

Jackson County Schools
Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan
Effective 2016-2019

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Jackson County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015). 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 and 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 2016-2019. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's board of Education and sent to NC DPI for comment.

For 2016-2019, Jackson County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

Jackson County Schools Vision for local AIG program: Jackson County Public Schools supports and engages all learners. Our Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program serves students in kindergarten through twelfth grade who manifest the ability to learn well beyond the expected level of their peers. The vision of the JCPS AIG program is to enrich students' learning opportunities through challenging, rigorous, and creative learning opportunities beyond the curriculum outlined by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. We wish to support AIG students emotionally, socially, and academically to prepare them for their future endeavors.

Sources of funding for local AIG program (as of 2016)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
\$193376.00	\$22811.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

Practice A

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

District Response: Jackson County Public Schools articulate and disseminate procedures for AIG student identification to school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community through a variety of methods, including:

- AIG specialist at each school have an AIG reference manual which includes a Flowchart of the AIG Referral Process, needs determination forms, observation checklist, parent permission for testing, and other referral information.
- AIG specialist and administration inform school staff about the procedures for screening, referring, and identifying students who are gifted in their classrooms.
- Third grade students and their families receive a brochure outlining the Jackson County Public Schools AIG program of service including the identification process before the screening. Brochures are available to parents, faculty, staff, and the community at any time. The brochure is also available on the JCPS AIG website.
- Information about the identification process can also be found on the Jackson County Public Schools website on the AIG page by the community-at-large.

Other Comments:

Practice B

States and employs multiple criteria for AIG student identification. These criteria incorporate 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 measures that are based on current theory and research.

District Response: Giftedness is the manifestation of ability to learn well beyond the expected level of one's age mates. It can be discovered through outstanding student performance, high test scores, and/or through observation. These abilities are sometimes muted in students by unfavorable environmental circumstances and need to be actively sought. Jackson County Public Schools' personnel is committed to seeking AIG students from all student populations.

Indicators for placement are: Student Achievement, Student Interest, Student Motivation to Learn, Student Aptitude, Student Performance, and Observable Student Behaviors.

AIG placement in Jackson County Public Schools will be based on evidence of the multiple indicators seen above. Placement on the AIG headcount for AM (Academically Gifted in Math), AR (Academically Gifted in Reading), or AG (Academically Gifted) will occur when at least four of the six indicators are present. Of those four, two must be quantitative, either student achievement, student aptitude, or student performance. Placement on the AIG headcount for IG (Intellectually Gifted) will occur when a student scores in the 90th percentile or greater for student aptitude but does not meet any of the other indicators.

Student Achievement – Indicators of a student's knowledge may be shown through a standardized test score, such as an End-of-Grade/End-of-Course test score. Achievement may also be reflected by other criterion-referenced tests. Achievement of 93% or higher will be obtained.

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

Student Motivation to Learn – Indicators of a student's commitment to pursue learning experiences may be shown through school and/or outside of school activities. With some students this may be negated by unfavorable environmental or experiential circumstances. For these students, who have often been called "underachievers", an individual case study may be important to reflect the student's specific areas of need.

Student Aptitude – Indicators of a student's capacity for learning involve reasoning, problem solving, memory, etc. Aptitude may be shown through an IQ score or demonstrated abilities. The Naglieri Non-verbal Ability Test (NNAT) will be given to all students in third and sixth grade, with the exception of students being evaluated on the North Carolina extended standards. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) will be administered to students testing off-grade level who have previously taken the NNAT. Students identified as AIG between third and sixth grade will not take the NNAT during the 6th grade screen. Student aptitude scores of 90% or higher will be obtained.

Student Performance – Indicators of a student's demonstrated mastery may be shown through work samples, portfolios, and grades. In some cases, performance may be demonstrated outside the school arena. Student performance will obtain 93% proficiency and student work samples and/or portfolio entries will be exemplary.

Observation of Student – Indicators of student's needs for differentiation, based on his/her observable behavior may be shown through the student's abilities using the characteristics recommended by Renzulli in the following areas:

- Communication – Highly expressive and effective use of words, numbers and symbols
- Motivation – Evidence of desire to learn
- Humor – Conveys and picks up on humor
- Inquiry – Questions, experiments, explores
- Insight – Quickly grasps new concepts and makes connections, senses deeper meaning
- Interests – Intense (sometimes unusual) interests
- Problem-Solving – Effective, often inventive, strategies for recognizing and solving problems

- Memory - Large storehouse of information on school or non-school topics
- Reasoning - Logical approaches to figuring out solutions
- Imagination/Creativity - Produces many ideas, highly original.

[Reference source- Coleman, Gallaher, Harrison, and Robinson (1995)]

Other Comments:

Practice C

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

District Response: Jackson County Public Schools continue to use a non-verbal test to allow for under-represented populations to be represented in the referral pool. There has been a steady increase of English Language Learner students identified since the first use of this test. Stakeholders identify the need to improve communication between AIG and the Exceptional Children's Department and the English Language Learner's Department but are satisfied with current procedures.

Student Search/Nomination: Initial Screening

A. General Information

1. The 'student search phase' of the placement process includes all activities designed to screen the general student population in order to determine which students may require further assessment for placement in the AIG program.
2. Particular attention during this process will be given to potentially gifted students from culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged populations, including assessments given in the language in which the student is most fluent (when allowable) and non verbal assessments.
3. Information collected at the final stage will lead either to a referral and additional assessment, or to a decision that the student currently does not require differentiated services. This process will establish a pool of highly able students in Jackson County.
 - a. If the student is referred, parents will be notified by the school-based AIG needs determination team that further assessment is necessary. Parent consent will be required for testing.
 - b. If the AIG needs determination team finds that the student does not require differentiated services, documentation will be placed in the student file. This will alert future teachers that the learner has shown some indication of potential giftedness and deserves to be monitored to determine if the process should begin again.

B. Recognizing Giftedness in Under-Represented Populations

1. AIG specialist and school based administrators will provide training for teachers of

characteristics of giftedness including those that are often considered not to be "teacher pleasing".
2. AIG specialist and school based administrators will provide training for teachers regarding cultural diversity and the impact on students' educational performance.

Other Comments:

Practice D

Implements screening, referral, and identification processes consistently within the LEA.

District Response: AIG specialists have been provided training on screening, referral and identification processes and provided reference notebooks for use. A random sampling of new AIG placement folders are reviewed for consistency by the AIG Coordinator each year.

AIG specialists at each school will provide training to general education teachers about the screening, referral, and identification process to ensure consistency across the district.

