are monitoring gifted students' growth, the Department of Testing and Accountability has partnered with the AIG Program to create a data application that allows us to do this more effectively. In addition, the coordinator of student management system partners with us in monitoring drop-out rates for gifted high school students.

Goals: - To collect drop-out data for each of our 5 high schools

- To look for trends in growth patterns and drop-out data
- To conference with potential dropout students
- To involve high school counselors in mentoring students who are potential drop-outs

Description: Director of Testing and Research and his staff has partnered with the AIG Department to create an AIG data application that allows the AIG Program to review and analyze system-wide data for each AIG student as well as allowing the AIG specialists to analyze AIG student data for each individual school. This application enables the district to consider trends in under-represented populations at the district and school level. Through the use of this program, we will look for tendencies in growth patterns and possibly drop-out data. The AIG application has also allowed the AIG Program to incorporate several of its forms in the program to where the forms are completely electronic, and thus there is no longer a need for specialists to maintain spreadsheets. The AIG Department will start utilizing the AIG Application in the 2013-2016 plan cycle. The high school specialist reviews the high school data and counsels with potential AIG drop-outs. The coordinator of the student management system partners with the AIG Department in providing the data. The high school AIG specialist will monitor and analyze the data in conjunction with the names of the referrals of potential drop-outs to see if a direct correlation exist.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Disaggregation of EOG and EOC data

- AIG Application in APEX
- Documentation of counseling sessions

- Drop-out data including AIG students

Other Comments:

Practice E

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: This practice continues to be a maintained practice since the self-assessment indicates we are doing well in addressing this practice. Rockingham County Schools 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. Even though RCS' AIG Program monitors under-represented populations, we feel a better job can be done through the utilization of the AIG application in APEX.

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

Description: Each fall, the AIG specialist analyzes the AIG population and academic growth from all ethnicities. Each AIG specialist completes a school AIG plan which includes data of the representation of under-represented populations. Once the AIG coordinator receives the individual school plans, the data is analyzed in order to get a county composite and representation. District statistics show that the ethnicity gap widens as students progress through school. The gap is marginal at the elementary level but continues to widen at the middle and high school levels. Over 50% of RCS' student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch. Due to federal guidelines protecting students' rights, there is no data concerning the number of gifted students on free and reduced lunch; however, the AIG Program strives to identify candidates regardless of their economic status. The AIG Program will begin using the electronic AIG Application to monitor and analyze the representation and retention of under-represented AIG students. Percentages will be reviewed to determine retention of under-represented students in the AIG Program. RCS' AIG Program follows the philosophy that "once gifted – always gifted." Through an annual review process, each school's (elementary/middle) I/P team looks carefully at data regarding each student's performance, achievement, aptitude, observation, interest, and motivation in order to closely monitor a student's needs and adjust the level and type of service, as the data directs. Because we have followed this approach, we have not closely tracked the retention data; rather, we have focused on the representation component. During the next three year cycle, we will begin to more closely track not only the representation of other subgroups of under-represented populations, but also monitor the retention of each subgroup in an effort to better assess our program's effectiveness.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Data of under-served populations

- Data of under-served populations from the pool spreadsheets (referrals)

- Data regarding referral and identification trends based on demographics, sub-groups (include

retention data)
- AIG Application data

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: The self-assessment data indicates we are meeting this practice. Thus, it has been designated as maintained as we will continue to keep data current in order to make sure that qualified personnel are serving AIG students. Data is maintained on the credentials of all AIG specialists but not on all personnel serving AIG students. The Human Resources Department provides data on teachers with AIG certification. It is the goal of the AIG Department that AIG students are cluster/subject grouped in a classroom with a certified AIG teacher, but this is not always possible. Currently, teachers without AIG certification are being provided with opportunities to learn how to meet the needs of gifted learners through a local AIG endorsement.

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

Description: A current report of AIG certified teachers is available upon request from the personnel office of Rockingham County Schools. This database should include the teachers who have recently acquired AIG certification. As professional development is offered in the area of gifted education, records may be procured as a result of staff development registration on SEA System. Information concerning student placement and the classroom teacher who facilitates the learning process is submitted with the school plan under goal 3.

