

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

Approved by local Board of Education on: 04-JUN-13

LEA Superintendent's Name: Dr. Janet Mason

LEA AIG Contact Name: Michelle Luckadoo Clement

Submitted to NC Department of Public Instruction on: JULY 01, 2013, 13:25:53

Revision Submitted to NC Department of Public Instruction on: JULY 01, 2013, 13:25:53

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

Rutherford County Schools Vision for local AIG program: The mission statement for Rutherford County Schools states that we will partner with family and community to prepare students for life-long learning by rigorously challenging each student to achieve in academics and career preparation in a safe and nurturing environment.

The North Carolina Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program Standards require all school districts 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. Since resources and funding are limited in programs for gifted education, general education has an integral responsibility to provide differentiated curriculum for gifted students.

Because this is quite true in Rutherford County, efforts are needed to ensure that general education can offer opportunities for personalized learning and differentiation not only for gifted learners, but all learners. It is perhaps most difficult to adequately meet the needs of gifted learners in the general education environment due to lack of resources and funding. For instance, our limited funds prevent us from employing and utilizing the highly qualified professionals needed to ensure effective and uninterrupted gifted programming K-12.

Rutherford County Schools can be credited with having a very sound and solid gifted framework in

8/8/2013

place, yet there is much work to be done. We offer some very specific plans of action that will help us begin. In order to ensure that gifted learners become internationally competitive in the 21st century, it is essential that they are provided with rigorous, relevant, and technologically-advanced instruction and opportunities. Students' interests, strengths, and needs are critical components of designing effective curriculum and programming; therefore, as the academic and social/emotional needs of the gifted students change, curriculum and programming must change as well. What follows is Rutherford County's plan of action that would assist in adding layers of protection and opportunities for the structure that currently exists in order to address the needs of our gifted learners.

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

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$433996.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Table of Contents

Standard 1: Student Identification	4
Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction	14
Standard 3: Personnel and Professional Development	27
Standard 4: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community	36
Standard 5: Partnerships	46
Standard 6: Program Accountability	51

Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The Plan for Gifted Education in Rutherford County is the go-to guide for articulating and disseminating the processes of clear, comprehensive, and equitable screening, referral, and identification. These articulation and dissemination processes are not consistent among school sites. While the plan itself is the go-to guide and clearly articulates the processes of clear, comprehensive, and equitable screening, referral, and identification the access to the information is not readily consistent. It is the responsibility of the program district-wide to ensure the contents of the plan are explained and made readily available to school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community-at-large. It is because of this lack of access that we will target this as a focused practice.

Goals: While the Plan for Gifted Education in Rutherford County, available in both English and Spanish, clearly articulates the procedures for AIG identification it is not clearly disseminated K-12. A comprehensive AIG website will be developed to ensure school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community at large have access to the procedures for AIG identification. In addition, a district brochure for services K-12 will be created that clearly provides this information to all stakeholders.

Description: * The Plan for Gifted Education in Rutherford County is on the Rutherford County Schools website in both English and Spanish.

* The current AIG district website will be updated to include all pertinent information for student identification for all stakeholders.

* An AIG brochure that details the program K-12 will be made available district wide for school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community.

* During the last several years extensive professional development has been provided to all K-2 teachers using U-STARS~PLUS materials. This professional development will continue during this cycle and will include 3rd grade teachers and all new hires.

* This will help us continue to identify students from underserved populations.

* An AIG identification team (School Review Team - SRT) is established at each school.

* An information-seeking process includes nominations from teachers, parents, students, and others who may have knowledge of a student's learning needs. This will be more readily accessible to all stakeholders and clearly articulated on the district website.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Plan for Gifted Education in Rutherford County on district website (English and Spanish)

* Updated AIG Website that details program and includes all forms needed for nominations.

* AIG brochure detailing program K-12 (English and Spanish)

* Documented School Review Team (SRT) meetings

- * Agendas from faculty meetings
- * Agendas from parent group meetings
- * Agendas from Board of Education meetings

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: Rutherford County Schools provides screening procedures that focus on equal opportunity and access for all students including students from historically under-represented populations. Annual screenings are conducted in the spring semester of each school year for elementary and middle school. Student screening and identification at the high school level is conducted by parent/teacher/student referral. There are opportunities for parent/teacher/student nominations at all grade levels. This screening procedure allows for a more expanded pool of students to be considered for identification and placement within the AIG program.

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

Description: The screening process includes:

- * a third grade blanket aptitude assessment using a culturally fair assessment instrument
- * 3rd grade Pretest (Beginning of the year state assessment)
- * multiple criteria for decision-making, including formal assessment (these criteria are viewed separately, not in an additive method)
- * assessment that goes beyond a narrow conception of giftedness (use of both qualitative and quantitative criteria)
- * reliable research-based instruments and strategies for assessing giftedness
- * appropriate instruments used with underserved populations
- * data which provide relevant information for instructional decision-making rather than labeling

K-3 Identification:

The K-3 program focuses on nurturing and enriching the academic and intellectual potential in all students. Formal identification begins in grade four. K-5 AIG Specialists provide inclusion opportunities for K-3 teachers throughout the year. It is during this time that K-3 teachers implement the use of U-STARS~PLUS and TOP (Teacher's Observation of Potential) Forms. These opportunities are especially important and helpful in allowing for identification of potential in advanced learners, particularly from underserved populations.

Grades 4-8 Identification:

Formal identification begins with grade four. All students in grade three will participate in a blanket

screening using a standardized test of aptitude during the spring semester of each school year. The results of this test are used to develop a pool of students to be further assessed for AIG services. Currently, RCS uses the Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT). Students scoring at or above the 87th percentile qualify for additional testing and take the Cognitive Abilities Test, Form 7 (CogAT) or the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). Students scoring at or above the 90th percentile on the CogAT or the 93rd percentile on the OLSAT are then recommended for further review by the School Review Team. In addition, teachers may also make nominations at this time based on other factors that show individual student's strengths, abilities, and aptitudes. Teachers may nominate students for review on the basis of classroom performance, motivation to learn, or interest in a particular subject. Parents may nominate their child by contacting the classroom teacher, AIG teacher, counselor or administrator. A parent/teacher nomination form must be completed.

The School Review Team (SRT) receives nominations, collects data from a variety of sources (including student performance, behaviors and interests), reviews the data, and determines if the student should receive AIG identification using a holistic approach. The members of the School Review Team should include:

- AIG teacher(s)
- Regular Education teacher(s)
- A school administrator
- Guidance Counselor

Annually, students in grades 4-8 who score at or above the 85th percentile on the Reading or Math portions of the Measures of Academic Progress assessments (MAP), or comparable assessment, during two of the previous three testing cycles are placed in a screening pool for further AIG assessment. The SRT follows the same process for all AIG identification. Students scoring at or above the 85th percentile qualify for additional testing and take the Cognitive Abilities Test, Form 7 (CogAT) or the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). Students scoring at or above the 90th percentile on the CogAT or 93rd percentile on the OLSAT are then recommended for further review by the School Review Team. Teachers, parents and students may make nominations at any time throughout the school year. The SRT receives nominations, collects data from a variety of sources (including student performance, behaviors and interests), reviews the data, and determines if the student should receive AIG identification using a holistic approach.

Grades 9-12 Identification:

Student screening and identification at the high school level is conducted by parent/student/teacher referral. All students, whether identified as AIG or not may enroll in Honors and AP classes.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Documented use of Naglieri Nonverbal Aptitude Test (NNAT)

* Documented use of Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)

* Documented use of Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)

* Documented use of Measure of Academic Progress assessment data (MAP)

* Documented use of End-of-Grade (EOG)

* Documented use of End-of-Course (EOC)

* Documented use of TOP(Teacher's Observation of Potential)Form

* Documented use of Parent/Teacher Nomination Form

* Student AIG folders containing identification information

Other Comments: Rutherford County Schools is aware that no single criterion can be used in isolation to accurately identify a gifted student. In addition, no single criterion will eliminate a student from further consideration.

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: Rutherford County Schools employs the use of multiple qualitative and quantitative researched-based screening instruments, referral and identification procedures. Nominations and information from teachers, administrators, counselors, parents, students and others who may have knowledge of a student's learning needs are crucial. Special attention is given to potentially gifted students from under-represented populations. Under-representation of special populations in advanced programs is present at all levels in Rutherford County Schools. While more consistent efforts have been made at the elementary level, efforts need to extend to the middle and high school levels.

Goals: During the last ten years there has been extensive training in U-STARS~PLUS (Using Science Talents and Abilities to Recognize Students ~ Promoting Learning in Under-represented Students) for early elementary teachers. The purpose of U-STARS~PLUS is to support teachers in early recognition and nurturing of potential in children from economically disadvantaged and/or culturally diverse families and children with disabilities in order to improve their academic achievement and to provide them with access to advanced educational opportunities. While the curriculum materials from U-STARS are used at all grade levels K-3 by both regular classroom teachers and K-5 AIG specialists, the true intent of the usage of the materials has been lost in many cases. It is the hope of the AIG program that U-STARS~PLUS will again be implemented district wide for its true intent and purposes at the elementary level. Beginning with the 2013-14 school year U-STARS~PLUS will be re-introduced to one elementary school in each district adding an additional elementary school from each district in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. During this time, K-5 Specialists will continue to support teachers to implement consistent follow-through with this as an early elementary district initiative.

Consistent Staff Development efforts will be made to ensure middle and high school teachers are aware of indicators of giftedness from students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice exceptional. In addition, the program will consider administering a blanket aptitude screening for all 6th grade middle school students using a culturally-fair assessment as is done in elementary.

Description: With the support and guidance of the elementary AIG Specialists, early elementary teachers will implement the use of TOPS (Teacher Observation of Potential in Students) forms.

Through consistent use of this form, teachers will have the ability to recognize outstanding abilities- especially how these abilities manifest themselves in under-served populations. The purpose of using these forms is to move professional educators through personal perceptual bias and on to viewing students through a different lens.

All K-3 teachers will have a copy of Science and Literature Connections, a book providing integrated science and literature curriculum. All Rutherford County Schools elementary libraries have copies of the classic children's books which correlate to the U-STARS lesson plans. The lessons provide teachers with a range of questions to promote higher level thinking and several post-lesson activities which reflect multiple learning styles. The K-5 AIG Specialists will support the classroom teachers as the lessons are implemented. K-5 Specialists will push in to each elementary class K-3 at least once during the first five grading periods to present a U-STARS lesson (aligned to the Common Core where applicable).

Parents are invited to become involved with their children's learning through the U-STARS Family Involvement Packets. With the support of K-5 Specialists, classroom teachers will facilitate science lessons in the classroom and then send packets of material home for an extension activity. The results will be shared in class with charting and graphing exercises.

RCS will continue to administer a blanket aptitude screening for all third grade students using a culturally-fair assessment. At present, we are using NNAT (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test). During the next plan cycle the use of NNAT2 will be implemented.