The Jackson County Public Schools Flowchart of the AIG Referral Process will be made available to all staff.

Other Comments:

Practice E

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

District Response: Individual student folders maintained at each school show evidence that this occurs.

The responsibility of the school-based AIG needs determination team in the Identification and Placement process is to:

1. Collect data from:
 - a. Tests and other sources of measurable performance (e.g., grades)
 - b. Nominations and supporting materials from teachers, students, and parents
 - c. Observations of student performance
2. Make an initial decision regarding which students need further review or referral for possible placement.
3. Notify parents in writing if the team decides to refer the student for possible services or when further review is necessary.
4. Make recommendations and suggest program options for appropriate placement (math, reading, or both).

5. Keep appropriate records of decisions regarding all students nominated for review, referral, and placement by the team.

A copy of the Jackson County Public Schools Individual Student Needs Determination Record for AIG and a copy of the current schools year's Differentiated Education Plan (if student has been identified) shall be placed in the student's cumulative record for easy access for school transfers. School AIG specialists will transfer student AIG folders within one month of a student transfer within district.

Other Comments:

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: To improve the identification process for Jackson County Public Schools students the AIG advisory board recommends:

- Developing better communications methods (additional information on AIG website, updated brochures)
- Providing professional development to AIG specialist, classroom teachers, administrators, and families
- Establishing a committee to develop a unified K-3 nurturing program
- Improving communication opportunities between AIG, Exceptional Childrens, Limited English Proficiency, and Intervention staff
- Improving procedures for transfer student identification and placement and records

Sources of Evidence: •JCPS AIG Reference Manual and included documents

- JCPS AIG brochure and cover letter sent to all students being screened and available as needed
- JCPS student folders containing identification information and AIG records
- JCPS AIG website
- Trends for screening, referral, and identification of 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.

District Response: The current plan supports the NC Standard Course of Study and differentiation. The NC Educator Evaluation System requires all teachers to differentiate for all students.

All students who are identified as AIG will experience curricula that build upon and extend beyond the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS). The AIG program will provide students with opportunities to study curricula in greater depth and at a quicker pace than covered by the NCSCOS and to explore areas of interest beyond the NCSCOS. Every student identified as AIG will be engaged in many opportunities for extension including, but not limited to:

- Broadening classroom studies through self-selected activities
- Studying in areas of personal interest
- Creating individual project-based learning opportunities to allow for personal in-depth study
- Engaging in civic responsibility lessons and activities

Other Comments:

Practice B

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

District Response: Current District Instructional Initiatives based on Robert Marzano's Classroom Instruction that Works, address specific strategies that provide differentiated instruction for all students.

DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULA AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

All students who are identified as AIG will experience curricula that build upon and extend beyond the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS). The AIG program will provide students with opportunities to study curricula in greater depth and at a quicker pace than covered by the NCSCOS and to explore areas of interest beyond the NCSCOS. Every student identified as AIG will be engaged in many opportunities for extension including, but not limited to:

- Broadening classroom studies through self-selected activities
- Studying in areas of personal interest
- Creating individual learning opportunities to allow for personal in-depth study

In addition, they will be encouraged to participate in enrichment options or extra curricular activities such as:

- Mentoring programs connecting students with experts in the community in areas of student interest
- Online opportunities – facilitating student access to online study
- Allowing opportunities for students to engage in organized academic teams such as Lego Robotics, Battle of the Books, and Science Olympiad.
- Pull-out students grouped with able peers

The process for evaluating the implemented curriculum to determine its impact on student achievement is as follows:

- State testing results
- District benchmark assessment
- Classroom assessment
- Survey results
- Self-assessment

Learners will also be engaged in various classroom assessments through choice of projects, products, writing, etc. that demonstrate student mastery of content. Student work samples can be used to facilitate this assessment.

All teachers who teach gifted students will use differentiated instruction to accommodate the strengths and needs of students identified as AIG. Each AIG specialist will provide general classroom teachers with differentiation strategies. AIG specialists will use multiple assessments and evaluation tools for monitoring student understanding and achievement. It is the school's responsibility to provide alternative assessments to meet these requirements.

Jackson County Public Schools board policy states that all teachers should have an average of five hours weekly allotted planning time. In adherence to this policy, school administration is responsible for ensuring that planning time is provided to AIG specialist during the regular school day (JCPS Board Policy 3120). It is also the school administration's responsibility to ensure that there is development of differentiated curricula and programs.

The school's administration will provide clearly articulated guidelines for identifying and teaching any student recognized as accelerated in any content area. Grade/content acceleration can only be considered through a special committee made up of the administration, the regular classroom teacher, the AIG teacher, the parent, the school psychologist, as well as the guidance counselor if necessary.

PROGRAM SERVICE OPTIONS

Grouping may be used to meet individual instructional needs. Such grouping can be flexible; for example, within/between/among individual classrooms or teams. Students may be placed in a group

based on their ability, performance, interests, and/or needs. Such flexibility allows students to be moved in and out of groups based on needs and performance.

- Jcps will continue to provide district-wide professional development to all teachers on differentiation strategies.
- Use of new teacher evaluation instrument and Professional Growth Plans to document differentiation in the classroom.
- Differentiation strategies documented during teacher observations
- Schedule of differentiation professional development
- Individual student DEPs

Other Comments:

Practice C

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

District Response: Stakeholders feel that current resources are effective, but would like to see additional resources available to both AIG specialists and general education teachers.

A system-wide list of research-based supplemental resources to augment curriculum and instruction is available.

AIG specialists and the AIG Coordinator will continue to work to identify resources currently available in schools and identify resource needs. A list of these resources and their locations will be distributed to the teachers in the district. Additionally, the AIG Coordinator has a collection of professional development materials addressing the needs of AIG students and how to meet those needs available for check-out.

Other Comments:

Practice D

Fosters the development of 21st century content and skills an advanced level.

District Response: Stakeholders feel the district continues to improve in this area. Additional resources will always continue to be investigated.

AIG Specialists are included in all professional development to facilitate opportunities for collaboration of unit and lesson planning, and development of curriculum audits and pacing guides. AIG specialists design activities to foster students' collaborative and critical thinking skills as well as incorporate a variety of technologies into units and lessons. Additionally, students have the opportunity to participate in Science Olympiad, Battle of the Books, Science Fair and other extra-curricular activities.

Other Comments:

Practice E

Uses on-going assessment, both formative and summative, to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction and inform flexible grouping practices.

District Response: Although there are many forms of data available to schools, the district has identified a need to be consistent in data literacy to inform instruction.

