

**Randolph County School System**  
**Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan**  
**Effective 2019-2022**

**Approved by local Board of Education on:**

**LEA Superintendent's Name:** Stephen Gainey

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**Submitted to NC Department of Public Instruction on:**

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The Randolph County School System has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018). These standards serve as a statewide framework and guide Local Education Agencies (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 2019-2022. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's Board of Education and sent to NC DPI for comment.

***For 2019-2022, the Randolph County School System local AIG plan is as follows:***

**Randolph County School System AIG Program Vision:**

The vision of the RCSS AIG Program is to provide a comprehensive K-12 program that is aligned with the total school community. The identification process is one that affords all students equitable access to demonstrate potential giftedness. Students receive differentiated instruction that meets their individual, unique academic and social-emotional learning needs. Assessment data are used to cluster and/or flexibly group students through a variety of service options in order for students to maximize their learning. Students are exposed to an accelerated curriculum that is rigorous, challenging, and extends and/or enriches their learning beyond mastery level of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study standards. Personnel who work directly with AIG students demonstrate a deep understanding of the characteristics and unique needs (academic and social-emotional learning) of gifted learners, and plan instruction that is grounded in evidence-based AIG strategies, resources, and practices. Extra-curricular opportunities at the school and/or district level and experiences through partnerships with institutes of higher education, businesses/industries, and community and/or faith-based organizations afford gifted students opportunities to explore in depth their academic areas of expertise, personal interests/passions, and potential adult careers. Future Ready Skills (4Cs: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity) are integrated into instructional planning for gifted learners in order to prepare students for post-secondary education experiences and/or adult careers.

**Sources of funding for local AIG program (as of 2019)**

<b>State Funding</b>	<b>Local Funding</b>	<b>Grant Funding</b>	<b>Other Funding</b>
<b>\$897107.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

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## Standard 1: Student Identification

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

### Practice A

Develops screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels

### District Response:

#### Screening:

The Randolph County School System Academically/Intellectually Gifted Program screening and referral process for all grade levels is comprehensive, consistent, and equitable. RCSS is committed to a screening process that affords multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate potential giftedness and to be identified as Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted.

The district's formal screening process occurs at grades 3 and 5. RCSS annually administers the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), a nationally-normed aptitude test measuring learned reasoning abilities in specific areas linked to school success, to third and fifth graders. Screening fifth graders is a point of pride for RCSS, as students are formally screened prior to entering middle school. Third and fifth graders who score at the 85th percentile or higher on any of the three CogAT batteries of tests - Verbal, Quantitative, and or Nonverbal - comprise what the district refers to as the "pool" of students who automatically participate in the next step of the formal screening process. Once identified for further screening, parents/guardians receive "Permission to Test" forms to be signed and returned to the school's AIG Specialist.

**NOTE:** Forms are available in English and Spanish.

The second step of the screening process is the administration of an achievement test. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), a nationally-normed achievement test on grade level, is administered to students in the identified "pool," based on aptitude scores. Students scoring 90% or higher on the IOWA are recognized as demonstrating the potential for giftedness in one of three AIG pathways.

When deemed appropriate, alternative screening assessments such as the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT), the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), and district-developed assessments Performance Tasks are used for identification purposes. District Performance Tasks administered as alternative achievement assessments in Reading and/or Mathematics afford students who meet aptitude criteria, but score between 85%-89% on the IOWA achievement test, opportunities to demonstrate mastery through student work samples. Tasks are scored at the district level by AIG personnel from a school that is not the student's home school. Pre-established rubrics guide the decision-making process. Opportunities for a second evaluation of tasks are provided upon request on a case-by-case basis.