Planned Sources of Evidence: All elementary schools will use the following identification process which ensures inter-rater reliability:

- * Documented use of student portfolio
- * Documented use of Parent and/or Teacher nomination
- * Documented use of NNAT
- * Documented use of CogAT, Form 7
- * Documented use of MAP scores
- * Documented use of EOG scores
- * Documented use of Reading 3D measures
- * Student AIG folders containing screening and testing information
- * Documentation of consistent implementation of U-STARS~PLUS
- * Documented use of TOPS forms
- * Documented use of Science/Literature Connections Lessons
- * Documented use of Family Involvement Packets
- * AIG child count beginning to move toward a statistically balanced reflection of school demographics
- * Documented use of research-based culturally-fair third grade blanket ability screening instrument
- * Samples of portfolio-based identification using non-traditional criteria
- * Documented testing accommodations

All middle schools and high schools use the following identification process which ensures inter-rater reliability:

- * Documented Parent and/or Teacher nomination
- * Documented student portfolio

- * Documented use of MAP scores
- * Documented use of EOG and/or EOC scores
- * Documented use of NNAT
- * Documented use of CogAT, Form 7
- * Documented use of OLSAT
- * Student AIG folders containing screening and testing information
- * AIG child count beginning to move toward a statistically balanced reflection of school demographics
- * Documented use of research-based culturally-fair 6th grade blanket ability screening instrument
- * Samples of portfolio-based identification using non-traditional criteria
- * Documented testing accommodations

Other Comments: These multiple criteria are presented to the School Review Team, data are evaluated and considered, and a decision is made concerning students who need to be identified as AIG and provided with a DEP (Differentiated Education Plan) or an IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan). The mix of qualitative and quantitative data used in screening and identification ensures that the process is free of weighting and cut-off scores. Professional personnel administer individualized ability and achievement assessments in Spanish, where indicated.

Perhaps the over-riding goal for implementing U-STARS~PLUS is to reinforce the need for teachers to know what they are looking for, to provide activities and lessons where students can show their strengths, and to provide a safe classroom environment for students to take risks and explore new ideas - a classroom that invites students to show their strengths. In this way, teachers can continually nurture, recognize, and respond to all students.

Practice D

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools provides screening, referral, and identification procedures that focus on equal opportunity and access for all students, including students from under-represented populations. During the 2010-13 plan cycle, this became very consistent at both the elementary and middle school levels. However, we need to ensure the same degree of consistency at all high schools in the district. Because screening and identification at the high school is conducted by teacher/parent/student referral, efforts need to be made to ensure this is made known to all stakeholders in the high school arena.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will conduct at least an annual screening, referral, and identification process at all elementary, middle and high schools in the district. This process will ensure equal opportunity and access for all students, including students from under-represented populations.

The focus at the middle and high schools will be on the use of data which provide relevant information for instructional decision-making.

Description: A School Review Team (SRT) is established at each elementary and middle school. This plan cycle will ensure the same is established at all high schools. The SRT teams include, but are not limited to, the principal or administrative designee, guidance counselor, AIG Specialist, and classroom teacher at each school.

Each team's responsibilities are:

- * implement the district's referral, screening, identification, and instructional placement processes
- * make decisions on the strength-based needs of the student
- * provide equitable access for students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds
- * receive permission for testing from the parent/guardian for any aptitude or achievement testing not generally administered in the regular school program
- * record information used in decision-making
- * determine program option(s) for students

Transfer students will be ensured rapid attention to their placement needs K-12. The School Data Manager will inform the AIG Coordinator that an identified AIG student has enrolled. AIG Records from the previous school will be requested by the AIG Coordinator. Upon receipt of the records the SRT will review and make appropriate recommendations.

Rutherford County Schools will accept scores on assessment instruments used by other school districts or trained personnel outside the school district provided these instruments are reliably sound. Students will be given the option to take the assessments used in the district should any questions arise. In Rutherford County Schools students are not exited from the AIG program without due cause.

Planned Sources of Evidence: The LEA will use multiple criteria for decision-making, including:

- * formal assessment
- * qualitative and quantitative criteria
- * reliable research-based instruments and strategies
- * teacher nomination
- * parent nomination
- * student portfolio
- * MAP assessments (Reading and Math)
- * Reading 3D
- * EOGs (Math and Reading)
- * EOCs

Other sources of evidence will be:

- * Minutes from School Review Team (SRT)
- * Agenda and presentations from school and district AIG meetings
- * DEPs (Differentiated Education Plans) and IDEPs (Individualized Differentiated Education Plans)

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: Rutherford County Schools has clearly established written policies that safeguard the rights of AIG students and their parents/families. These policies ensure that each student AIG file contains a signed Permission to Evaluate form and a signed DEP or IDEP form. The transfer policy is stated in Practice D.

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

Description: The Gifted Education Program goals, objectives, and service delivery options of Rutherford County Schools should be clearly communicated to parents and guardians. In the event that a disagreement exists between parents or guardians and Rutherford County Schools when a child is not identified as an academically and/or intellectually gifted student or concerning the appropriateness of services offered to the AIG student, the following procedures to resolve the disagreement will be followed:

Step I. The first attempt to reach an agreement will be with the School Review Team (SRT).

1. The parent/guardian may make a request in writing to the school principal for a conference with the SRT to discuss concerns about identification and/or implementation of the child's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP).
2. The SRT, including the school principal, reviews the student's record and nomination, identification, and service options decision. The committee may gather additional information about the student from teacher(s) and/or parents/guardians as needed.
3. The SRT grants the conference within 10 school days of receipt of the request and responds to the parent/guardian in writing within 5 school days after the conference.

Step II. If the disagreement is not resolved with the SRT, the parents may request an administrative review at the system level.

1. The parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the SRT in writing to the Director of Secondary Education and/or the Gifted Education Coordinator within 10 days of receiving the written response from the SRT. The parent/guardian must explain in writing the concerns and specific points of disagreement with the SRT.
2. The Director of Secondary Education and/or the Gifted Education Coordinator will convene a panel to review the disagreement within 5 school days of receipt of the appeal. The panel will include the Superintendent (or designee) and other members at the discretion of the Director and/or Coordinator.
3. The Director of Secondary Education and/or the Gifted Education Coordinator will respond in writing within 5 school days to the parent/guardian and principal concerning the outcome of the review.

Step III. If agreement cannot be reached administratively, the parents/guardians may appeal to the Rutherford County Schools Board of Education. The Board will offer a written decision to the parents within 20 school days.

Step IV. In the event that the local grievance procedure fails to resolve the disagreement, the

parents/guardians may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the North Carolina General Statutes. This must be done within 20 calendar days after receipt of the written decision of the Board of Education. According to the law, "The scope of the hearing shall be limited to

1. whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an AIG student, or
2. whether the local plan developed under G.S. 115C-150.7 has been implemented properly with regard to the child."

Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains findings of fact and conclusions of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the decisions 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.

- Planned Sources of Evidence:** * Student AIG folders including signed permission to evaluate and signed DEPs/IDEPs at all elementary, middle and high schools
* Policy to Resolve Disagreements (see Description above) will be available on district website and communicated to all families/parents annually (websites/newsletters)
* Rapid attention to placement of transfer students (see above Practice D)
* Rutherford County Schools Plan for Gifted Education

Other Comments:

Legal fees are the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

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: The AIG Program for Rutherford County Schools maintains individual documentation for each identified student. These individual files each contain an initial student referral form; a signed permission to evaluate form, any teacher/parent/student nomination forms; a DEP or IDEP; and a signed evaluation results letter and permission to receive services.

To ensure consistency in this area, we designate this as a focused area.

Goals: A clearly articulated plan will be in place for all identified AIG students. The AIG program Specialists and coordinator will provide an opportunity for all parents/families of identified AIG students to participate in an annual review of AIG students' program options and performance for the school year. This annual performance review will serve as the springboard for determining appropriate service options for the following year. Signed copies of DEPs and IDEPs will be given to parents, students, teachers and counselors as appropriate and will be placed in AIG student files.

Description: Based on the data from each AIG student's assessment, the SRT initially recommends placement in a program option of differentiated instruction that matches the student's academic and intellectual needs. Service options are addressed in the following manner:

Differentiated Education Plan (DEP): A DEP for Math and/or Reading is written for each identified AIG student demonstrating a need for differentiation beyond that which is normally provided by regular education. The DEP outlines the program service options appropriate for an individual student at each grade level.

Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP): An IDEP is developed for the very small group of unique AIG students who do not fit into any programs listed on the DEP.

During an annual review, if a student no longer requires a particular service option, the SRT will convene to discuss possible modifications in the student's DEP or IDEP. When an AIG student is returned to a general education program, an IDEP will be developed and the student will be provided with support in order to reenter the service options at a later time.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * AIG folders containing DEPs and IDEPs development plans
* Documented annual reviews with parents

Other Comments: Since resources are limited in programs for gifted education, general education has an integral responsibility to differentiate the curriculum for gifted students. Mindful of this, Rutherford County Schools has placed gifted education programming within the framework of regular education. This allows a close relationship between general education and the program options necessary for gifted students.

Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

Practice A

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools offers a system-wide baseline of gifted service options. All identified AIG students may access these services according to demonstrated strength-based needs. The guiding principles of our program design include: 1) a continuum of program services, 2) adequate funding, 3) a comprehensive, sound base, 4) integration within the regular school day, 5) flexible groupings of students to facilitate differentiated instruction and curriculum, and 6) specific education policies for adapting and adding to the general education program. However, there is much work to be done in this area.

Several efforts have been made to ensure the program begins with a comprehensive, sound base beginning with our elementary program. During the 2010-13 plan cycle our elementary program transitioned from programming based on pull-out, which was mostly enrichment, to a push-in model that is directly focused on the NCSCoS (Common Core and NC Essential Standards). While our K-5 Specialists are to provide nurturing and enrichment opportunities K-3 they are directly responsible for offering acceleration in the areas of math, language arts, science and social studies to identified students in grades 4 and 5. The implementation of Hands On Learning Extravaganza Days (H.O.L.E. Days) helps provide this acceleration, in addition to the numerous push-in opportunities.

Students in grade 4 and students in grade 5 are pulled for H.O.L.E. days for one full instructional day during five of the six yearly grading periods. The time that is allotted for these instructional H.O.L.E. days equals, and in many cases exceeds, the amount of time students received when elementary programming was based on a pull-out program. H.O.L.E. days are project days directly tied to the NCSCoS in math, language arts, science and social studies. H.O.L.E. days allow students to develop products from start to finish. This change has received very positive feedback from all stakeholders. While this initiative is still in the developing stages we are confident that continual improvements will be ongoing.

Students in middle school are offered courses that are differentiated through our "rigor in the middle" initiative. Likewise, students in high school are offered access to both Honors and Advanced Placement Courses.

Staff development was provided for all K-5 AIG Specialists and 6-8 AIG Specialists in the area of differentiation during the 2012-13 school year. However, much attention and effort is needed at both the middle and high schools to ensure a range of advanced ability levels are addressed through the use of different strategies, including enrichment, extension, and acceleration.

Hence the stakeholders assess this practice as "minimally evident" and look forward to further work in this area as a focused practice.

Goals: In order to adapt the NCSCoS according to identified abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles, K-12, we intend to maintain our focus efforts in blocks at the K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 levels.

The K-5 AIG Specialists have adopted a push-in model and provide support to all core subjects upon request. As stated above, the implementation of Hands On Learning Extravaganza Days (H.O.L.E. Days) provides the opportunities for the use of different strategies, including enrichment, extension, and acceleration. In addition, the Elementary Specialists are now members of district-wide instructional support teams (ISTs) comprised of an elementary instructional coach, technology facilitator and an AIG Specialist. Together, these teams develop lesson plans and complete units K-5. The AIG Specialists will continue their work with the ISTs.