All teachers participate in data literacy training as part of school professional learning communities (PLCs) to become proficient in using data to inform instruction and provide differentiation.

The district has access to state testing results, summative and formative classroom assessment, survey results, self-assessments, EVAAS, and benchmarking data to inform instructional decisions for differentiation. Professional Development in data literacy will be provided to encourage consistent and effective use of these data.

Other Comments:

Practice F

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

District Response: Jackson County Schools recognizes that often AIG students have unique social and/or emotional needs that affect their learning. In an effort to meet the diverse needs of all AIG students, including those with different socio-emotional levels, learning styles, and those who may be at risk, the system has established a plan to recognize and nurture the unique socio-emotional needs of gifted learners. This plan includes increased communication between the AIG Specialists and content area teachers, as well as guidance counselors and other school personnel. A variety of services are available throughout the district to address emotional needs, career planning, and interventions for students who may be at risk for academic achievement. AIG students have access to school counselors and Jackson County Psychological Services while at school.

Highly gifted students may be considered for grade skipping/grade acceleration/double promotion. Only those students who score at the 98 or 99 percentile on both achievement and aptitude tests will be considered for this learning environment option. Such students are typically performing two grade levels above their same age peers and may be better served in an educational setting that is developmentally more appropriate. These students will be considered for grade acceleration only after exhibiting a desire to be so accelerated. In addition, a profile of the student's social-emotional maturity must be completed. All other service delivery options must have been considered before this learning option is available. If a highly gifted student is being considered for double promotion (grade skipping), the school psychologist will be consulted.

For more information regarding grade acceleration, consult the following: The Academic Acceleration

of Gifted Children, W. Thomas Southern and Eric D. Jones, eds., Teachers College Press/Columbia University, NY, copyright 1991 and Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom, Susan Winebrenner, Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis MN, copyright 1992.

At the middle school level, both individual and group counseling become critical, particularly for students experiencing identity and adjustment problems. Small group sessions with gifted students that address their unique needs have proven highly successful. Establishing mentor programs have also proven to be effective in helping such students develop self-esteem, set higher aspirations, make appropriate secondary course selections, and develop career plans.

The NC Standard Course of Study promotes awareness of social issues such as bullying and good decision making. Fifth grade students participate in D.A.R.E. and middle grade students benefit from the partnership with the Jackson County Health Department and their Wise Guys/Smart Girls program.

At the secondary level, individual post-secondary and career planning becomes essential. Opportunities for academic planning, career guidance and college preparation are made available for gifted learners. Career and Technical Education teachers, Career Development Coordinator, and school counselors are involved in working with AIG students regarding the development of their four-year plans as these students select their career pathways and conduct career and college searches.

Gifted learners are provided with differentiated guidance services to meet unique socio-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.

District Response: Jackson County Public Schools is committed to informally identifying students of high intellectual/academic potential in grades K-3. Students are informally identified using multiple indicators, in conjunction with biannual state-wide assessments, systematic observations, portfolio assessments, work samples, and teacher interviews. The informal identification is dynamic and flexible and will include students from special populations.

Differentiation occurs in the classroom by varying content, process, product and environment and is reflected in advanced learning experiences and enrichment opportunities. Because of the flexible nature of the identification process, students have the opportunity to move between various groups.

Other Comments:

Practice H

Collaborates with AIG personnel and other professional staff, including regular education teachers, special education teachers, other instructional staff, and administrators, to develop and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction.

District Response: All teachers who teach gifted students will use differentiated instruction to accommodate the strengths and needs of students identified as AIG. Each AIG specialist will assist general classroom teachers with ideas for differentiation strategies. AIG specialists will use formative and summative assessments to monitor student understanding and achievement.

In accordance with board policy, all teachers have a planning period. It is the school administration's responsibility to ensure there is development of differentiated curricula and programs. The district provides teachers with the ability of electronic sharing of lessons, units, strategies, and other resources.

All teachers in the district participate in district initiative training and training of the NC Standard Course of Study; during these trainings, AIG and general education teachers work together to develop curriculum. The district has identified a need for consistent use of PLCs across the district to best ensure the identification of research-based best practice to meet all student needs.

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

District Response: Each AIG specialist develops a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) for every identified student that includes the differentiated curriculum and services. Each year, AIG specialists meet with parents and students to review and revise the DEP at the beginning of the school year. AIG specialists meet with parents and students on an annual basis to review and revise the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). Support and training will be provided to AIG specialists in developing DEPs. An AIG Reference Manual has been developed to assist in the Identification and Placement processes. To ensure consistency of paperwork across the district, the AIG coordinator will spot check folders of newly placed AIG students.

Other Comments:

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: •More time for collaboration and planning between AIG

specialist from different schools and for AIG specialist with regular classroom teachers in their home school.

- Attendance of AIG specialist to the National AIG conference during the 2016/2017 school year in Charlotte.
- Add curriculum links on AIG webpage or curriculum website for teachers.

Sources of Evidence: •Teacher evaluations

- Student work samples
- Teacher lesson plans
- Differentiation strategies documented during teacher observation
- Schedule of professional development
- Individual student DEPs
- List of system-wide resources
- AIG professional "library" for teacher access
- Curriculum Audits
- Participation in extra-curricular activities
- Technology access for AIG students
- Sign-in sheets and agendas for PLCs
- Freshmen Academy and other transition programs
- AIG student record folders

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.

District Response: The district AIG Coordinator should be licensed or collaborate with a group of licensed specialist to do the following tasks:

- Guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program
- Ensure compliance with state and local regulations, policies, and procedures
- Oversee budget and materials selection
- Coordinate professional development
- Provided consultative services for staff and community
- Evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the local AIG program with all stakeholders

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.

District Response: AIG specialist serve AIG students in Jackson County in many ways. They directly provide learning opportunities to AIG students that research shows promotes student success and achievement, as well as provide continual support to classroom teachers of gifted students. AIG specialists model and act as experts for differentiation strategies that are effective in the classroom. They also work with families, students, and other school staff to impact AIG students' social and emotional needs.

Learning Environments

No subject has received more attention recently in education than the subject of homogeneous vs. heterogeneous grouping. The grouping of students has been severely attacked as promoting tracking, separatism, discriminatory practices, and disparity of program opportunities. The effect of grouping on students has, however, been found to be positive by some researchers [Kulik and Kulik (1991), Rogers (1981), Fedheusen (1990)]. Jackson County Public Schools serves students through both "pull-out" homogeneous groups typically in grades three through eight and through a mostly consultative model in grades nine through thirteen using heterogeneous grouping. AIG students will

be placed in a classroom with an AIG certified teacher when one is available.