A district-developed K-2 Checklist and an Alternative Checklist, as well as the Slocumb-Payne Teacher Perception Inventory, the William and Mary Classroom Observation Scale, the Gifted Rating Scale, and subgroup data from the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA ACCESS), are utilized to identify students from under-represented populations for potential gifted identification. The use of alternative screening assessments and subgroup specific data ensure equity and access for under-represented populations of students such as those identified as English Learners (ELs),

Students With Disabilities/ Twice-Exceptional (SWD), and Economically Disadvantaged (ED).

**NOTE:** All screening data are recorded on the RCSS AIG Nomination Log utilized by individual AIG Specialists at their respective schools. Students who complete the initial screening process who do not meet RCSS criteria for identification may be considered for nurturing experiences provided by the AIG Specialist. AIG Specialists monitor the progress of all students who participate in the screening process, particularly those who do not meet identification criteria, in order to review academic progress from one grade to the next.

**NOTE:** End-of-Grade Reading and Mathematics data are reviewed annually for students listed on RCSS AIG Nomination Log who did not meet district criteria for identification. Scores of 90% or above on EOG Reading and/or Mathematics tests may be used as achievement test data for identification purposes.

### **Referrals:**

In addition to the annual screening windows for third and fifth graders, screening for potential gifted identification may occur at any grade level during designated times throughout the school year. Windows of time are designated in the fall and spring for additional screening opportunities for referred students. Referrals may be made by parents/guardians, teachers, or administrators. For K-2 students, a district checklist developed by the AIG Specialists team, in collaboration with the Director of Elementary and district K-5 Lead Teachers, is in place to determine if a referred K-2 student should be formally screened for potential gifted identification. AIG Specialists at grades 3-8 and high school counselors serving as AIG contacts utilize AIG nomination logs to collect aptitude and achievement data to determine if a referred student should be formally screened for potential gifted identification. RCSS is committed to offering multiple pathways and opportunities for students to be referred and screened for AIG identification.

### **Practice B**

Establishes a process and criteria for AIG student identification at all grade levels that provide multiple opportunities to reveal a student's aptitude, achievement, or potential to achieve. The criteria may include both qualitative and quantitative data in order to develop a comprehensive learner profile.

### **District Response:**

RCSS utilizes multiple data points including both quantitative and qualitative data to determine that a student's comprehensive learner profile shows a need beyond the regular education program. The following designations are used for students meeting RCSS criteria for identification:

**Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AI):** This designation is for students who demonstrate high intellectual (aptitude) and high achievement (academic) performance in the fields of Reading and/or Mathematics.

**Academically Gifted (AG):** This designation is for students who demonstrate high academic performance in a designated academic field (Reading and/or Mathematics).

**Intellectually Gifted (IG):** This designation is used for students who demonstrate high intellectual ability (aptitude), but have not yet demonstrated high academic performance.

**Grades K-2 Criteria for Identification:**

RCSS offers students in grades K-2 access to screening for potential identification of giftedness on a referral basis. To ensure equity and consistency, the district establishes two screening windows, one in the fall, and one in the spring, to conduct K-2 screening.

**NOTE:** Students in grades K-2 recommended for screening must meet the following criteria in order to be formally tested for potential identification:

- 1.Recommendation from parent/guardian/teacher/administrator
- 2.Score 85% or higher on the RCSS AIG K-2 Checklist (minimum of 36 points)
- 3.Must meet the following mCLASS designations:
  - \*K-2 reading levels at the time of screening (beginning, middle, end of year) should be at least one grade level above the expected proficient level at the time of screening.
  - \*K-2 Text Reading Comprehension (TRC) /Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS): students should score in the above proficient “blue” range.

**AI:**

- 97%-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT)
- 97%-99% standardized achievement test (IOWA)

**AG:**

- 85%-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT)
- 97%-99% standardized achievement test (IOWA)

**IG:**

- 97%-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT)
- Below 97% standardized achievement test (IOWA)

**Grades 3-5 Criteria for Identification:**

**AI:**

- 97%-99% standardized aptitude test: (CogAT): Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal
- 97%-99% standardized achievement test (IOWA): Reading and/or Mathematics

**AG:**

- 85%-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT): Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal
- 90%-99% standardized achievement test (IOWA): Reading and /or Mathematics

**IG:**

- 97-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT): Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal
- Below 90% standardized achievement test (IOWA): Reading and /or Mathematics

**NOTE:** Once the initial screening/identification process for grades 3-5 is complete, students who do not meet RCSS criteria for identification may be recommended for nurturing services provided by the AIG specialist at the school.