The 6-8 AIG Specialists had completed several units of study adapting gifted needs to the NCSCoS. However, the implementation of the new NCSCoS during the 2012-13 school year has left these units outdated and below standards. The 6-8 grade Specialists will continue modifying existing curriculum and guiding the writing of new units of study at their schools.

High School courses have been modified to reflect "Honors" designations. However, attention is needed to ensure differentiation at appropriate levels is occurring.

Description: At the K-5 level, Rutherford County Schools offers AIG students:

- * Early entry Kindergarten (in accordance with State Board of Education policy GCS-J-001 G.S.115C-364d)
- * U-STARS~PLUS
- * Jacob's Ladder
- * Primary Education Thinking Skills (P.E.T.S.)
- * Inclusion/demonstration lessons (push-in) by K-5 AIG Specialists
- * H.O.L.E. days led by K-5 AIG Specialists
- * Elementary Chess tournament
- * Subject acceleration (Math/Reading)
- * Grade acceleration
- * Junior Great Books
- * Elementary Book Challenge

At the 6-8 level, Rutherford County Schools has implemented a "rigor in the middle" initiative. This program provides accelerated opportunities for subject grouping in Math and English Language Arts. Some high school courses are being taught at the 7th and 8th grade levels.

*The 6th grade honors math program compacts curriculum for 6th and half of 7th grade math NCSCoS.

*The 6th grade scholars math program compacts curriculum for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade math NCSCoS.

*The 7th grade honors math program compacts curriculum for half of 7th and all 8th grade math NCSCoS.

*The 7th grade scholars math program offers Common Core Math I (formerly Algebra I).

*The 8th grade honors math program offers Common Core Math I (formerly Algebra I).

- *The 8th grade scholars math program offers Common Core Math II (formerly Geometry).
- *The 7th grade honors/scholars program offers World History.
- *The 8th grade scholars program offers English I.
- *The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade honors English Language Arts program is an accelerated and enriched study of the ELA NCSCoS at each grade level.
- *The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade scholars English Language Arts program is a highly accelerated and enriched study of the ELA NCSCoS at each grade level.

Rutherford County Schools offers several options for gifted high school students.

Among these are:

- * Honors and AP courses
- * AP Academy
- * NC Career and College Promise ~ Isothermal Community College online and face-to-face courses
- * NCVPS (online high school courses)
- * NCSSM Interactive Video Conference (IVC) courses & NCSSM Online
- * REaCH (Rutherford Early College High School)
- * Accelerated high school scheduling leading to early graduation

Planned Sources of Evidence:

- * K-3 Using Science Talents and Abilities to Recognize Students (U-STARS~PLUS)
- * Jacob's Ladder
- * Primary Education Thinking Skills (P.E.T.S)
- * Hands On Learning Extravaganza Days (H.O.L.E. Days)
- * K-5 AIG Specialists help write curriculum units of study (correlated to NCSCoS)
- * 6-8 AIG Specialists and classroom teachers write Honors and Scholars curriculum correlated to NCSCoS
- * Samples of these units, lessons, activities
- * NC Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) - online high school courses
- * AP, High School Honors courses
- * Accelerated high school scheduling
- * Participation in AP Academy
- * Documentation of early graduation

Other Comments: Since resources are limited in programs for gifted education, general education has an integral responsibility to provide differentiated curriculum for gifted students. The AIG program will make concerted efforts to provide professional development in the area of differentiation during the 2013-16 plan cycle.

Practice B

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools defines gifted students as "students who require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program" (see Program Vision). Our LEA provides differentiated services involving extended, applied, and

conceptual thinking that builds upon and extends beyond the NCSCoS in core subject areas. However, consistency is needed regarding these instructional practices. Much attention and effort is needed in this area at the elementary, middle and high school areas. Therefore, the stakeholders assess this practice as "minimally evident" and RCS will pursue it as a focused practice.

Goals: We will focus on writing and employing differentiated curriculum that:

- * has qualitatively different academic environments
- * builds upon interests, strengths, and personal goals
- * engages in sophisticated investigations of materials, texts, interactive technologies, and learning activities
- * employs advanced critical and creative processes
- * welcomes risk-taking by teachers and students (using experimental, investigative, problem-based and open-ended learning processes)
- * requires deep understandings of concepts, generalizations, and essential questions
- * sets no predetermined limits
- * creates life-long learners and thinkers

Description: The K-5 AIG Specialists will spend a portion of their time helping the elementary Instructional Support Teams (ISTs) create curriculum units for regular classroom inclusion. The Specialists will also continue developing lessons that are used during push-in times. The Specialists will assist in staff development dealing with curriculum and differentiation.

The 6-8 AIG Specialists will meet on a regular basis with 6-8 grade Language Arts and Math teachers to promote instructional units that provide both differentiation and acceleration.

The honors and AP teachers at the high schools will modify existing units of study and create new units.

Attention will be given to the concept that units of study are developed and implemented to:

- * allow students to go beyond the traditional curriculum in both depth and breadth
- * offer material in greater complexity, novelty, acceleration, and pacing
- * provide multiple opportunities for students to take greater responsibility for their learning
- * distinguish a difference in the quality of work expected rather than the quantity of work desired
- * provide students with problem-seeking and problem-solving opportunities

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Differentiated lessons and units of instruction K-12

- * Professional Development offered at elementary, middle and high schools
- * Honors Course Curriculum Guides
- * See Practice A above

Other Comments: The purpose and intent of Rutherford County Schools' differentiated curriculum is to:

- * provide the opportunity for advanced work
- * promote rigorous academic study, practical applications, and transfer of knowledge and skills
- * offer challenging courses for students who aspire to an advanced level of learning

Practice C

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools has selected and uses a variety of research-based supplemental resources that augment curriculum and instruction. However, there is much work to be done in this area. We will continue to target this as a focused practice as we encourage further consistency and perhaps most importantly, access in the use of best practice and exploration of further research-based supplemental resources.

Goals: It is important to understand that funding is limited for AIG programming and general education has an integral responsibility to differentiate curriculum appropriately for identified AIG students. Strategies Using Common Core Essential Standards Successfully (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.) training will help provide support for this. Also, the AIG program has introduced several research-based supplemental resources that augment curriculum and instruction to teachers in the regular classroom. We will continue to consistently support classroom teachers in the use of these resources. We will also strive to ensure equity and access to these materials district wide.

Description: Supplemental research-based resources that are being used to augment curriculum and instruction are:

- * U-STARS~PLUS (Using Science Talents and Abilities to Recognize Students - Promoting Learning in Underrepresented Students)
- * Jacob's Ladder (a reading comprehension program for grades K-9)
- * Junior Great Books (discussion of classic texts with a facilitator)
- * Chess (development of strategic comprehension)
- * Creative Problem Solving (development of critical and creative thinking skills)
- * Primary Education Thinking Skills (P.E.T.S.)
- * Hands On Equations
- * Elementary Book Challenge (elementary Battle of the Books)
- * BOB (Battle of the Books)
- * Word Within a Word (Michael Thompson series)
- * Magic Lens (Michael Thompson series)
- * Vocabulary Workshop (Sadlier-Oxford Series)
- * Vocabulary from Classical Roots (Norma Fifer and Nancy Flowers Series)

Planned Sources of Evidence: Examples of curriculum products from:

- * U-STARS~PLUS (K-3)
- * Jacob's Ladder (K-9)
- * Creative Problem Solving (CPS)(3-5)
- * Junior Great Books (JGB)(K-8)
- * Elementary Book Challenge (3-5)
- * Battle of the Books (BOB)(6-8)
- * Chess (3-12)
- * Primary Education Thinking Skills (P.E.T.S. K-5)
- * Hands On Equations (3-6)

- * Vocabulary Workshop (6-8)
- * Vocabulary from Classical Roots (6-8)

Other Comments: We are looking for increased consistency in the use of these curriculum and instruction resources both within individual schools and across the LEA. Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, Elementary AIG specialists will visit each K-3 classroom a minimum of once during each of the first five six-week grading periods to conduct an inclusion lesson from U-STARS, Jacob's Ladder, Junior Great Books, or P.E.T.S.

Middle Schools will align research-based resources district wide to ensure access and equity.

Practice D

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The single priority of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century. Students will excel in rigorous and relevant core curriculum that reflects what they need to know and demonstrate in a global 21st century environment. Student achievement will be measured with an assessment system that informs instruction and evaluates knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions needed in the 21st century. Students will enroll in a course of study designed to prepare them to stay ahead of international competition. Students will use technology to access and demonstrate new knowledge and skills that they will need as life-long learners. Students will have the opportunity to graduate from high school with an Associates Degree or college transfer credit (Future-Ready Students for the 21st Century).

Rutherford County Schools acknowledges this 21st century priority and has made great strides in this area. The district's Going G.L.O.B.A.L. (Growing Learning Opportunities Beyond All Limits) initiative, now in its third year, has created a 1:1 learning environment where teachers K-12 and students in grades 6-12 have been provided with an individual laptop. Every instructional classroom in the district is equipped with 21st century learning tools such as interactive whiteboards and document cameras. Using these tools, teachers and students are participating in inquiry-based, authentic learning experiences promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and innovation. In addition, the infusion of iPads and MacBook carts at the Elementary grades has provided an avenue to ensure access and provide a means of skill development for students as they progress through 21st century learning. This technological movement has created more avenues for both vertical alignment and collaboration. The stakeholders have assessed this practice as "mostly evident" and yet wish to target it as a focused practice. Rutherford County Schools acknowledges that both our global environment and technology are ever-changing and for this reason must constantly evaluate and assess what is

occurring to ensure the development of 21st century content and skills.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will continue to assimilate and correlate the goals, descriptions, and evidences of the above practices A, B, and C. Each of these practices: curriculum writing, unit development, online distance learning courses, focus on technology, and supplemental research-based resources will assist in fostering the development of 21st century content and skills at advanced levels.

Description: In order to focus on this practice, we will specifically target the following sections:

- * infusing high level content through curriculum writing and unit development which includes global awareness, civic and economic liberties, and health awareness
- * providing specific opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving through questioning techniques embedded in curriculum and participation in competitions
- * offering project-based and open-ended assignments which allow for exploration of creativity and innovation

Elementary school counselors continue to guide The Peer Helper Program. This program involves many AIG students. They are trained and responsible for tutoring, raising monies, and participating in local charity organizations. These duties foster leadership, ethics, accountability, productivity, responsibility, self-direction, and social responsibility. These students, including AIG students, meet with an advisor on a regular basis for counseling and training.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * See above practice A

- * See above practice B
- * See above practice C
- * Service learning projects that address 21st century content and skills
- * Senior Projects
- * Student participation in extra-curricular activities
- * Student research projects that are advanced
- * Rubrics that require applied information, media, communication, and technology literacies
- * Student involvement in high school reform initiatives
- * Middle school student participation in non-traditional accelerated courses
- * Participation in The Peer Helper Program

Other Comments:

Practice E

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools uses a variety of assessments to determine individual student strengths and needs. These assessments are excellent instruments for guiding educators in differentiating classroom curriculum and instruction. Both Elementary and Middle Schools use data from a variety of assessments to create leveled groups of students who range from those needing remediation to those needing acceleration and enrichment. Teachers administer pre-assessments to match academic needs to drive curricular decisions. However, this is not done with consistency and

fidelity throughout the district. The stakeholders have assessed this practice as "minimally evident" and will focus on this crucial practice districtwide for ALL learners.