Content Differentiation

Four ways to differentiate content are described by Gallagher in Teaching the Gifted Child (1994).

- Content acceleration-Students are provided advanced materials that match their level of performance regardless of their grade placement.
- Content enrichment-Students are provided with a variety of materials or resources that elaborate upon the basic concepts being taught in the regular program.
- Content sophistication-Students are provided more complex materials that would allow them to see the larger system of ideas and concepts related to the basic content.
- Content novelty-Students are introduced to completely different materials that are not necessarily provided in the regular curriculum.

All of these methods have been proven effective in both heterogeneous and homogeneous classes.

Enrichment

It is important to stimulate interests and develop potential in all students at all levels. Many students have highly developed interests that need appropriate outlets for expression. At the elementary and middle school level, interest development might occur through classroom centers, special activities and projects, special mini-courses, and enrichment clusters. At the secondary level, interests and talents are further expanded through special elective courses and opportunities for independent investigation of topics of interest through seminars, mentoring, and internships.

Social/Emotional Guidance and Counseling

Jackson County Schools recognizes that often AIG students have unique social and/or emotional needs that affect their learning. In an effort to meet the diverse needs of all AIG students, including those with different socio-emotional levels, learning styles, and those who may be at risk, the system has established a plan to recognize and nurture the unique socio-emotional needs of gifted learners. This plan includes increased communication between the AIG Specialists and content area teachers, as well as guidance counselors and other school personnel. A variety of services are available throughout the district to address emotional needs, career planning, and interventions for students who may be at risk for academic achievement.

If a highly gifted student is being considered for double promotion (grade skipping), the school psychologist will be consulted. At the middle school level, both individual and group counseling become critical, particularly for students experiencing identity and adjustment problems. Small group sessions with gifted students that address their unique needs have proven highly successful. Establishing mentor programs for both minority students and underachievers has also proven to be effective in helping such students develop self-esteem, set higher aspirations, make appropriate secondary course selections, and develop career plans.

At the secondary level, individual post-secondary and career planning becomes essential. Opportunities for academic planning, career guidance and college preparation are made available for

gifted learners. Workforce development teachers and vocational counselors are involved in working with AIG students regarding the development of their four-year plans as these students select their career pathways and conduct career and college searches using the internet.

Gifted learners are provided with differentiated guidance services to meet unique socio-emotional development. All JCPS teachers are encouraged to refer underachieving gifted students for counseling services with the schools' guidance counselors and/or contract services.

Other Comments:

Practice C

Establishes specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, special education teachers, counselors, and school administrators.

District Response: Differentiation training has been developed and offered to general education teachers based on survey results of teacher need. However, stakeholders would like to see some type of professional development requirements for secondary teachers of honors courses. It is the responsibility of the AIG specialists, administrators and guidance counselors to provide the necessary requirements for the implementation of a successful AIG program. Jackson County Public Schools, along with colleges/universities, and professional development providers such as WRESA and NCDPI Division of Educator Effectiveness, work together to support professional development opportunities for the gifted programs. AIG specialist are required to maintain or be seeking AIG certification for their North Carolina teaching license through coursework and professional development (to maintain). Recent key district initiatives, such as Marzano's Classroom Strategies That Work, provide differentiation strategies, are required of all teachers and are monitored by principals. Differentiation professional development will continue to be offered to any interested teacher, counselor or school administrator. AIG specialists work with their school to provide annual professional development of recognizing key characteristics of AIG students and strategies for differentiating for AIG students.

Other Comments:

Practice D

Places AIG students in general education classrooms with teachers who have earned an AIG add-on license from an Institute of Higher Education (IHE) or who have met the LEA's professional development requirements for that position.

District Response: Stakeholders have identified the need to address more intentional placement of students with teachers who have AIG add-on licensure.

- The AIG Coordinator will work with HR to identify general education teachers holding AIG add-on licensure
- The AIG Coordinator will work with principals in scheduling students with teachers holding AIG add-on licensure

All AIG specialists in K-8 are AIG certified. There currently is no requirement for secondary teachers of Honors or AP classes to hold such certification. However, there are five AIG certified teachers at Smoky Mountain High School, and one at Jackson County Early College.

A plan will be established to determine LEA requirements for teachers teaching Honors or AP classes.

Other Comments:

Practice E

Aligns professional development opportunities with local AIG program goals, other district initiatives, and best practices in gifted education.

District Response: System-wide professional development ensures inclusion of intentional instruction on the needs of AIG, EC, and ESL students.

Jackson County Public Schools conducts a yearly comprehensive needs assessment that encompasses many data, including demographic, geographic, survey, attendance, graduation, and disaggregated formative and summative assessments. As part of this needs assessment, individual subgroup data are analyzed for trends. The results from the comprehensive needs assessment are used to guide the development of the district improvement plan and professional development. All district initiatives and district provided professional development include instruction on the needs of the gifted, exceptional children, and students for whom English is a second language.

Other Comments:

Practice F

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

District Response: Through the district comprehensive needs assessment, the need for true professional learning communities (PLCs) throughout the district has been identified.

The AIG Coordinator will facilitate the development of quarterly PLCs for AIG specialists.

Quarterly AIG PLCs will be scheduled at the district office for data analysis, reflection on professional practice, and planning future steps. Efforts will be made to incorporate the use of technology to allow for collaboration between PLCs to continue.

Other Comments:

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: •Communication to ensure all stakeholders know who the AIG specialist is in each school.

- More collaborative planning with classroom teachers.
- More focus on addressing social and emotional needs of students.
- Increased communication with school counselors.
- School counselors should be supplied a list of all AIG students each year.
- Develop local professional development requirements for honors and advanced placement teachers (especially in math and language arts).
- Budget for all AIG specialist who wish to attend, to attend the National AIG conference in Charlotte in November 2017.
- School scheduling evaluation to focus in interventions and enrichment.
- More frequent PLC meetings (digitally and face-to-face).

Sources of Evidence: •AIG specialist job description and duties

- AIG coordinator job description and duties
- Agendas from professional development activities
- Professional development needs survey results
- AIG student schedules and assignments of classes
- Smart Lunch opportunities for high school students

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 classroom environments, grade levels, and settings.

District Response: All AIG specialists have AIG licensure or are completing course work to obtain licensure and are trained in meeting the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners. Local professional development on these skills is made available to general education teachers.