A list of personnel who have AIG certification is maintained by the AIG coordinator. Some classroom teachers have received gifted education training but have not become AIG-certified. The AIG specialist at each school collaborates with these teachers in order to provide richer curricula to the gifted students. It is recommended that regular classroom teachers who have a cluster group of gifted students have taken or are taking coursework in gifted education. Although it is recommended, due to limited funds, this is not always the case. A list of all RCS employees with AIG licensure and locally approved professional development is maintained. Lists are broken down by school. License (credential) information for all personnel is kept current and monitored through the LEA's Human Resources Department. All district AIG specialists hold appropriate licenses and meet the federal definition of being highly-qualified. This information is reviewed annually.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - List of AIG certified teachers

- School AIG plan
- Professional development records
- List of teachers who have AIG students

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: Rockingham County's AIG Advisory Board oversees the revision process and makes recommendations to be included in our AIG Plan using evidence from surveys and comments from AIG meetings and advisory councils. The board is active during each school year, enabling the evaluation process to be continuous. An increased level of awareness concerning the needs of the AIG students in Rockingham County would be beneficial in strengthening the AIG Program. The self-assessment indicates that we are doing well in addressing this practice, and therefore it is designated as maintained.

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

Description: Parents and members of the community assist in developing, monitoring, and evaluating the AIG Plan as members of the AIG Advisory Board. The district Advisory Board is composed of administrators, AIG specialists, classroom teachers, parents, businesses, a guidance counselor, the IB coordinator, and at least one school board member. The teachers represent elementary, middle, and high schools, and many parents are involved as well. Minority representation is present. Members share input from parents, students, and the community as recommendations for revisions are made. Members of the board evaluate the effectiveness of the plan yearly and serve two-year terms on a rotating basis. The make-up of the board reflects the demographics of the community. The district AIG website contains a listing of AIG Advisory Board members. In addition to the district Advisory Board, each elementary and middle school has an AIG advisory council that consists of a cross-section of stakeholders. The AIG advisory councils are an important component of the monitoring of the local AIG Plan. This on-site group of educators and parents will expedite discussions concerning screening, identification, placement, and service delivery options for AIG students as well as suggestions concerning areas of improvement in the implementation of the county and school AIG plans. The school advisory council meets a minimum of twice a year. The first meeting will occur prior to January 1. The second meeting will occur during the second semester prior to the End-of-Grade testing window. The county's AIG Advisory Board will discuss current issues and trends that affect the local AIG Program, evaluate the current plan, make suggestions, and provide input for its continued improvement. A listing of Advisory Board members is on the county AIG website, and each AIG specialist has a listing of the advisory council members on his/her website. A cross-county high school advisory council was created during the 2010-2013 plan cycle. The high school council will continue to monitor the implementation of the AIG Plan at the high school level.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Agenda and minutes of the AIG Advisory Board meetings
- Membership of board members

- Invitations to serve
- Surveys

Other Comments: - Agenda and minutes of the AIG Advisory Board meetings

- Membership of board members
- Invitations to serve
- Surveys

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: The Rockingham County Schools' AIG Program is committed to promoting and increasing feedback from students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders. In the past three years, RCS' AIG Program has purposefully and intentionally obtained feedback on a regular basis by providing formal and informal opportunities for stakeholders to participate in providing feedback regarding the quality and effectiveness of the local AIG Program; therefore, the self-assessment data supports this practice as a maintained practice.

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

Description: Opportunities for students, parents/guardians, teachers, and other stakeholders to provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of the local AIG Program include, but are not limited to the following:

- District Advisory Board
- District High School Advisory Council
- Elementary and Middle School Advisory Councils
- Parent meetings and conferences
- Annual DEP/IDEP meetings
- Parent meetings and conferences
- School-based Identification Placement Teams
- Various technological avenues

The AIG Program continues to have an open door policy where parents are welcome to talk with the AIG coordinator, AIG specialist, and/or the classroom teachers about strengths and weaknesses of the program. Program evaluation is obtained through informal discussions and meetings of the county AIG Advisory Board and regular monthly meetings of the AIG specialists. At the school level, feedback is encouraged through advisory council meetings, various correspondence through the schools' AIG specialists, webpages, emails, wikis, blogs, and annual DEP (Differentiated Education Plan) meetings. Continuation of informal evaluations as well as more formal evaluations will assist in program assessment. The survey results regarding the quality and effectiveness of the AIG Program will be posted on the district AIG website. AIG specialists should collect data from students throughout the year through discussions, conferences, and interviews. Feedback from the stakeholders in the AIG Program gives voice to the level of awareness concerning the overall

effectiveness of the program. We recognize that consistent feedback, both formal and informal, is essential to effective program evaluation, and continued efforts to obtain feedback from stakeholders will be on-going both, formally and informally.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Survey results

- Webpages
- Data gathered from focused questions at the DEP meetings
- Minutes from advisory councils
- Minutes from Advisory Board

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: The AIG Program and plan are reviewed and revised using data disaggregated from EOG and EOC scores, the AIG Advisory Board, advisory council from the different schools, feedback from surveys, and informal reviews; consequently, as noted by the self-assessment results, this practice is designated as maintained.