Goals: The district's work with the Response to Intervention (RtI) process in Elementary schools has brought attention to differentiated curriculum and instruction. The district has a great deal of resources to aide in the intervention process, but needs to spend time considering the best matches between the interventions needed and the best resources that are available. While elementary schools for the most part have access to an array of the same resources some have more or less additional resources.

The district plans to deliver professional development for teachers K-12 focusing on differentiated instruction. This is needed to ensure the same language is implemented and understood when discussing differentiation.

Teachers can differentiate at least four classroom elements based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile:

- *Content – what the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information;
- *Process – activities in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content;
- *Product – culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit; and
- *Learning environment – the way the classroom works and feels.

Work is needed to ensure the appropriate element is differentiated due to information gathered from the vast array of assessments available in the district.

Description: Rutherford County Schools currently uses the following student assessments:

- * Individual student Kindergarten assessments
- * Brigance Screening
- * mClass: Reading 3D (DIBELS and Running Record)
- * MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) testing
- * NNAT (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test - blanket 3rd grade assessment)
- * Teacher made assessments (quizzes, tests, etc.)

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Examples of pre, formative, and post assessment data

- * Documented student readiness or diagnostic assessment results and trends
- * Use of flexible grouping
- * Lessons indicating one or more of the four classroom elements where differentiation is occurring and why

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: The social and emotional needs of AIG students are of crucial importance and oftentimes overlooked in curricular and instructional practices. Many times this is due to the misconceptions of what giftedness "looks like" and means for individual students. The various stereotypes and misconceptions of gifted students leads many classroom teachers to assume the students are fine on their own and can handle whatever comes their way when in reality the social and emotional needs can even be more challenging. The stakeholders have assessed this practice as "minimally evident" and declare it a focused practice.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools recognizes that advanced learners, especially those from underserved populations, need affective as well as cognitive learning support. Gifted programming will establish a strategic plan to improve school services to nurture, recognize, and respond to the unique social and emotional development of gifted learners. The development of this plan will use the Guiding Principles template from the NAGC (National Association of Gifted Children) Gifted Program Standards.

This plan will include staff development for regular classroom teachers, honors and AP teachers, counselors and administrators.

Description: Goal I: Gifted learners are provided with guidance and counseling to meet their unique needs. Counseling services should be provided by a counselor familiar with specific training in the characteristics and social and emotional needs of diverse gifted learners. Professional Development for guidance counselors in working to meet the needs of gifted learners at all levels K-12.

Goal II: Gifted learners are provided with career guidance services. This college and career guidance should be appropriately different and delivered earlier than typical programs. The AP Academy will help fulfill this goal.

Goal III: Underachieving and at-risk gifted students are served rather than exited from gifted programs. Gifted learners who do not demonstrate satisfactory performance in regular and/or gifted education classes should be provided with specialized intervention services.

Goal IV: Gifted learners are provided with affective curriculum as part of their differentiated curriculum. A well defined and implemented affective curriculum scope and sequence containing personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational career awareness should be provided for gifted learners.

Goal V: Underachieving gifted learners must be served rather than omitted from differentiated services. Removing gifted learners from gifted service options only furthers their disengagement. Underachieving gifted learners should be provided with specific guidance and counseling services that address the issues and problems related to underachievement.

The AIG Coordinator and AIG Specialists will work with the Media Specialists to develop a list of books addressing the social and emotional development of gifted students. The following criteria will help with text selection:

- * Characters coping with same problems readers are facing
- * Characters stand alone or in a small group for their convictions

- * A character may be different from peers and is learning to cope with the difference
- * Characters may be learning to accept someone else who is different
- * Adult characters are present and supportive in at least some books
- * Some characters are gifted adults
- * Some child characters are gifted
- * Giftedness need not necessarily be labeled
- * Characters are open-minded, questioning, have a passion for learning, may be devoted to one subject of intense interest
- * Characters are struggling with issues of personal or moral courage, personal values, moral and ethical choices
- * Some books should have humor of a high level

Planned Sources of Evidence:

- * Strategic plan to promote school services which apply to the unique social and emotional needs of gifted learners
- * guidance and counseling services for gifted students
- * career guidance services for gifted students and how the AP Academy addresses this service
- * Under-achieving and at-risk services for gifted students
- * Affective curriculum development for gifted learners
- * Library inventory to include books to assist gifted learners with social and emotional development

Other Comments:

Practice G

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The development of potential in young (K-3) students needs to be cultivated through purposeful and intentional strategies offered through differentiated curriculum and instruction. This requires a great deal of communication and collaboration between regular classroom teachers and K-5 AIG Specialists. K-5 Specialists are responsible for not only delivering the U~STARS (K-3) nurturing program, but also are expected to assist regular classroom teachers with planning and creating differentiated curriculum and instruction. The stakeholders assessed this practice as "minimally evident," and we wish to target this as a focused practice.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will re-implement U-STARS to strengthen the nurturing program for the early recognition of high student performance. Information will be gathered through student observations during enriched, hands-on lessons. The results of this nurture and recognition will lead to targeted intervention services for students exhibiting high potential. Since extensive under-representation of special populations in advanced programs is present at all levels in the school system, beginning in Kindergarten, it is important to note that we will increase our consistency in the implementation of U-STARS~PLUS (Using Science Talents and Abilities to Recognize Students~Promoting Learning in Under-represented Students) as a district initiative in Kindergarten

through third grade.

This re-implementation of this program will be as follows:

2013-14: Cliffside Elementary, Forest City-Dunbar Elementary and Spindale Elementary

2014-15: Forrest W. Hunt Elementary, Sunshine Elementary and Rutherfordton Elementary

2015-16: Harris Elementary, Ellenboro Elementary, Mt. Vernon-Ruth Elementary and Pinnacle Elementary

AIG Specialists will work with K-3 teachers to encourage and provide support for differentiated curriculum and instruction. K-3 classroom teachers will be present in the classroom for all USTARS lessons so that TOPS forms can be completed.

Description: Refer to Standard 1, Practice C, for a comprehensive explanation of U-STAR~PLUS

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Workshops to implement consistency with U-STAR~PLUS (K-3)

* Documentation of consistent implementation of U-STAR~PLUS

* Completed TOPS forms

* Documented use of Science/Literature Connection lessons

* Documented use of Family Involvement packets

* Documented meeting times to plan for differentiated instruction and curriculum

* Documented units that contain differentiated curriculum and instruction

Other Comments: The K-5 AIG Specialists will deliver inclusion lessons in all Kindergarten through third grade classrooms using the U-STAR~PLUS materials and philosophy. This will be done a minimum of one time for each classroom grades K-3 each six week grading period (periods 1-5). During these times, classroom teachers will observe their students using the TOPS form. K-5 AIG Specialists will meet with teachers during their planning times to discuss students of outstanding potential. Outstanding student work will be placed in individual student TOPS folders creating portfolios which will follow the students through the elementary grades. This will allow for a body of evidence approach, providing a piece of gifted education documentation over time.

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: Rutherford County Schools views gifted programming and services as a collaborative effort which is integrated within general education programming. This is due largely in part to the fact that 3 Elementary AIG Specialists serve a total of 10 Elementary schools and while AIG Specialists are present at each middle school their responsibilities include a full teaching load. Currently there are no identified Specialists in the high schools. With this reality, the day to day implementation of differentiated curriculum and instruction falls back to the regular classroom teacher. Collaboration among professional staff is perhaps the greatest source of sustained insight and growth for

educators. While significant strides have been made in this area at the Elementary level, there is still great room for growth and improvement in Elementary, Middle and High Schools alike. Therefore, this is a focused practice.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will ensure collaboration among AIG personnel and other professional staff by integrating this practice into ongoing initiatives within the LEA. Elementary Specialists will become integral members of grade level PLC's and will continue to maintain their schedule access for teachers through Google Documents.

Middle and High School subject area Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will write curriculum for advanced learners.

Description: Collaboration will be ensured by:

- * K-5 AIG Specialists meeting with classroom teachers during scheduled grade level planning times
- * SRT (School Review Team meetings)
- * Rtl (Response to Intervention) meetings
- * Discussions with Elementary Instructional Coaches
- * Discussions during curriculum writing sessions
- * Discussions with technology instructors
- * Discussions among middle and high school PLCs
- * Honors Course Curriculum Guides
- * Sharing of research-based supplemental resources
- * Meetings with counselors and media specialists to support social and emotional needs
- * Discussion of assessment data

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Inclusion lessons and grade level meetings

- * SRT meetings
- * Documented Rtl meetings
- * Collaboration with K-5 Instructional Coaches
- * Collaboration during curriculum writing
- * Collaboration with technology instructors
- * Collaboration with middle school and high school subject area teachers
- * Sharing of research-based supplemental resources
- * Meetings with school counselors and media specialists to support social and emotional needs
- * Documented uses of assessment data
- * Honors Course Curriculum Guides

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 AIG Program for Rutherford County Schools has developed and documented student plans that articulate the differentiated curriculum and instruction services matching the identified needs of K-12 AIG students. The stakeholders feel that these documents need to be reevaluated in order to become more reflective of how gifted education programming has been placed within the framework of regular education and to explain services more clearly K-12. These documents are to be reviewed annually (see Standard 1, Practice F) to ensure effective programming, a continuum of services, and school transitions. This is currently not taking place consistently throughout the district. Therefore, the stakeholders have assessed this practice as "minimally evident" and will pursue it as a focused practice.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools recognizes that current education plans need to be more comprehensive and meaningful to all stakeholders involved. Advisory teams consisting of AIG Specialists, Administrators, Regular Classroom Teachers and other support staff will help determine more comprehensive "generic" plans that can be more accurately individualized for each student.

Description: A DEP (Differentiated Education Plan) for Math and/or Reading should be written for each student demonstrating a need for differentiation beyond that which is normally provided by regular education. The DEP should outline the program service options appropriate for an individual AIG student at each grade level. The DEP should list the learning environment, content modifications, and special programs available to the student at each grade level. A DEP must be completed annually for each identified AIG student.
An IDEP (Individualized Differentiated Education Plan) should be developed for that very small group of unique students identified as AIG who do not fit into any programs listed on the DEP. An IDEP is completed for an AIG student who demonstrates the need for a unique education plan.

A High School DEP consists of Honors and Advanced Placement courses, concurrent enrollment, REaCH (Rutherford Early College High School), online course options, and an accelerated early graduation option. With guidance from a trained school counselor, high school students select options. The high school plan begins at the end of the student's 8th grade year and is revisited at least annually for the subsequent high school years.

DEPs, IDEPs, and High School Plans should be clearly articulated and in place for all AIG students. Annually, parents are invited to participate in a review of their child's education plan.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * signed DEPs/IDEPs

* signed annual reviews

* focus on 5-6 and 8-9 transition years

* signed high school career development plans

Other Comments: When an AIG student is returned to a general education program, an IDEP should be developed. The student should be provided with support in order to reenter AIG service options at a later time.

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: Rutherford County Schools employs a licensed AIG educator to coordinate the AIG program. The coordinator guides, plans, develops, implements, revises, and monitors the local AIG program. The stakeholders want this practice to be maintained and assess it as "completely evident."