AIG services, including differentiation, will be delivered across all grade levels and settings through:

- On-going training of all teachers in research-based system initiatives such as Marzano's Classroom Strategies that Work and Direct Vocabulary Instruction, that incorporate differentiation into all classrooms, and
- Use of the Teacher Evaluation Instrument to document differentiation occurring in the classroom.

Introduction to the Program Service Options Grid

Planning grids have been developed for the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Each grid outlines service options for each of the categories of gifted learners. (See the Program Service Options Appendix B.)

Content Differentiation

Four ways to differentiate content are described by Gallagher in Teaching the Gifted Child (1994).

- Content acceleration-Students are provided advanced materials that match their level of performance regardless of their grade placement.
- Content enrichment-Students are provided with a variety of materials or resources that elaborate upon the basic concepts being taught in the regular program.
- Content sophistication-Students are provided more complex materials that would allow them to see the larger system of ideas and concepts related to the basic content.
- Content novelty-Students are introduced to completely different materials that are not necessarily provided in the regular curriculum.

Specific ways the differentiated content might be delivered are presented in the Program Service Options grids. All of these methods have been proven effective in both heterogeneous and homogeneous classes.

Enrichment

It is important to stimulate interests and develop potential in all students at all levels. Many students have highly developed interests that need appropriate outlets for expression. At the elementary and middle school level, interest development might occur through classroom centers, special activities and projects, special mini-courses, and enrichment clusters. At the secondary level, interests and talents are further expanded through special elective courses and opportunities for independent investigation of topic of interest through seminars, mentoring and internships. AIG students are also encouraged to participate in extra-curriculum activities such as Battle of the Books, Science Olympiad, and Robotics.

Support Services

Social/Emotional Guidance and Counseling

Jackson County Schools recognizes that often AIG students have unique social and/or emotional needs that affect their learning. In an effort to meet the diverse needs of all AIG students, including those with different socio-emotional levels, learning styles, and those who may be at risk, the system has established a plan to recognize and nurture the unique socio-emotional needs of gifted learners. This plan includes increased communication between the AIG Specialists and content area teachers, as well as guidance counselors.

At the secondary level, individual post-secondary and career planning becomes essential.

Opportunities for academic planning, career guidance and college preparation are made available for gifted learners. Workforce development teachers and vocational counselors are involved in working with AIG students regarding the development of their four-year plans as these students select their career pathways and conduct career and college searches using the internet.

Other Comments:

Practice B

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

District Response: All AIG specialists have their AIG licensure or are completing coursework to obtain licensure and are trained in meeting the academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted learners. DEPs are developed to address program placement aligned with needs and identified areas of placement.

The Jackson County Board of Education is committed to meeting the needs of all students. AIG funding is utilized to fund at least a half-time AIG specialist at each elementary school, and to fund AIG licensed specialists at the high schools. Pull-out programs at the elementary/middle level serve students based on the content area license of the AIG specialist. Currently, pull-out students are served in the area of English Language Arts. General education teachers provide differentiation in math in grades 4-6. Students identified as Academically Gifted in Math (AM), benefit from advanced math classes, Advanced 7th grade math in seventh grade and Math I in eighth, when they reach middle school. Students identified as Intellectually Gifted (IG) will receive differentiated support in

organization and application to academics.

All teachers who teach gifted students will use differentiated instruction to accommodate the strengths and needs of students identified as AIG. Each AIG specialist will provide general classroom teachers with differentiation strategies. AIG specialists will use multiple assessments and evaluation tools for monitoring student understanding and achievement. It is the school's responsibility to provide alternative assessments to meet these requirements.

Other Comments:

Practice C

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

District Response: LINKS TO OTHER SYSTEM WIDE EFFORTS

It is essential that programming for AIG students be linked to other school system initiatives. In Jackson County Public Schools, direct linkage is provided in the following ways:

Planning

All Jackson County Schools have School Improvement Plans. Based on the Effective Schools Correlates and the Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems criteria, these plans include goals and strategies which address the needs of all students including those identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted.

Professional Development

The AIG Plan is supported by professional development activities. Professional development funds may be used to instruct educators in the techniques necessary to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the AIG plan. Professional development will be necessary in order to communicate, implement, and evaluate the plan.

Personnel

In the Jackson County Public School System, each school has access to the AIG Coordinator who consults with principals and classroom teachers and coordinates the program for gifted students. In addition, each school has an AIG teacher on staff who works with students, teachers, and parents.

Technology

The Jackson County Public Schools' Technology Plan emphasizes basic computer competencies and the extension and enrichment of computer and other technological skills. Access to various modes of technology affords students the opportunity to work at an individual level and pace; academic and enrichment software may be used to offer extended curriculum for gifted students.

Scheduling

Block scheduling helps provide time and opportunities for extension and integration of curriculum. AIG students in elementary schools participate in pull-out programs to receive direct services from an AIG specialist.

Curricular Issues

The curriculum must meet the needs of all students including higher performing students. Curriculum alignment with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and enhancing instructional time in all academic areas is emphasized. Differentiated Educational Plans (DEP) for students identified as AIG will define curriculum differentiation for each student.

Extra-Curricular Activities

An array of extra-curricular activities is available for AIG students. These activities serve to support and enrich the existing curriculum as well as to develop students' higher order thinking abilities and problem-solving skills.

Student Assessment

A strong student assessment program is in place for students in grades K-12. Formative assessment instruments include the North Carolina K-2 Math assessments, K-3 Reading 3D assessments, and district benchmarks. Summative assessments include the North Carolina Testing Program for grades 3-12 which is comprised of End-of-Grade (EOG), End-of-Course (EOC), NC Final Exams and Advanced Placement tests. These tests also provide a means to assess the continuous progress of AIG students.

AIG Program Evaluation/Review

The Jackson County Public Schools AIG Plan requires a program review. This evaluation will provide opportunity for reflection and assessment of the progress toward program goals. Based on the assessment, program modifications may be made.

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.

District Response: The Jackson County Public Schools AIG Advisory Board is made up of AIG specialists, teachers, parents, community members, and the AIG coordinator. The Advisory Board participates in the review, evaluation, and development of the local AIG Plan. Plan development is offered for review to the public via emailed invitations and information on the district webpage. The plan posted on the district website.

Each school has an AIG Needs Determination Team (AIG NDT) that meets to make determinations concerning student placement in the AIG program and provide input into the annual DEPs at each

school. Each AIG Specialist provides the AIG NDT with information concerning placement procedures and criteria to facilitate the most informed decisions.