**Grades 6-8 for Identification Criteria:**

**AI:**

97-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT): Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal  
97-99% standardized achievement test (IOWA): Reading and/or Mathematics

**AG:**

85-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT): Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal  
90-99% standardized achievement test (IOWA): Reading and /or Mathematics

**IG:**

97%-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT): Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal  
Below 90% standardized achievement test (IOWA): Reading and /or Mathematics

**Grades 9-12 Criteria for Identification:**

**AI:**

97%-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT): Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal  
97%-99% standardized achievement test (IOWA): Reading and/or Mathematics

**AG:**

85%-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT): Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal  
90%-99% standardized achievement test (IOWA): Reading and/or Mathematics

**NOTE:** 90%-99% End of Course achievement test performance in English and/or Mathematics may be used as achievement criteria for Academically Gifted identification.

**IG:**

97-99% standardized aptitude test (CogAT): Total Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal  
Below 90% standardized achievement test (IOWA): Total Reading and/or Mathematics

**NOTE:** The AIG Program Specialist works collaboratively with the Director of Secondary Education, middle and high school counselors, career development coordinators, and other staff involved in the high school registration process. Students identified as gifted in grades 9-12 are strongly encouraged to enroll in rigorous courses of study that may include Honors/Advanced Placement courses across all subject areas including Career and Technical Education.

**Identification/Placement:**

Once the screening process is complete, the next step in the identification process involves the AIG Specialists (K-8) or the AIG Program Specialist (9-12) convening a School-Based AIG (SBC-AIG) Committee meeting. The purposes of the committee are to review initial screening data to determine potential gifted identification, complete required AIG identification paperwork, and initiate the development of the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). The DEP is a required document outlining gifted services, content modifications, and instructional programs or strategies to be implemented at the school level based on a student's area(s) of identification. Parents/guardians of any student not meeting RCSS criteria for identification receive a letter of notification.

Parents/guardians of any student meeting RCSS criteria for identification receive a letter of notification and are invited to a required SBC-AIG Committee meeting to review results of the screening/identification process and to develop a DEP for their identified student. Once required signatures are obtained, copies are shared with the parents/guardians and submitted to the district office of the AIG Program Specialist for review and approval. Upon review and approval of the required paperwork, data for identified students are entered into the North Carolina PowerSchool database.

**NOTE:** AIG Specialists are available upon request to discuss screening results with parents/guardians for any student not meeting RCSS criteria for identification.

**NOTE:** All RCSS AIG Screening/Identification and DEP documents are available in English and Spanish. Translators are available for SBC-AIG committee meetings.

**Transfer students:**

RCSS practices reciprocity with other NC school districts. Students identified as gifted who transfer to RCSS are scheduled into designated core classes with clusters of gifted students. When students identified as gifted transfer to RCSS from within NC, out-of-state, or alternative choices for schooling, AIG Specialists utilize the RCSS AIG Transfer form, which allows for a 30-day period of time for RCSS to request, process, and review academic records for transferring students. If the SBC-AIG Committee determines that aptitude and achievement data meet RCSS criteria for gifted identification, the committee will meet with parents/guardians to complete required paperwork for the transferring student. Should the SBC-AIG Committee determine that aptitude and achievement data do not meet RCSS criteria for gifted identification, RCSS may initiate the formal screening process.