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

Description: The Coordinator of Gifted Education has the following responsibilities:

- * Holds certification in Gifted Education and plans and guides the implementation of a comprehensive district-wide program for K-12 AIG students
- * Plans and guides the implementation of gifted program service options
- * Ensures that appropriate differentiated services are provided for AIG students
- * Ensures that adequate funding is used for gifted education services
- * Guides the implementation of the screening, identification, and placement process
- * Integrates gifted programming into the general education program
- * Stays informed of issues, trends, methods, and policies for gifted education
- * Communicates with parents and community regarding gifted education services
- * Conducts monthly gifted education staff meetings
- * Advocates for the continuous support of gifted education services
- * Organizes and facilitates the evaluation of the district Plan for Gifted Education
- * Plans, coordinates, and develops ongoing professional development in gifted education
- * Oversees the committee for The Plan for Gifted Education revisions under article 9B

Planned Sources of Evidence: * An AIG licensed educator employed full-time to coordinate the local AIG program

- * Job description of AIG coordinator (see description above)
- * AIG coordinator's qualifications
- * Coordinator calendar reflecting the above responsibilities

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: Rutherford County Schools employs Elementary AIG Specialists whose job descriptions explicitly address the academic, social and emotional needs of AIG students. Due to funding, the AIG Specialists at the middle school level carry a full teaching load in addition to serving as the AIG Specialists. They are obviously more limited in their responsibilities due to this circumstance. Currently, there are no assigned AIG Specialists working in the high schools. The AIG Coordinator is currently serving this role in addition to the responsibilities of overseeing the entire program. The stakeholders have assessed this practice as "mostly evident" considering budget allocations and availability. Due to no perceived increases in budget we will maintain this process for the next plan cycle. However, Rutherford County Schools will actively pursue avenues to help address more Specialists availability at both the middle and high school areas.

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

Description: Each Elementary AIG Specialist has the following responsibilities:

- Hold AIG certification.
- Oversee implementation of the AIG local plan in all assigned schools and provide on-going progress of focused and maintained practices of the AIG plan in semester reports to the AIG Coordinator.
- Provide H.O.L.E. day instruction for AIG students in grades 4-5 during the first 5 grading periods of each school year. These H.O.L.E. days will be aligned to the NCSCoS and planning of such days will include the input from all Elementary AIG Specialists.
- Provide inclusion lessons for all K-3 classrooms a minimum of one time each six-week grading period for the first 5 grading periods of each school year. These lessons may include the implementation of U-STARS Plus materials, Jacob's Ladder and P.E.T.S.
- Offer demonstration (inclusion) lessons in K-5 regular education to promote critical and creative thinking.
- Serve in a coaching capacity, often modeling best practices and/or helping the teacher organize materials and lessons utilizing gifted methodology.
- Serve as a resource for teachers within their own professional learning communities (grade level and department level meetings) and individual classrooms.
- Specialist are encouraged to attend weekly 4-5 grade level meetings at all assigned school sites. If due to scheduling, this is not feasible, Elementary AIG Specialists must provide documented weekly email correspondence with all 4-5 teams at each assigned school.
- Provide weekly calendars online for teachers with schedules reflecting time for collaboration with classroom teachers and grade levels, scheduled inclusion lessons, as well as, direct service to AIG students.
- Provide email correspondence/documentation to the classroom teacher, school principal and AIG Coordinator in the event of an absence or scheduling of district events causing the Specialists to not serve the allotted time at each assigned school.
- Implements the screening, identification, and placement of gifted students at assigned schools.
- Coordinate AIG testing at school sites.
- Plan and implement appropriate curricular offerings for AIG students in different grade levels.
- Develop differentiated units of study based on the NCSCoS for use in gifted program options and by

classroom teachers.

- Oversee service delivery options in DEPs and IDEPs.
- Collaborate with Instructional Coaches on the delivery of gifted programming services.
- Network with families about AIG students' academic and social progress offering a face to face meeting each year with the families of each identified AIG student.
- Serve as contact person for special events/programs/competitions.
- Participate in appropriate professional development.

Each Middle School AIG Specialist has the following responsibilities:

- Hold AIG certification.
- Oversee implementation of the AIG local plan in assigned school and provide on-going progress of focused and maintained practices of the AIG plan in semester reports to the AIG Coordinator.
- Serve as a resource for teachers within their own professional learning communities (grade level and department level meetings) and individual classrooms.
- Implement the screening, identification, and placement of gifted students at assigned schools.
- Coordinate AIG testing at school sites.
- Develop differentiated units of study based on the NCSCoS for use in gifted program options and by classroom teachers.
- Oversee service delivery options in DEPs and IDEPs.
- Network with families about AIG students' academic and social progress offering a face to face meeting each year with the families of each identified AIG student.
- Serve as contact person for special events/programs/competitions.
- Participate in appropriate professional development.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * 3 AIG licensed educators work full-time in the elementary schools on tasks which specifically address the needs of gifted learners

* Calendars and other documentation (emails, lesson plans, etc.)

* 3 AIG licensed educators teach Scholars Language Arts or Scholars Math classes at all 3 middle schools

* Teaching schedules and time logs reflect appropriate employment of AIG Specialist's time

Other Comments:

Practice C

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools believes that gifted learners are entitled to be served by professionals who have specialized preparation in gifted education. Currently, the district has 19 classroom teachers with AIG licensure, in addition to the three AIG Elementary Specialists (4

Elementary, 10 Middle, and 5 High School). During the 2011-2012 school year, middle school teachers were offered intensive PD to earn a local certificate indicating they had met the local professional development requirements for AIG. This was viewed as a great need due to the fact that only ten middle school teachers district wide have their AIG License. The hope was to offer a cohort every school calendar year beginning with middle school and then elementary. Unfortunately, plans were changed due to the intensive professional development needed to guide teachers as they proceeded during the 2012-2013 school year with the implementation of the new NCSCoS (Common Core and Essential Standards). As a result, the stakeholders have assessed this practice as "minimally evident" and therefore it is a focused practice.

Goals: In an effort to both spread and implement the theme of "AIG All Day, Everyday" the AIG program will begin implementing a series of professional development offerings to classroom teachers, exceptional children's personnel, counselors, and school administrators. These offerings will include general information sessions on gifted, differentiated instruction, and how to meet the social and emotional needs of students.

Particular attention will be spent on addressing the social and emotional needs of AIG learners at both the middle and high school level. This is a crucial component in our Advanced Placement Academy (high school programming).

Rutherford County Schools will continue to pursue work towards placing AIG students in classrooms with teachers who have met the LEA's professional development requirements for that position and/or have earned AIG certification. Local certificate professional development will again be offered beginning in the 2014-15 school year. In addition, teachers will be encouraged to pursue state licensure at one of the state's Institutes of Higher Education (IHE).

Description: Quality professional development in gifted education should use the following guiding principles:

- * learning aligns with the LEA's mission statement, the NCSCoS, and the Plan for Gifted Education in Rutherford County
- * learning content reflects best practices and has meaning and relevance for participants
- * learning opportunities span the needs of K-12 AIG students
- * learning provides both academic and social and emotional guidance and counseling
- * learning includes time for reflection, follow-up, and collaboration to ensure implementation of new instructional strategies
- * learning includes formats and activities to address participant learning styles
- * learning is scheduled to maximize participation and results
- * learning includes evaluation by participants

The AIG program and other Rutherford County Schools initiatives will offer professional development opportunities which will lead toward local LEA requirements of specialized professionals to teach AIG students. These specialized professionals should include all Scholars teachers at the middle schools, school counselors, interested K-5 regular classroom teachers, as well as all other interested professional educators.

Required professional development courses to earn a local AIG certificate from Rutherford County Schools will include:

1. Introduction to Gifted Education
2. Differentiation/Instructional Practices/Methods and Models
3. Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Students

These courses may be taught by certified AIG Specialists/Coordinators/Outside experts in the field.

Interested teachers in Rutherford County Schools may affiliate with a number of UNC universities for on-line training programs which provide AIG certification and/or advanced degrees in gifted education. At present these universities include:

- * East Carolina University
- * N.C. Central University
- * UNC-Charlotte
- * UNC-Wilmington
- * Western Carolina University
- * Barton College
- * Campbell University
- * Duke University
- * Elon University
- * High Point University
- * Mars Hill College
- * Wingate University
- * Meredith College
- * Appalachian State University

Three K-5 AIG Specialists will serve the 10 elementary schools as coach/inclusion teachers for AIG students. These Specialists must have AIG certification. See Practice B above for AIG Specialists job description.

Three 6-8 AIG Specialists will serve the 3 middle schools as Scholars teachers for English Language Arts or Math.

The AIG Coordinator will continue to communicate and schedule activities for the AP Academies at each high school. Efforts will be made to identify a staff member at each high school that will serve as a liaison between the AIG Coordinator and each individual high school.

The curriculum writing professional development workshops will:

- * adapt the NCSCoS according to identified abilities, readiness, interests, and learning styles
- * enrich, extend, and accelerate the curriculum
- * employ diverse and effective instructional practices
- * select and use a variety of research-based supplemental resources
- * foster the development of 21st century skills
- * use ongoing assessments
- * create affective curricular and instructional practices
- * cultivate and develop the potential of young students

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Clear roles and responsibilities for AIG personnel and related teachers

- * District list of AIG certified teachers
 - * Documented Professional Development participation
 - * District list of AIG teachers who have received a local certificate
 - * AIG student class assignments/class rosters
 - * DEPs and IDEPs
-
- * Local certificate requirements and responsibilities
 - * Workshops with K-5 instructional coaches
 - * Workshops for Jacobs Ladder
 - * Workshops for U-STARS~PLUS
 - * Curriculum writing K-5, 6-8, 9-12
 - * Workshops in SUCCESS
 - * Workshops in Rtl
 - * Continued workshops in technology
 - * Workshops to develop strategic plan for social and emotional needs of gifted students

Other Comments:

Practice D

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools recognizes the importance of placing AIG students in general education classrooms with teachers who have met the local professional development requirements for that position or have earned an AIG add-on license. The stakeholders recognize this as a crucial practice and realize there is much work to be done in this area. This practice relies on the implementation and success of practice 3C.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will work towards placing AIG students in classrooms with teachers who have met the LEA's professional development requirements for that position and/or have earned AIG certification. During this plan cycle, the district will establish guidelines requiring teachers of AIG students to participate in local professional development so they may meet the districts requirements for a local certificate.

Elementary principals will be encouraged to utilize cluster grouping of AIG students in order to concentrate AIG Specialists' time in fewer classrooms. This structure will enable AIG Specialists to have the potential for greater impact on student growth.

Schools will be encouraged to identify strategies relating to AIG students in their SIP where

appropriate.

Description: A comprehensive district plan will be created to address this practice. It will involve input and communication between school-based administrators, classroom teachers, AIG personnel and district personnel.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * School Improvement Plans that address this practice

* Class Rosters indicating cluster grouping

* Reports to the local BOE regarding placement data

Other Comments:

Practice E

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Comprehensive professional development is described in each School Improvement Plan. This reflects the process of ensuring continuous improvement for all students, which should, in turn, ensure continuous improvement for AIG students. Since the professional development listed at each school site is designed to reflect continuous improvement for students, the stakeholders would like to see that the process aligns with AIG program goals (specifically AIG local certification) as well as other district initiatives. Rutherford County Schools will focus on this practice of aligning professional development with local AIG program goals and other district initiatives which was assessed as "minimally evident."