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

Description: In order to ensure that the AIG Program improves continuously, the local plan needs to be reviewed and revised on a regular basis. Through formal and informal data collection methods, interests and needs of program stakeholders are addressed, and every attempt to accommodate the unique learning characteristics of gifted students and those who teach them is taken under advisement. Tools for program reviews and revisions may include, but are not limited to, the following forms of data:

- Surveys involving all stakeholders
- Evaluation results from End of Grade and End Of Course
- Demographic results from student screening and identification with special emphasis on under-represented populations
- LEA's enrollment data with demographics

Regular monitoring of the AIG Program and its implementation helps to ensure that AIG students continue to receive academic rigor in the educational environment. In addition, input is received from advisory councils from each elementary and middle school and the district high school advisory council. Review and revisions also occur as a result of informal evaluations that take place monthly. The North Carolina AIG Standards and the fifty-one practices provide the basis for program evaluation. Formative evaluations occur in an on-going manner. The summative evaluation and a thorough plan revision occur every three years as mandated by the state.

The Advisory Board, which is made up of school personnel, parent representatives, and Rockingham

County Board of Education personnel, is a large part of the AIG Program evaluation. The Advisory Board includes minority representation that mirrors the demographics of the county. The AIG director is a member of the Advisory Board.

Informal evaluation also takes place through regular meetings of the AIG specialists for all the schools, K-12. Monthly meetings are scheduled during the year. By meeting periodically, those involved in the implementation of the program are able to assess progress continuously and to make suggestions related to program design and implementation.

The AIG Application in APEX includes student demographic information. The coordinator has access to total school demographic information for comparisons. This data is used to revise and review on-going practices and to make adjustments in school services.

Feedback from surveys completed by students, parents, certified staff, administrators, and AIG specialists provides information and suggestions concerning areas of strength and areas of improvement.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - Demographic results from student screening and identification
- Survey results from all stakeholders
- LEA's enrollment data with demographics

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: AIG data and information is available to stakeholders through involvement with the DEP meetings, Advisory Board meetings, and various functions held at the county level and school level; however, because parent involvement is limited in these activities, communication has also been limited. The release of data should not be dependent on parental involvement, but disclosure of data should be made available to the public through the RCS' AIG website, AIG specialists' websites, and other avenues that allow for the publication of evaluation data. The AIG Department has made progress in meeting this practice; however, the Advisory Board and the self-assessment data indicates that this should continue as a focused practice.

Goals: - To provide stakeholders with data concerning AIG Program evaluation
- To create a more transparent environment of data sharing.

Description: Dissemination of all data, including DPI headcount information, survey results, and the posting of the AIG Plan, will help stakeholders understand the plan and will provide a greater understanding of the AIG Program in Rockingham County. It is important that the AIG Department provides clear and candid communication concerning program evaluation data to all stakeholders in

order to monitor the progress of the AIG Program effectively. The majority of public awareness will come through the RCS AIG website. Some information will be disseminated through the websites of the AIG specialists. Our county website posts announcements and recognitions in the "RCS in the News" section. Data relating to the evaluation of the AIG Program will be posted on the Rockingham County School's AIG website and, at times, on the AIG specialists' websites. The AIG director or AIG coordinator will share aspects of evaluations with parents, administrators, AIG specialists, and the local school board. We believe that by creating a more transparent environment and sharing all available data, we will encourage open and honest dialogue among stakeholders that will ultimately improve gifted services.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - District AIG website

- AIG specialists' website
- End-of-Year program evaluations
- Data presented to the Advisory Board
- Meetings with the Testing and Research director
- Parents/family meetings

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: Rockingham County Schools has policies in place that protect all students and their rights. The AIG Plan has procedures and policies in place to protect the rights of AIG students. The self-assessment data indicated this is effectively done; consequently, this is a maintained practice.

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

Description: The AIG Department and its personnel strive to protect the rights of AIG students through policies, procedures, and practices. Folders of identified AIG students are secured in the AIG specialist's file cabinet for easy access and for security. These folders contain all documentation of any referrals and the screening and identification process for the identified student. As these policies, procedures, and practices are in place, the AIG Program will work to make sure all stakeholders have adequate levels of awareness.

The AIG Program will maintain this practice in the following ways:

- Distribute Procedures to Resolve Differences at initial parent contact and obtain parent signature
- Secure parent permission for student testing and placement
- Issue an Invitation to Conference after testing
- Conduct AIG folder reviews

If a disagreement should occur between parents and Rockingham County Schools concerning AIG identification and/or services, "Procedures to Resolve Differences" provides a step-by-step grievance procedure. Follow-up meetings or calls are conducted in response to all complaints.