**Early Admission to Kindergarten:**

RCSS complies with the state legislation [G.S. 115C-364(d)] allowing a child to enter kindergarten early if he/she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. When a parent/guardian of a student requests, the principal convenes a committee of professional educators that includes school staff, and may include the school level AIG Specialist and/or the AIG Program Specialist, and district staff to consider the required five factors as outlined in state policy to determine a student's eligibility to enter kindergarten as a four-year-old. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to present information required by state policy to the principals. Early admission to kindergarten does not automatically result in gifted identification.

**Grade Acceleration/Skipping:**

RCSS recognizes and uses the Iowa Acceleration Scale as a primary tool to guide educators in making important decisions regarding whether a student is a candidate for whole grade acceleration (grade skipping). The Iowa Acceleration Scale is administered to students by the school's AIG Specialist or other authorized staff. The principal convenes a committee of educators that includes school staff, and may include district staff and the school's AIG Specialist and/or the AIG Program Specialist, to review data from the Iowa Acceleration Scale and other relevant data to render a final decision regarding whole-grade acceleration. Grade acceleration/skipping does not automatically result in gifted identification.

### **Practice C**

Ensures AIG screening, referral, and identification procedures respond to 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:**

The percentage of identified students in RCSS remains constant at 10%. Subgroup data of identified students are comparable to the percentages of subgroups within the total school population. RCSS screening, referral, and identification procedures are responsive to under-represented populations of students. While formal screening procedures are in place for gifted identification, under-represented populations of students are afforded opportunities through alternative pathways to demonstrate potential giftedness. AIG Specialists work collaboratively with multiple district departments and school personnel to analyze, discuss, and review alternative sources of both quantitative and qualitative data for various subgroups of students.

When deemed appropriate, alternative cognitive assessments, such as the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, are available for use during the screening process. While RCSS recognizes 85% and above on the nonverbal battery of the CogAT, research supports the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) as a valid assessment, particularly for students challenged by language acquisition or verbal skills. District-developed alternative checklists and inventories such as the Slocumb-Payne Teacher Perception Inventory, the William and Mary Classroom Observation Scale, the Gifted Rating Scale, and subgroup data from specific assessments such as the World-class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA ACCESS) test, are also reviewed to identify students from under-represented populations for potential identification. "Local norming" allows the district to compare students who share similar characteristics in effort to identify the higher performing students from under-represented populations. The use of alternative assessments ensures that under-represented populations of students such as English Learners (ELs), Students with Disabilities/Twice-Exceptional (SWD), and Economically Disadvantaged (ED) students are treated equitably and are given access to the screening/identification process for gifted identification.

### **Practice D**

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

### **District Response:**

A point of pride for RCSS is that screening for potential gifted identification occurs in grades K-2, based upon a referral process, and annually for all third and fifth graders. Students are screened for aptitude and achievement. In addition to grade level screening at third and fifth grades, the district establishes a window of time in the fall and the spring, during which any student K-12 may be referred and screened. The establishment of screening windows in the fall and spring ensures equity and consistency and protects instructional time for AIG Specialists. A schedule for testing windows each semester is shared with stakeholders at the beginning of the year.

It is the responsibility of the AIG Specialist and the School-Based AIG (SBC-AIG) Committee to meet, to review all screening data, and to determine if students meet RCSS criteria for gifted identification. Once the committee reaches a decision, it is the responsibility of the AIG Specialist to notify the

parents/guardians of the committee's decision and to establish a time to meet with the committee to review the screening/identification process. The AIG Specialist notifies the parents/guardians of students who do not meet the criteria for gifted identification, and is available upon request to meet to review the screening/identification data and process.

Once the screening, referral, and identification process are complete, required documentation is submitted by the School-Based AIG Committee to the office of the AIG Program Specialist for district level review and approval. Upon review and approval of the required paperwork, data for identified students are entered into the North Carolina PowerSchool database. The AIG Program Specialist monitors district-developed AIG Nomination Logs maintained by AIG Specialists at their respective schools. Monitoring occurs during visits to schools, as well as during district AIG meetings. The AIG Program Specialist maintains copies of required signed documentation in a secure location, where internal monitoring/audits occur at the district level.