Goals: The LEA's School Improvement Teams will be encouraged to include AIG Specialists or personnel that can ensure the perspective of AIG is included.

The AIG program will become an integral member of the Rtl district process.

The AIG Coordinator and Specialists will work with district and school staff to incorporate best practices related to gifted learners in local PD.

Description: The AIG program will work to ensure the AIG perspective is clearly defined within various PD initiatives.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * District's professional growth plan and School Improvement Plans reflect the needs of gifted learners

* Evidence of AIG participation in Rtl district training and implementation

* Schedules, agendas, participation logs of professional development opportunities aligned with AIG program goals

Other Comments:

Practice F

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools focuses on aligning professional development opportunities with state and national teaching standards. We are incorporating 21st century skills (as well as content at an advanced level) in this current AIG Plan. We are hopeful, that due to the new teacher rating scale and the focus on student growth at ALL levels, future professional development opportunities will include best practices in gifted education.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will work to ensure that professional development opportunities include addressing the needs of gifted students.

Description: Rutherford County Schools has begun S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (Strategies Using Common Core Essential Standards Successfully), a system-wide professional development component. This initiative aligns with state and national teaching standards, including 21st century skills and advanced level content. The AIG Specialists and Instructional Coaches will work together to provide further support for classroom teachers as they implement these components.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Training in Strategies Using Common Core Essential Standards Successfully (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.)

* Documented alignment with NAGC/CEC professional development standards

Other Comments:

Practice G

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Quality professional development must ensure that learning includes time for reflection, follow-up, and collaboration in order for new instructional strategies to be implemented appropriately. The professional development opportunities for AIG Specialists have increased significantly in the last three years. The AIG Specialists at both the elementary and middle schools have been involved in gifted education refresher seminars, differentiated instruction workshops and attendance at the state gifted conference. The AIG Specialists have the task of presenting the professional development they receive to their schools. While significant strides have been made to increase professional development opportunities for the AIG specialists much attention is needed to insure the Specialists have opportunities to plan, implement and refine the applications of their professional development learning. The stakeholders consider this practice to be "mostly evident", yet will include it as a focused practice.

Goals: Time for collaboration between and among AIG Specialists, Instructional Coaches, and

8/8/2013

classroom teachers will be scheduled so that skills and instructional strategies learned in professional development can be successfully shared, processed and implemented.

Description: We will be mindful to incorporate time for reflection, follow-up, and collaboration between and among AIG Specialists, Instructional Coaches, and classroom teachers to ensure that support and resources are sufficient and satisfying.

Planned Sources of Evidence:

- * District AIG Plan incorporated into School Improvement Plans
- * Examples of curriculum resources produced through collaboration
- * AIG Specialists' schedules reflect time for collaboration with each other and classroom teachers

Other Comments:

Standard 4: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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

Practice A

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools offers a system-wide baseline of gifted service options, however, stronger comprehensive programming must be developed and implemented. A continuum of services beyond the elementary level has been limited to advanced level classes to help meet the academic needs of middle and high school gifted learners. While efforts have been made to ensure a continuum of services K-12 [with particular attention at the high schools with the implementation of the Advanced Placement (AP) Academies] there is still much work to be done in this area.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will combine the efforts of Standard 2 and Standard 3 with Standard 4 focusing on curriculum planning and development which incorporates vertical alignment and comprehensive programs and services across all grade levels. RCS will also implement professional development focusing on the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners. These two standards will foster and allow Standard 4 to become a reality.

Description: As stated in Standard 2, Practice A, we will adapt the SCoS focusing in blocks of K-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

As stated in Standard 2, Practice B, we will enrich, extend, and accelerate the curriculum.

As stated in Standard 2, Practice C, we will use a variety of research-based supplemental resources.

As stated in Standard 2, Practice D, we will foster the development of 21st century content and skills.

As stated in Standard 2, Practice E, we will use on-going assessment to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction.

As stated in Standard 2, Practice F, we will create affective curricular and instructional practices to support the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

As stated in Standard 2, Practice G, we will cultivate and develop the potential of young students.

As stated in Standard 2, Practice H, we will ensure collaboration among AIG personnel and other professional staff by integrating with ongoing initiatives within the LEA.

These standards, combined with the professional development efforts of Standard 3 will allow the requirements of Standard 4 to be fulfilled.

With each of the above stated practices there will be a view towards appropriate pacing and curricular transitions through vertical alignment. The 5th and 8th grade AIG students will receive focused attention so that the transition years from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school

will be smooth.

5th and 8th grade teachers will complete student recommendations for all 5th and 8th graders. This is to ensure that any pertinent information is shared with all stakeholders involved.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * K-3 Using Science Talents and Abilities to Recognize Students (U-STAR~PLUS)

- * Jacob's Ladder
- * K-5 AIG Specialists write curriculum units of study correlated to the NCSCoS
- * 6-8 Specialists and classroom teachers write Honors and Scholars curriculum
- * AIG exploratory classes
- * AP Academy
- * NC Career and College Promise
- * NC Virtual Public Schools(NCVPS)
- * NCSSM Interactive Video Conferencing courses & NCSSM Online
- * Create underachieving gifted component
- * Isothermal Community College concurrent enrollment
- * AP, Honors courses
- * Accelerated high school scheduling
- * Documented teacher referrals for grades 5 and 8.
- * Appropriate school and career counseling especially at transition years

Other Comments:

Practice B

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Elementary Schools have limited direct AIG services due to 3 AIG Specialists serving 10 elementary schools. Middle Schools offer Honors and Scholars classes which provide services, but not all classes are taught by teachers with AIG certification. High Schools offer Advanced Placement Academies and an array of services which students self-select. The stakeholders assess this practice as "minimally evident" because there is not clear consistency with alignment of programs and services. Upon completion of the work on focused practices within this Plan (specifically Standard 2, Practice B, for this practice category), it seems likely that more consistent alignment of programs and services will take place.

Goals: AIG programs and services at all levels must show clear alignment with the needs of students whose Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) shows the need for differentiation.

Description: Refer to Standard 2, Practice B, for a description of how this practice will be focused.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * see Practice A above

- * signed DEPs/IDEPS

- * Student identification matched to service options
- * state PRC034 funds matched to AIG services
- * List of Program Service Options for each school
- * Local AIG Plan incorporated within School Improvement Plans (in accordance with principal's guidelines)
- * see Standard 2, Practice B

Other Comments: Once again, it is necessary to state that resources are limited for gifted education. Therefore, general education must accept an integral responsibility to provide differentiated curriculum for AIG students. This curriculum may be slightly different from school to school.

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 Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools attempts to adhere to an integral and connected instructional approach between AIG programs and services and LEA policy and practice. We are intent on enhancing current and adding further AIG programs and services which will weave into LEA practice. The stakeholders assess this practice as "minimally evident" and will see that it is focused.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will strive to ensure the AIG program is woven through all programs and services offered by the RCS system.

Description: Several practices within this Plan articulate the ways AIG programs and services are intended to be integral and connected to the LEA's total instructional practice. Administrators will be encouraged to have AIG at the table for all meetings involving student achievement.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Grade level, cross grade level collaborative planning

- * DEPs and IDEPs document a range of placement options
- * Students' instructional schedules
- * AIG student folder data
- * AIG Plan incorporated in School Improvement Plans when appropriate
- * Policies and procedures for acceleration and grouping with academic/intellectual peers

Other Comments:

Practice D

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: There is extensive information regarding differentiated services and instruction for AIG students and regulations relating to gifted education. According to stakeholders, dissemination of this information to teachers, administrators, and staff is "minimally evident." This is unacceptable for a functioning program and will become a focused practice that will receive immediate attention.

Goals: Teachers, administrators, and instructional staff will have access to be adequately informed of differentiated services and instruction, regulations relating to gifted education, and the local AIG program Plan through collaborative planning meetings; parent, student, teacher, administrator surveys; district and school web sites; brochures; and district and school meetings.

K-5 Specialists will ensure teachers, administrators and instructional staff at their assigned schools are directly informed of differentiated services and instruction for AIG students, regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program and plan at the beginning of each school year. They will request to be included on the agenda of one of the first staff meetings for each school each year.

The AIG coordinator will ensure teachers, administrators and instruction staff at all middle and high schools are directly informed of differentiated services and instruction for AIG students, regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program and plan at the beginning of each school year. They will request to be included on the agenda of one of the first staff meetings for each school each year.

A comprehensive presentation will be designed and delivered by the AIG Coordinator and AIG Specialists to ensure consistent information is disseminated district-wide.

Description: The AIG program will articulate and disseminate clear information about the program and services to school personnel, parents, students, and the community.

Through collaboration with colleagues, AIG Specialists will articulate the differentiated services and regulations related to AIG students.

Providing opportunities for AIG Specialists and other teachers to plan, implement, and refine applications will allow time to clarify the programs services, regulations, and plan.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Agendas from faculty meetings from ALL schools K-12 showing AIG presence at the beginning of each school year

- * Agendas and minutes from collaborative planning meetings
- * Dissemination of the AIG Plan at district and school meetings
- * Surveys to related stakeholders
- * Information posted on district and school web sites

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 is an area where, regardless of the well-meaning intentions of the parties concerned, the perception will always tend to be that more is needed. The stakeholders want this practice to be focused and have assessed this practice as "minimally evident," realizing that a few key intentions on behalf of implementation will move this into a maintained practice.

Goals: The AIG program will step up its efforts at comprehensive and meaningful communication among and between teachers and schools. The results should be a more effective continuation of services, especially at key transition points.

Fifth grade teachers at each Elementary School will be asked to complete "referrals" for students in regards to middle school placements.

Eighth grade teachers will be asked to do the same for high schools.

Ensure teachers and schools understand the AIG continuation of services K-12 so they understand their place in the continuation.

Description: The AIG program Specialists develop and document plans (DEPs and IDEPs) that articulate the differentiated services matching the needs of AIG students.

A planned source of evidence under this standard is a focus on 5-6 and 8-9 transition years.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Consistent AIG services among the schools

- * Minutes from district and school meetings focused on services
- * Student and parent orientation meetings at key transition points
- * Student referrals from 5th and 8th grade teachers
- * Signed DEPs/IDEPs

Other Comments:

Practice F

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Professional development opportunities in the Rutherford County Schools System are encouraged to be offered that include differentiation at all levels. This is a great need that has come to light both in regards to the Rtl process and lack of AIG student growth on a yearly basis.

Collaboration between and among professional educators is a powerful tool. It is often neglected due to time constraints. As stated in Standard 2, Practice H, "Collaboration ...is perhaps the greatest

source of sustained insight and growth for educators." Stakeholders consider this practice "minimally evident" and will include it as a focused practice.

Goals: RCS will offer professional development in the area of differentiation at all levels (See Standard 2, Practice E).

Time for collaboration between and among AIG Specialists and the educational community will be scheduled to ensure differentiated programming and services (See Standard 2, Practice H and Standard 3, Practice G).