The AIG Coordinator participates in all professional development planning for the system. This ensures the integration of AIG program standards in all curriculum and PD.

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.

District Response: AIG specialists annually meet with the faculties of their schools to inform them of screening, identification, and placement procedures for the AIG program. General education teacher participate in the development of the DEPs for the students they serve. AIG specialist at the elementary level meet with eighth grade students to help develop high school schedules and discuss the AIG program at the high school level. Additionally, all eighth grade students participate in freshman orientation and school visitation.

The AIG Coordinator will be facilitating AIG PLCs to allow for discussion about service and opportunities between schools.

Other Comments:

Practice F

Facilitates collaboration among school counseling personnel, regular education teachers, AIG specialists, and others to address the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

District Response: Each school has an AIG Needs Determination Team (AIG NDT) that meets to make determinations concerning student placement in the AIG program and provide input into the annual DEPs at each school. The AIG NDT is made up of AIG specialist, a school administrator, and general education teachers. Additional members may be added as needed such as; school counselor, special education teacher, and ESL teachers. The school counselor is especially important to help address the social and emotional needs of AIG students and should be included in DEP meetings as frequently as possible.

Jackson County Public Schools has a clearly outlined plan for meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners allowing referrals from school personnel, parents, or students themselves.

Social/Emotional Guidance and Counseling

The Jackson County school system is cognizant of and supports the affective domain of gifted students. When social and emotional issues are addressed and social and emotional needs are met, students face their challenges with emotional balance and appropriate coping mechanisms that promote success in reaching personal potential (Roeper 1995). The school utilizes the services of the Guidance and Counseling personnel in this endeavor. All JCPS teachers are encouraged to refer underachieving gifted students for counseling services. All AIG specialists, as well as the AIG coordinator, endeavor to pay special heed to the social-emotional needs of their students.

The system recognizes that often AIG students have unique social and/or emotional needs that affect their learning. In an effort to meet the diverse needs of all AIG students, including those with different socio-emotional levels, learning styles, and those who may be at risk, the system has established a plan to recognize and nurture the unique socio-emotional needs of gifted learners. This plan includes increased communication between the AIG specialists and content area teachers, as well as guidance counselors and other school personnel. A variety of services are available throughout the district to address emotional needs, career planning, and interventions for students who may be at risk for academic achievement.

Other Comments:

Practice G

Articulates and implements opportunities for acceleration, including compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, subject and/or grade acceleration when an appropriate body-of-evidence indicates the need.

District Response: Compacted Content and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

Students may request the opportunity to show proficiency for a course and earn credit for a course through participation in the North Carolina Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) program. Interested students must contact their school counselor to begin the process for consideration for CDM in either the fall or spring semester. A school team will be compiled to evaluate the student for the CDM credit and course credit will be recognized if awarded.

Subject Acceleration

Highly gifted students may be considered for subject acceleration for a single subject without grade acceleration when determined appropriate by the student's DEP team. This provides opportunities for advanced learning without removal from the students peer group for the entire day. Thus, avoiding social and emotional concerns that may occur with full grade acceleration.

Grade Acceleration/Double Promotion

Highly gifted students may be considered for grade skipping/grade acceleration/double promotion. Only those students who score at the 98 or 99 percentile on both achievement and aptitude tests will

be considered for this learning environment option. Such students are typically performing two grade levels above their same age peers and may be better served in an educational setting that is developmentally more appropriate. These students will be considered for grade acceleration only after exhibiting a desire to be so accelerated. In addition, a team of professionals will be assembled to complete the Iowa Acceleration Scale to determine the appropriateness of acceleration and make planning decisions. The members of the team will include, but not be limited to: principal, parents, current teacher, potential receiving teacher, AIG Coordinator, school counselor, etc. All other service delivery options must have been considered before this learning option is available.

Jackson County Schools will follow state board policy for early entry to Kindergarten.

Other Comments:

Practice H

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

District Response: IDEPs are developed for twice-exceptional students.

AIG specialist will continue to be trained in recognizing and providing services to under-represented populations in ways that best meet their needs.

Jackson County Public Schools continues to develop a programming plan for differentiation to meet the needs of ELL students which should include:

- Collaborate with the Jackson County Schools English as Second Language (ESL) Coordinator to provide guidance and resources for programming.
- Explore AIG programming for ELL students in other LEAs
- Examine system data to determine trends for ELLs

Other Comments:

Practice I

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

District Response: Extra-curricular programs are encouraged and broadly disseminated through school newsletters, the Jackson County Public Schools Website and social media. AIG specialist in schools encourage students to participate in extra-curricular programs and events.

Examples of Enrichment Options*

Accelerated Reader
Art Club
Battle of the Books
Chess Club
Debate Club
Drama Club
Duke University Motivation for Academic Performance (MAP) Program
Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP)
Essay Contests
Foreign Language Club
Governor's School
History Day
National Youth Leadership Conferences
NC Legislature Page Program
Orchestra
Quiz Bowl
Robotics
Science Fair Competitions
Science Olympiad
Seminars
Summer Programs for Gifted Students
Tarheel Junior Historians
University Workshops

*Options may vary from year to year and by school

Other Comments:

Practice J

Utilizes intentional, flexible grouping practices to facilitate effective instruction and support the growth of AIG students.

District Response: Identified AIG students are grouped intentionally based upon their identification area, i.e. AG, AM, AR, IG, in elementary schools. This allows students to be served in their area of giftedness and work collaboratively with peers sharing their identification. Students are grouped flexibly in regular classrooms and within AIG classrooms based upon readiness, interest, and/or learner profiles.

Both the intentional and flexible groupings facilitate effective instruction that allows students to engage with peers and grow academically.

Other Comments:

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: •Continue to work toward equitable services at each school and shared resources.

- Continue to work to align gifted curriculum resources with LEA instructional programs.
- Develop an abridged AIG Handbook for teachers and administrators.
- Develop an AIG Quick Guide for teachers, administrators, and families.
- Continue to provide teachers with differentiation strategies.
- Develop programming guidance for students in need of advanced options.
- Establish school support teams or connect with already existing teams for other student groups.

Sources of Evidence: •DEPs/IDEPs

- Program descriptions
- Lesson plans
- Service Option Grid
- Meeting agendas and sign-in sheets
- Website postings
- Survey data
- Evidence of accelerations
- JCPS CDM website

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 following needs of AIG students:

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional.