PROCEDURES TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES

In the event that a parent/guardian disagrees with a decision regarding the identification of his or her child, the following procedure to resolve differences shall occur.

Step 1

Parent(s) shall submit a written request for a conference with the AIG specialist to discuss the concern. The AIG specialist will:

- a. Grant the conference within five school days of the request.
- b. Respond in writing within ten school days of the conference.

If the AIG specialist cannot resolve the concern, proceed as follows.

Step 2

Parent(s) may make a written request within ten days for a conference with the principal. The principal will:

- a. Review the recommendation with the AIG specialist.
- b. Grant the conference within five school days of the request.
- c. Respond in writing within ten school days of the conference.

If the principal cannot resolve the concern, proceed as follows.

Step 3

The parent may make a written request for a decision review with the Identification and Placement Team (I/P Team). At the I/P Team meeting:

- a. Parents may provide additional documentation for consideration by the I/P Team.
- b. The I/P Team will share documentation used to support the committee decision and review additional documentation.
- c. Grant the conference within five school days of the request.
- d. The chairperson will respond in writing within 10 days of the review.

If the committee and parent(s) cannot resolve the concern, proceed as follows.

Step 4

The parent may appeal in writing to the AIG coordinator. The AIG coordinator will:

- a. Meet with school representative(s) and parent(s).
- b. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
- c. Review the grievance within five days of the appeal.
- d. Respond in writing within ten days following the review.

If the concern is not resolved, proceed as follows.

Step 5

The parent may appeal in writing to the AIG Program director. The AIG Program director will:

- a. Meet with school representative(s), parent(s), and the AIG coordinator.
- b. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
- c. Review the grievance within five days of the appeal.
- d. Respond in writing within ten days following the review.

If the concern is not resolved, proceed as follows.

Step 6

The parent(s) may appeal in writing to the Assistant Superintendent Curriculum and Instruction. The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction will:

- a. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.

- b. Review the grievance within ten days of the appeal.
 - c. Respond in writing within ten days following the review.
- If the concern is still not resolved, proceed as follows.

Step 7

The parent may appeal in writing to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will:

- a. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue.
 - b. Review the grievance within ten days of the appeal.
 - c. Respond in writing within ten days following the review.
- If the concern is still not resolved, proceed as follows.

Step 8

The parent may appeal in writing to the local Board of Education within ten school days following the written response from the Superintendent. The Board of Education will:

- a. Review all documentation concerning the unresolved issue at the first board meeting following the written appeal.
 - b. Offer a final written decision within thirty days after review.
- If the concern is still not resolved, proceed as follows.

Step 9

In the event that the local grievance procedure fails to resolve the disagreement the parent may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The purpose of the review is to determine if:

- The local school administrative unit failed to properly identify the student as an academically or intellectually gifted student, or
- The local plan has been implemented inappropriately with regard to the student.

Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings of fact and conclusion of law. Notwithstanding the provision 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. Attorney's fees are not available to parents. At any point in the process up to the filing of a petition, mediation by a mutually agreed upon third party is encouraged.

Planned Sources of Evidence: - AIG plan
- Procedure to Resolve Differences

Other Comments:

Glossary (optional):

Please refer to the Appendix - Glossary.

Appendix (optional):

Bright Child_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
Checklist_for_AIG_Folders_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
Entrance_Criteria_4-5_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
Entrance_Criteria_6-8_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
Indicators_of_Giftedness_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
K-2_Work_Sample_list_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
Pool_Report_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
Referral_Screening_Process_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
Writing_the_Differentiated_Education_Plan_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
flow_chart_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1*)
Nurturing_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:2*)
Service_program_options_4-5_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:2*)
Service_program_options_6-8_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:2*)
Service_program_options_9-12_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:2*)
Service_program_options_K-3_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:2*)
Procedures_for_Subject_Grade_Acceleration_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:2:4*)
Subject_grade_Acceleration_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:2:4*)
ethnic_representation_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:4*)
Procedures_for_Placements_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:6*)
timeline_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:6*)
timeline_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 1:6*)
Collaboration_Documentation_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 2*)
School_AIG_Plan_template_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 2:3:6*)
Links_to_System-wide_efforts_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 4:5:6*)
034 budget_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 6*)
Article 9B_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 6*)
Personnel_Roles_and_Responsibilities_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 6*)
local budget_2013.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 6*)
13-16_board document_AIG plan.pdf (*Local Board Approval Document*)
AIG 11_2pg_Procedures to Resolve Differences_2013.pdf (*Other Forms*)