Description: Refer to Standard 2, Practice E (uses on-going assessment to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction); Standard 2, Practice H (ensures collaboration among AIG personnel and other professional staff) and Standard 3, Practice G (provides opportunities for AIG specialists and other teachers to plan, implement, and refine applications of their professional development) for an overview of how this practice will be initiated.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Inclusion and demonstration lessons

- * Agendas from grade level meetings
- * SRT meetings
- * Documented RtI meetings
- * Collaboration during curriculum writing
- * Collaboration with technology instructors
- * Sharing of research-based supplemental materials
- * Meetings with counselors and media specialists to support social and emotional needs
- * Documented uses of assessment data
- * Documentation of parent/school involvement
- * Planned sources of evidence under Standard 2, Practice E; Standard 2, Practice H; and Standard 3, Practice G

Other Comments:

Practice G

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: As stated in Standard 2, Practice F, "The social and emotional needs of AIG students are of crucial importance and oftentimes overlooked in curricular and instructional practices." We recognize the need for collaboration within the educational community to address the social and emotional needs of AIG students and realize this is an area plagued with misconceptions and myths. The stakeholders have assessed this practice as "minimally evident" and would like to target this as a focused practice.

Goals: As stated in Standard 2, Practice F, "Gifted programming will establish a strategic plan to improve school services to nurture, recognize, and respond to the unique social and emotional

development of gifted learners. The development of this plan will use the guiding principles from the NAGC Gifted Program Standards."

Description: Refer to the description under Standard 2, Practice F.

Planned Sources of Evidence: Refer to Planned Sources of Evidence under Standard 2, Practice F.

Other Comments:

Practice H

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Through the use of IDEPs, aptitude scores, collaboration, and other qualitative and quantitative data, Rutherford County Schools has accelerated individual students both by grade and subject levels. During the 2010-2013 plan cycle, efforts were made to ensure consistency in how evaluation and consideration is taken into account across the district. The stakeholders view this as an area that is "mostly evident" and consider this a maintained practice.

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

Description: We currently have access to research based tools that are particularly helpful in making acceleration decisions. Our district has decided to implement the use of the Iowa Acceleration Scale to help guide decision makers in terms of subject and/or grade acceleration.

At the K-5 level, Rutherford County Schools uses a variety of acceleration options:

- * Early entry Kindergarten
- * Subject grouping
- * Resource Pull-out
- * Grade acceleration
- * Subject acceleration

At the 6-8 level, acceleration options include:

- * Subject acceleration
- * Grade acceleration
- * Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
- * High School classes
- * College classes
- * Online courses

At the high school level, acceleration options include:

- * Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

- * Honors courses
- * AP courses
- * Early graduation
- * Concurrent enrollment
- * College enrollment
- * NCVPS
- * NCSSM

EVAAS indicators are used to help determine the best middle school acceleration option.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * The development of a user friendly guide to assist with placement decisions.

- * Acceleration options available and processes communicated
- * Use of appropriate acceleration methods
- * Student profile/Body of evidence examples
- * Agendas from related meetings

Other Comments: It is our understanding that the final placement decisions are both the right and responsibility of the school based administration. Therefore, it will be the role of the AIG Program Coordinator to clearly articulate the role and responsibility of the AIG Specialist as a facilitator of the process – providing the tools and guidance through the decision making effort to encourage parity and consistency across the district.

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: The AIG Program of Rutherford County Schools screens, refers, and identifies traditionally under-represented populations such as culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice exceptional. However, intentional service options that directly match the developing unique needs of these populations need to be established.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will focus on identification and service options for traditionally under-represented populations through the use of the U-STARS~PLUS philosophy and materials (see Standard 1, Practice C and Standard 2, Practice G).

We will continue to provide a Spanish translation for the Plan for Gifted Education and all related AIG forms and letters.

Acceleration options will continue to be offered at their present level (see above Practice H).

Affective curricular and instructional practices which support the social and emotional needs of AIG

students is targeted as a focused practice (see Standard 2, Practice F).

Description: Gifted programming services must be accessible to all gifted learners. Students from underrepresented populations should be monitored and provided support for success.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * TOPS Form

* NNAT

* Formal nurturing program (see Standard 1, Practice C and Standard 2, Practice H)

* Translations of the Plan and other related AIG documents

* Documented acceleration opportunities (see above Practice H)

* Socio-emotional component (see Standard 2, Practice F)

Other Comments:

Practice J

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools offers a wide array of extra-curricular programs and events that enhance and further develop the needs and interests of AIG students. The stakeholders consider this practice "mostly evident" and wish to keep it as a maintained practice.

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

Description:

At the K-5 level, AIG students at all elementary schools have the opportunity to participate in:

- * a Chess Club at each elementary school with a Chess Tournament held at the end of the year
- * an elementary Book Challenge at each school with a combined local competition
- * Arts Council productions
- * Camp Invention
- * Spelling Bee

At the 6-8 level, AIG students at all middle schools have the opportunity to participate in:

- * Chess clubs
- * Battle of the Books with a local, regional, and state competition
- * Isothermal Community College Junior Challenge (similar to Quiz Bowl)
- * Spelling Bee
- * Junior Beta Club
- * Math competitions
- * Arts Council productions
- * Duke TIP

At the 9-12 level, AIG students have the opportunity to participate in:

8/8/2013

- * Service learning projects
- * Math competitions
- * Isothermal Senior Challenge (similar to Quiz Bowl)
- * Governor's School
- * AP Academy
- * Inquiry based projects
- * Arts Council productions

Planned Sources of Evidence: Documented participation in:

- * Chess
- * Spelling Bee
- * Elementary Book Challenge
- * BOB
- * Camp Invention
- * ICC Junior Challenge
- * ICC Senior Challenge
- * Arts Council productions
- * Duke TIP
- * Governor's School
- * AP Academy
- * Service learning
- * Inquiry based projects

Other Comments:

Standard 5: Partnerships

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

Practice A

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Developing partnerships relies almost entirely on effective communication and dissemination of appropriate literature. Several plan practices are provided to ensure that parents/families and the community receive communication regarding appropriate services for AIG students. The stakeholders consider the implementations of these practices as "minimally evident." We will consider this a focused practice because there are several focused practices within Standards 1, 2, 3, and 4 that directly pertain to this. Our intent is to weave these practices together. While considerable efforts have been made there is still work to be done.

Goals: The AIG Coordinator will weave the following practices within this Plan to ensure parents/families and community receive communication regarding appropriate services for AIG students:

- * Standard 1, Practices D and F
- * Standard 2, Practices F and H
- * Standard 3, Practice G
- * Standard 4, Practices D, E, and G

Description: * We will ensure consistency of communication by establishing School Review Teams at all schools (see Standard 1, Practice D).

- * We will maintain documentation that is reviewed annually by parents (see Standard 1, Practice F).
- * We will create affective curricular and instructional practices to support the social and emotional needs of AIG students (see Standard 2, Practice F).
- * We will ensure collaboration among AIG personnel and other staff (see Standard 2, Practice H).
- * We will provide opportunities for AIG Specialists and other teachers to plan, implement, and refine application (see Standard 3, Practice G).
- * We will inform all teachers, administrators, and support staff of the AIG program and Plan including differentiated services and regulations (see Standard 4, Practice D).
- * We will communicate between teachers and schools to ensure effective continuation of services (see Standard 4, practice E).
- * We will ensure that counseling personnel, classroom teachers, AIG Specialists, and parents/families collaborate to address the social and emotion needs of AIG students (see Standard 4, Practice G).
- * We will communicate with AIG parents by email, newsletter, website, etc.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * AIG Plan incorporated into School Improvement Plans

- * DEPs/IDEPs

- * AIG Plan and information on district websites, brochures
- * Strategic Plan for social and emotional development
- * SRT meetings
- * Documented collaborative opportunities

Other Comments:

Practice B

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools considers this practice as "mostly evident." However, as stated previously, there is never too much communication in regard to information about the local AIG program, AIG Plan, and policies related to gifted education. Availability of "communication" and accessibility of said communication is totally different. So, we will consider this a focused practice and, as in Practice A above, we will weave several practices within this plan together to address sharing information with stakeholders.

Goals: The AIG Coordinator will establish an AIG Parent Advisory Group to promote a sustained process for advocacy of gifted education. A network of effective advocacy must include parents and community members as well as educators and administrators. Advocates must be prepared to inform others about the dangers of assumptions.

AIG Parent Nights (H.O.L.E. day showcases, informational meetings, etc.) will be established for each district for elementary schools.

Middle Schools will hold informational meetings each year.

High Schools will continue to have AP Academy Evening Events throughout the year.

Description: An AIG Parent Advisory Group will be trained to advocate for gifted education. Parent nights will be held for all levels: elementary, middle and high.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Agendas from AIG Parent Advisory Group

- * AIG Brochure (with Spanish translation)
- * Information posted on web sites (to include AIG Plan with Spanish translation)
- * See Sources of evidence in above Practice A
- * Communication from AIG Parent Nights
- * AP Academy Event Notifications

Other Comments:

Practice C

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools is always looking for meaningful ways to involve parents/families and community members of diverse populations. Stakeholders consider this practice "minimally evident" and will target it as a focused practice.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will involve stakeholders reflecting diverse populations in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG program and Plan through the organization and implementation of the AIG Parent Advisory Group (see above Practice B).

Description: The AIG Parent Advisory Group will meet at least 4 times per academic school year. The task of this group will be to advocate for gifted education (see Practice B above) and to offer continuity in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the local AIG program and Plan.

The AIG Program Coordinator will organize and be chairperson for these meetings.

The duties and responsibilities of the AIG Advisory Committee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *review annually the local plan for the education of gifted students, including revisions
- * determine the extent to which the local plan for the previous year was implemented
- * develop annual goals and priorities based on the AIG Standards marked as Focused Practices
- * represent diversity in the community
- * encourage a collaborative relationship between school personnel, Central Office personnel, and the community
- * become knowledgeable about current programs, research, and best practices in gifted education and its relationship with general education
- * focus attention on issues relative to improving the educational services for gifted students.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * AIG Parent Advisory Group reflecting diversity of families

- * List of AIG committee members and representative roles
- * Documentation and agendas of AIG Parent Advisory Group meetings
- * District/School websites and brochure

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: Rutherford County Schools implements a comprehensive language translation service to

inform parents/families and the community of available opportunities for students. The AIG program uses this service for AIG forms, AIG brochures and AIG Plan translations. All screening, identification, and placement documents are translated into Spanish. While the written word is translated the spoken word at AIG events is not. The stakeholders consider this practice "mostly evident" and wish to focus on it to ensure consistency of information pertaining to opportunities available for AIG students and also to ensure that translation is provided both for literature and face to face meetings.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will task the AIG Parent Advisory Group (see above Practice B) to assist in informing families and communities of opportunities available to AIG students.

Description: Dissemination of information of opportunities available for AIG students will be handled by:

* Parent Advisory Group (see above Practice B)

Parents will be selected from each of the districts within the LEA and will be responsible for transmitting information to the appropriate schools (administrators, teachers, students, parents)

* Information postings on websites (with Spanish translation)

* Informational letters, emails, memos by AIG Specialists (with Spanish translation)

* Seek translator help with formal events

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Agendas from AIG Parent Advisory Group

* Newspaper articles

* Translated documents

* Postings on websites and brochures

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: Rutherford County Schools views partnerships as a powerful way to enhance and gain support for programs and services. Collaboration to share and promote a positive vision of the AIG program, purpose and goals, continues to be a district-wide commitment. The stakeholders assess this practice as "minimally evident" in AIG programs and services and target this as a focused practice.