District Response: Provisions are made for regular parent participation in the development of the annual Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) and the Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP). AIG specialists meet annually with parents of each student enrolled in the AIG Program to discuss the DEP and/or IDEP. Each school maintains an AIG Needs Determination Team that meets as needed to review student information and make determinations concerning placement and services. The AIG Advisory Board meets twice a year to serve in an advisory capacity and ensure the implementation and annual review of the local AIG Plan. The district maintains an AIG website, sharing information about the AIG program with parents and the community, including, screening, referral and identification procedures, the local AIG plan, and opportunities for students. News from classrooms and student accomplishments are submitted to the local newspaper, and an AIG brochure and letter is sent home to the family of each student prior to the mass screening explaining the AIG program.

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.

District Response: The AIG Advisory Board meets twice a year to serve in an advisory capacity and ensure the implementation and annual review of the local AIG Plan. The district maintains an AIG website where information about the AIG program is shared with parents and the community, including, screening, referral and identification procedures, the local AIG plan, and opportunities for students. News from classrooms and student accomplishments are submitted to the local newspaper for printing. An AIG brochure and letter is sent home to the family of each student prior to the mass screening.

Other Comments:

Practice C

Establishes and utilizes an advisory group to develop, implement, and monitor the local AIG program and plan. This advisory group is representative of the diverse populations of the district and is at least comprised of community members, AIG parents and families, AIG teachers, and other instructional and support staff.

District Response: Opportunities for the overall involvement of school community, parents, and local community representation in the ongoing implementation of the local plan, monitoring of meeting plan goals, and the integration of education services for gifted students are available for all stakeholders. A semi-annual review meeting of the AIG plan includes parents, community members and student representatives from each school in the district. Teachers identify special populations and extend invitations to parents and community members to serve as representatives in the planning process to ensure inclusion of underrepresented populations. Input and feedback is encouraged from all stakeholders. Amendments may be recommended as needed.

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.

District Response: Parents and community members are regularly informed about the education of gifted students in the school district through Jackson County Public Schools AIG brochure, AIG link on the system website, and semi-annual meetings of the AIG Stakeholder Committee. Translators from the ESL Program and community at large are provided for meetings as needed. Written translations of information and forms are available.

Additionally:

- Information regarding AIG opportunities can be sent to parents electronically
- AIG specialists will provide AIG Coordinator with accurate, up-to-date parent email list.

Other Comments:

Practice E

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

District Response: Jackson County Public Schools enjoys excellent working relationships with local

institutions of higher education, businesses and industry, and the community-at-large. To promote continued collaborations with these partners, JCPS will:

- Partner with Western Carolina University to share resources.
- Invite professors from Western Carolina University's AIG program to serve on the AIG Advisory Board.
- Develop a time/talent survey to be completed by stakeholders indicating areas of expertise that AIG specialists can access to supplement instruction in their classrooms.
- Make survey available at beginning of each academic year
- Have both paper and electronic copies of survey to increase likelihood of multiple responses.

Other Comments:

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: •Include opportunities for camps, etc. on JCPS AIG website.

- Include parents and community experts in curricular based activities.
- Publicize the AIG website in newsletters and other parent communications.
- Add information about the AIG Advisory Board to the JCPS AIG brochure.
- Continue to seek student representation on the AIG Advisory Board.
- Publicize the AIG Advisory Board meeting to all AIG parents including topic of meeting.

Sources of Evidence: •AIG Parent survey results

- AIG brochure
- AIG website
- AIG Advisory Board agendas and sign-in sheets
- Emails

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 to describe the local AIG program, in accordance with state legislation and SBE policy (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.5-.8 [Article 9B]), which has been approved by the LEA's school board and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

District Response: An AIG plan is completed with input from the AIG Advisory Board and submitted to the local Board of Education for approval.

The development of the AIG Plan is a cyclical process. All improvement begins with examining current status. This is done through a needs assessment. The AIG Advisory Board examines survey data, plan review/comment from DPI, and assessment data. Using the information from the needs assessment, committees complete the Self-Assessment and determine areas of improvement or change and strategies for impacting those practices. The local board of education approves the plan and it is submitted to DPI for review. As the plan is implemented, and annual review is conducted to determine if goals are still appropriate or need to be adjusted.

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.

District Response: Each year, the AIG Coordinator, AIG specialists, and other stakeholders, meet for the purpose of program and plan evaluation. Prior to that meeting, each participant reviews the AIG program goals and makes notes of any necessary plan/program changes, plan/program achievements, and/or plan/program areas for reflection. At the annual meeting, goal progress is reviewed, updated, and modified if necessary.

Every three years, the AIG plan/program as a whole is evaluated and necessary revisions to the plan [this document] are made. The revisions are then submitted to the Board of Education for approval, after which the revised plan is forwarded to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for further review and response if necessary.

Stakeholders can find the approved plan on the JCPS AIG website.

Other Comments:

Practice C

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

District Response: In order to maximize student services, the local board is committed to ensure at least a half –time AIG specialist at each school. All AIG state funds are used only for AIG staffing and programming needs. The majority of state AIG funds are used for salaries and benefits. Local money is also used to supplement as needed.

Jackson County Public Schools serve a total population of 3,749* students, of which 339* are currently identified and served as Academically and Intellectually Gifted. The allotment the Board of Education receives for PRC 034 is used to pay the salary and related benefits of 3.60 AIG specialists, reimbursement for teachers seeking AIG Add-on Licensure, and supplies and materials, including testing supplies. The specialists paid with these funds teach students who are identified pursuant to the plan required by G.S. 115C-150.7. In addition, the Board of Education partially funds two AIG teaching positions with local funding, provides reimbursement for AIG teachers working toward AIG Add-on Licensure, supplies and materials, and pays for web-based subscriptions.

*The numbers indicating JCPS student population and AIG headcount are current as of March 22, 2016.

Other Comments:

Practice D

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

District Response: When annual student achievement, student growth, and drop-out information is provided by the state, the AIG Coordinator will disaggregate the data to show trend information. This information will be discussed with school administrators, AIG specialist, school counselors, and the AIG Advisory Group. Discussion of disaggregated performance and drop-out data is part of the monitoring of the local AIG program and plan.

Other Comments:

Practice E

Monitors the representation, performance, 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.

District Response: Mass screening of all third and sixth grade students is accomplished each spring using the Naglieri Non-verbal Ability Test (NNAT). This test was selected because of its culture-fair format, allowing for reliable and valid evaluation of the ability of students from many backgrounds. Referrals for AIG evaluation are addressed during two testing windows each year (spring and fall). Referrals can be made by parents, teachers, and students, allowing for diversity in placement decisions.

The AIG Coordinator will maintain data regarding referral and identification trends based on student demographics.

Retention is addressed most frequently at the high school level through course and career counseling. In Jackson County Public Schools we notice a trend of students from under-represented populations not continuing on the path of advanced course-work (honors and AP classes) throughout the completion of high school. During this plan cycle we will research and implement strategies to encourage these students to remain in advanced classes.

Other Comments:

Practice F

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

District Response: The AIG Coordinator will review with the Personnel Director the credentials of all AIG Specialists at the beginning of each academic year. A list of regular classroom teachers with AIG certification will be kept annually.

Other Comments:

Practice G

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

District Response: To elicit feedback from our stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the JCPS AIG program the following steps will be taken:

- Distribute a stakeholder survey every other year that can be completed on either a paper form or on-line.
- AIG Specialists will have students complete an exit survey whenever they leave the AIG program, except in the case of graduation.
- Evaluate how surveys are distributed to ensure maximum results
- Stakeholders will review former survey questions and determine their appropriateness. Other

questions will be developed if needed.

- Utilize free web-based survey site on which to post system survey
- Notify stakeholders of upcoming survey through posts on website, ConnectED, and written notices home, to ensure large response
- Include the exit survey in the AIG specialist notebook and provide direction during yearly training on the use of the survey.

Other Comments:

Practice H

Utilizes multiple sources of data to review and revise the local AIG program and plan during comprehensive program evaluation.

District Response: Meetings of the AIG Advisory Group are held twice a year to allow for review of the program. Meetings are held at a time to allow for stakeholder involvement. Data sources for review include stakeholder surveys, summative assessments, referral and placement in AIG program, DEPs, and graduation and drop-out rates for AIG students. The JCPS plan is revised as needed to ensure continuous improvement.

Other Comments:

Practice I

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

District Response: The newly developed AIG website will be used to disseminate plan evaluation information and data. Information will also be sent via emails, ConnectED calls, school newsletters, etc.

Other Comments:

Practice J

Safeguards the rights of all AIG students and their parents and families through established written policies, procedures, and practices. The LEA plan includes: informed consent regarding identification and placement, reassessment procedures, transfers from other LEAs, and procedures for resolving disagreements.

District Response: Informed consent is necessary for identification and placement into the AIG program. Students who place into the AIG program while enrolled as a JCPS student will not be

removed from the headcount based on academic performance changes unless requested by parent. Students in grades 4-8 wishing to remain in the AIG program but receive services in the general education classroom will request a meeting of the AIG Needs Determination Team (NDT) at their school. The AIG NDT will review all student data, including any information provided by the student, and consider the request. If the request is granted, an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) will be developed for the student to be implemented within the general education class.

Students who transfer to JCPS from another school in North Carolina with documented AIG placement criteria will be added to the JCPS headcount and the AIG NDT will evaluate the student and determine services. Transfer students without documented AIG placement criteria and transfer students from out of state may be evaluated during the off-grade level windows in the spring and fall of each school year.

Newly enrolled children of military families will abide by local board policy 4155 and will continue to be served by AIG.

JACKSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Procedure to Disagree

LEVEL I – School Site Grievance Procedure

When the parents or any person, organization, or agency acting on the behalf of a child fails to agree on the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or educational services of a child, a written complaint should be submitted to the Grievance Committee of the school in which the child is enrolled. The school Grievance Committee will be composed of the AIG Needs Determination Team, the Coordinator of AIG Services, parent(s), and the principal of the school who will chair the committee.

Step 1 – A written grievance should be submitted at least 48 hours before the regularly scheduled AIG Needs Determination Team meeting is scheduled.

Step 2 – If no regular meeting is scheduled, there should be a called meeting within the next five school days.

Step 3 – If the grievance is not resolved, the written complaint and the minutes from the local grievance committee should be submitted to the Jackson County Administrative Grievance Committee for further action.

LEVEL II – Jackson County Administrative Grievance Review

If the disagreement is not resolved at the school site, the parent may appeal in writing to the Coordinator of Academically and Intellectually Gifted Services who will convene the Jackson County Administrative Committee composed of the superintendent or assistant superintendent, a school board member, and a school administrator not involved in the dispute. The Coordinator of Academically and Intellectually Gifted Services will serve as an ex-officio member. They will review the case and respond to the parents and principal in writing within ten days of receipt of the appeal.

Representatives from the child's school, such as the AIG teacher, school administrators, guidance counselor, member of local grievance committee, and/or classroom teachers, may choose to attend

the meeting and present information or answer questions. The party bringing the grievance may come to the meeting to present clarification of the written grievance and answer questions the committee may have.

The Jackson County Grievance Committee will meet on an as-needed basis. The chairman of the committee will respond in writing to the complainant within five days of the meeting.

LEVEL III – Appeal to Board of Education

If agreement is not reached through the Jackson County Grievance Committee, the parents(s) may appeal in writing to the Jackson County Board of Education who will hear the complaint in closed session at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

LEVEL IV - Mediation

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

LEVEL V – Administrative Law Hearing

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

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

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The Jackson County Board of Education affirms the principle that every student-regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, cultural or economic background, or disability-should be given an equal educational opportunity for educational development. Further, no student, on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood, will be excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity conducted by the district. The school district will treat its students without discrimination in regard to course offerings, athletics, counseling, employment assistance and extracurricular activities.

Any student, parent, or guardian who feels that this policy has been misinterpreted, misapplied, or violated may file a grievance in accordance with Board Policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure.

The Title IX Coordinator is:

Dr. Kim Elliott, Assistant Superintendent
Jackson County Public Schools
398 Hospital Road
Sylva, NC 28779
(828) 586-2311 ext. 1933

Other Comments:

Ideas for Strengthen the Standard: •Develop an AP Academy or similar certificate to recognize students completing at least 4 AP courses.

- Develop a certificate for students completing at least 4 Dual-Enrollment college level courses.
- Continue to seek non-parents to participate in the Advisory Group as community members.
- Continue to improve survey questions and how the data is reviewed.
- Develop brochure including parents and students rights.
- Actively support under-represented populations to remain active in the AIG program throughout high school.
- Continue to encourage honors and AP teachers to seek AIG certification.
- Continue to offer local professional development on differentiation for all teachers.

Sources of Evidence: •AIG Advisory Board agendas and sign-in sheets

- AIG Survey results
- Disaggregate EOG/EOC data
- Dropout data
- Budget spreadsheets
- Purchase orders from PRC 034
- JCPS AIG website

Glossary (optional):

Appendix (optional):

PROGRAM SERVICE OPTIONS Appendix A.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 4*)