Goals: Rutherford County Schools will work on the following partnerships to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services:

* Community sponsorships

* Isothermal Community College partnerships

* AIG Parent Advisory Group

* Family involvement programs

* Rutherford County Arts Programs

Description: * Community sponsorships have been formed for both the K-5 Chess Tournament and elementary Battle of the Books. We will work to increase sponsorships for other AIG programs and competitions.

* Isothermal Community College sponsors both the Isothermal Junior and Senior Challenges. The middle and high schools in Rutherford County have a long history of participation in these events. Other partnerships with the college include REaCH (an early college initiative), concurrent courses, and 5 year high school diploma/associate's degrees. These initiatives will continue to expand.

* The Parent Advisory Group (see above Practice B) will work to enhance partnerships.

* The U-STARS~PLUS program (see Standard 1, Practice C) will include an increasing number of parent/families.

•The Arts Council will promote its programs throughout the school system.

Planned Sources of Evidence:

- * Expanded Sponsorships
- * Isothermal Community College partnerships
- * AIG Parent Advisory Group
- * Family involvement programs

Other Comments: During the 2010-13 plan cycle, Rutherford County Schools partnered with Duke TIP to bring intensive professional development to assist with the local certificate requirement. Dr. Rick Courtright led the middle school teachers that participated in the cohort through the following modules: Introduction to Gifted Education, Differentiation/Instructional Practices/Methods and Models, and the Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Students. Dr. Courtright and his expertise proved to be a tremendous asset to the district's local certificate program.

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: The Plan for Gifted Education in Rutherford County is in its sixth generation of re-vision. This is in accordance with Article 9B of the North Carolina state legislation. Each AIG Plan for Rutherford County Schools has been approved by the school board and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment. The reviews and comments have always been positive.

The stakeholders consider this practice as "completely evident" and wish to see it continued as a maintained practice.

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

Description: The Plan for Gifted Education in Rutherford County has been written in accordance with the 6 NC State Standards.

Refer to Standard 1: Student Identification.

Refer to Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction.

Refer to Standard 3: Personnel and Professional Development.

Refer to Standard 4: Comprehensive Programming Within A Total School Community.

Refer to Standard 5: Partnerships.

Refer to Standard 6: Program Accountability.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * LEA's AIG Plan

Other Comments:

Practice B

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools employs a full-time licensed AIG Coordinator to guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program. The AIG Coordinator will prepare an annual report detailing progress toward successful implementation of the AIG Plan for review by the

Board of Education, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Members of the Curriculum and Instruction Department, and all other stakeholders. The report should articulate the status of current programming and provide formative and summative evaluation reports.

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

Description: The licensed AIG Lead Teacher/Coordinator (refer to Standard 3, Practice A) will:

1. Ensure that the LEA's student identification procedures for AIG are clear, equitable, and comprehensive and lead towards appropriate educational services (refer to Practices A, B, C, D, E, and F under Standard 1).
2. Ensure that challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum and instruction K-12 is employed to accommodate a range of academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners (refer to Practices A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I under Standard 2).
3. Ensure that highly qualified professionals are recruited and retained and that relevant and effective professional development concerning the needs of gifted learners is on-going and comprehensive (refer to Practices A, B, C, D, E, F, and G under Standard 3).
4. Ensure that 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 (refer to Practices A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J under Standard 4).
5. Ensure on-going and meaningful participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the local AIG program to develop strong partnerships (refer to Practices A, B, C, D, and E under Standard 5).
6. Ensure that 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 (refer to Practices A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, and K under Standard 6).

Planned Sources of Evidence: * A full-time licensed AIG coordinator is employed to monitor the AIG Plan implementation

- * Disaggregation of EOG and EOC data
- * Department of Public Instruction headcount
- * Disbursement report of AIG funds
- * Annual report of the AIG program
- * Parent/Teacher/Student surveys and interviews

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 Article 9B (115C-150.5) of the North Carolina General Assembly, all funds allocated to local LEAs for gifted education must be used for the direct services of the local AIG program.

Rutherford County Schools adheres to this allocation process and therefore the stakeholders assess this practice as "completely evident" and it will be maintained at its present level.

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

Description: Rutherford County Schools will continue to adhere to the PRC 034 funding process outlined under Article 9B (115C-150.5) when allocating funding to the local AIG program.

AIG funding supports the following areas:

- * Personnel
- * Professional Development
- * Special/Innovative Programs
- * Instructional/Curriculum Products
- * Academic Competitions

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Annual budget statement

- * AIG Teacher licensure
- * Use of PRC 034 funds
- * Contracts for professional development
- * Receipts for materials and curriculum products

Other Comments:

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: There is little consistent and focused tracking of data for AIG students. The stakeholders assess this practice as "minimally evident." The AIG Coordinator needs access to a software program that allows for tracking student performance growth and drop-out data for AIG students.

Goals: A method of generating and retrieving AIG student performance growth and drop-out data will be developed. This will allow Rutherford County Schools to maintain, analyze, and share this information.

Description: Through collaboration with the testing center, the AIG Coordinator will create spreadsheets to reflect the following:

- * EOG scores
- * EOC scores
- * AP scores
- * Duke TIP scores
- * AIG student drop-outs
- * AIG student disaggregation by gender, ethnicity
- * Underachieving AIG students

This information will be compiled yearly and will produce a longitudinal research display.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Disaggregation of EOG and EOC and AP score data

- * Compilation of AIG student drop-out data
- * DEPs, IDEPs, SRT meetings
- * TIP data
- * Disaggregation by gender and ethnicity
- * Underachieving AIG student data

Other Comments:

Practice E

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Rutherford County Schools is able to monitor the gender and ethnicity of AIG students through the use of NCWISE and beginning next year with PowerSchool. There is no further monitoring of the representation and retention of under-represented populations in the local AIG program and therefore this is a "focused practice."

Goals: A method to monitor the representation of under-represented populations in the AIG program will be developed. Ideally, a newly established database including each of the following should be created:

- * area(s) of identification
- * exceptionalities
- * ethnicity/culturally diverse
- * economically disadvantaged
- * English language learner
- * highly gifted

Description: Through collaboration with PowerSchool Data, Food Service Director, English Language Learner educators, special education teachers, and AIG Specialists, the AIG Coordinator will collect and organize data which reflects the representation and retention of under-represented populations to include:

- * Areas of identification
- * AIG students who are culturally/ethnically diverse
- * AIG students who are economically disadvantaged
- * AIG students who are English Language Learners
- * Highly gifted AIG students

* Twice-exceptional AIG students

Planned Sources of Evidence: * PowerSchool data

- * Create spread sheets (refer to above Practice D)
- * Data regarding referral and identification trends based on demographics and subgroups
- * Enrollment data in upper level courses
- * Retention data
- * Evaluation instruments

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 Human Resources Department of Rutherford County Schools maintains frequently updated files on the credentials of all Rutherford county personnel, including personnel serving AIG students.

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

Description: Rutherford County Schools will continue to maintain current files reflecting the credentials of personnel serving AIG students. Professional development hours accrued through opportunities that address gifted education are maintained and monitored. This data will be monitored by the AIG Coordinator.

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Current files reflecting the credentials of personnel serving AIG students

- * Continuing Education Credit Records

Other Comments:

Practice G

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

This practice is a Focused Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: Responsibility for the education of gifted learners is a shared one requiring strong partnerships with all stakeholders in the AIG program. Currently, Rutherford County Schools does not have in place an advisory group advocating for AIG students.

Goals: The AIG Coordinator will form an AIG Advisory Committee comprised of community members, parents/families of AIG students, 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.

Description: The duties and responsibilities of the AIG Advisory Committee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- * review annually the local plan for the education of gifted students, including revisions
- * determine the extent to which the local plan for the previous year was implemented
- * develop annual goals and priorities based on the AIG Standards marked as Focused
- * represent the diversity of the community
- * encourage a collaborative relationship between school personnel, Central Office personnel, and the community
- * become knowledgeable about current programs, research, and best practices in gifted education and its relationship with general education
- * focus attention on issues relative to improving the educational services for gifted students

The AIG Advisory Committee should meet a minimum of four times yearly.

Planned Sources of Evidence:

- * Meetings/agendas from Rutherford County Schools AIG Advisory Committee
- * Documentation of participation and attendance

Other Comments:

Practice H

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

This practice is a Maintained Practice for 2013-2016.

Rationale: The local AIG program encourages feedback from all students, parents, teachers and administrators regarding the quality of the AIG program. This is a crucial aspect of any program to ensure strength and fidelity. While this is a maintained practice there is always room for improvement.

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:

- * Initial Placement meeting
- * Annual DEP/IDEP meetings
- * Parent meetings and conferences
- * Annual survey that addresses program strengths and areas of improvement, as well as critical issues that might influence program standards

- * District AIG Leadership Committee
- * Focus groups

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Agendas from AIG Advisory Committee

- * Documentation from DEPs, IDEPs, SRT meetings
- * Annual survey results

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 Plan for Gifted Education in Rutherford County has received positive review comments from DPI for each of its past 5 writings and revisions. The AIG Department collects data from multiple sources for use in reviewing and revising the local AIG plan and program for continuous improvement.

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

Description: The AIG Coordinator will ensure continuous program improvement by following focused practices from several of the AIG Program Standards. These practices, serving as additional sources of data will include:

- * Monitoring the implementation of the local AIG Plan (see above Practice B)
- * Monitoring state funds allotted to the AIG program (see above Practice C)
- * Monitoring student performance and drop-out data (see above Practice D)
- * Monitoring credentials of AIG personnel (see above Practice F)
- * Forming an AIG Parent Advisory Group (see above Practice G)
- * Eliciting regular feedback (see above Practice H)

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Process is completed every 3 years by law

- * Agendas from AIG Advisory Committee (see Standard 6, Practice G)
- * Student performance data (see Standard 6, Practice D)

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: In the past, data from evaluation of the local AIG program has been made available to members of the BOE and Central Office personnel, but has not been disseminated to the public. Data assimilated will now be made available to all stakeholders and the community at large.

Goals: The AIG Program will provide stakeholder's public access to all data from evaluation of the local AIG program collected annually.

Description: Rutherford County Schools will disseminate the following data from evaluation of the AIG program to the public:

- * Plan review comments from DPI
- * Annual report of the Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program
- * Disaggregation of EOG, EOC, and AP score data
- * TIP data
- * Disaggregation of AIG students by gender and ethnicity

Planned Sources of Evidence: * Annual Report posted on LEA website

- * Various modes of communication (newsletter, memos, emails, media, websites)

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: The Plan for Gifted Education employs policies, procedures, and practices that safeguard the rights of AIG students. Written policies guide all aspects of the process for identification, referral, placement, and service options. Clear procedures are outlined to protect the rights of AIG students who transfer into the system, demonstrate the need for reassessment, and show signs that may result in a plan for intervention.

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

Description: The Plan for Gifted Education has a written policy that safeguards the rights of AIG students and their parents/families, including informed consent regarding identification and placement, reassessment procedures, transfers from other LEAs, and procedures to resolve disagreements (see Standard 1, Practice E).

Planned Sources of Evidence:

- * Due process procedures written in Policy to Resolve Disagreements (see Standard 1, Practice E)
- * Student AIG folders including signed permission to evaluate and signed DEPs/IDEPs
- * Rapid attention to placement of transfer students (see Standard 1, Practice D)
- * Rutherford County Schools Plan for Gifted Education

Other Comments:

Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

AIG Plan 2010-2013.pdf (*Local Board Approval Document*)