Throughout the implementation of the current plan, multiple steps are now in place to ensure equitable access to screening opportunities and screening process consistency across all schools. A revised district K-2 checklist more reflective of characteristics and needs of under-represented populations of students is in place to increase access to screening opportunities for students who through the formal screening process may not meet the criteria for gifted identification. The RCSS Alternative Placement form for grades 3-12 has also been revised to reflect current research on the characteristics and needs of under-represented populations of students. Included in the AIG form revision process are letters to parents/guardians. District-developed parent/guardian letters guarantee that families receive clear, concise, and consistent information regarding the screening and identification process.

Training is provided by the AIG Program Specialist for all K-8 AIG Specialists during required district workdays in August. Specialists are expected to provide training for all staff at their respective schools. The AIG Program Specialist meets annually with K-12 counselors, as well as district and school administrators, focusing on the screening, referral, and identification process for gifted identification.

**NOTE:** All RCSS AIG forms are accessible in English/Spanish electronically through a secure site, as well as notebooks with printed copies. The RCSS AIG Parent/Guardian Handbook is available in English/Spanish electronically through the district website, and printed copies are available at all schools. Administrators are encouraged to display and distribute copies of the handbook.

### **Practice E**

Disseminates information regarding the screening, referral, and identification processes to school personnel, parents/ families, students, and the community-at-large

### **District Response:**

The RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is accessible through the district website. Printed copies are distributed to all stakeholders, both formally through school events and informally by being displayed and available at strategic locations at the district office and school buildings. District and school staff are encouraged to share the plan and its connections to all programs, initiatives, and student experiences with parents/guardians, as well as community partners. Specific opportunities to share the plan include Open Houses, Parent Nights, Title I Parent Nights, and other school-sponsored events.

The AIG Program Specialist networks across all district departments, through senior leadership meetings, district instructional team meetings, and with community partners, to share the contents of the plan, particularly the screening, referral, and identification processes. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-2022 is to increase communication across all stakeholders through the district/school websites, social media (e.g. RCSS Twitter), the RCSS School Messenger phone system, and required newsletters/online communications from school-level AIG Specialists regarding the screening, referral, and identification processes for gifted identification. The RCSS AIG Parent/Guardian Handbook includes information for all stakeholders. A district-developed flow chart outlining the process will be made available for distribution to all stakeholders.

AIG Specialists across all schools are expected to provide training outlining the screening, referral, and identification processes at their respective schools. Training may occur face-to-face during faculty meetings and/or professional learning team meetings (PLTs), and/or may include a hybrid approach through online resources such as the district's online learning management system and/or video conferencing tools. Specialists' individual growth plan goals should include strategies for providing training for staff.

**NOTE:** Interpreters are available at district and school meetings/events.

#### **Practice F**

Documents a student's AIG identification process and evidence which leads to an identification decision. This documentation is reviewed with parents/families and maintained in student records.

#### **District Response:**

Documentation of a student's identification process, review of documentation with parents/guardians, and secured maintenance of this documentation are paramount to ensuring equity and access to all students who demonstrate the potential for gifted identification. Screening test results are collected and reviewed by the AIG Specialists at the school level and shared with the School-Based AIG Committees (SBC-AIG). A point of pride is the recent subscription to Data Manager, an online tool through the district's CogAT vendor (Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt), which can generate in-house, detailed reports for teachers and parents/guardians, including test results, individual/group learning profiles with specific research-based instructional strategies, and suggestions for flexible grouping of students within core/regular education classrooms. Other resources are also available to support extended learning experiences and talent development opportunities for all students. Online access to student scores and reports through Data Manager expedites the screening process across the district.

A primary documentation tool is the RCSS AIG Nomination Log. This log encourages transparency, consistency, and improved collaboration between the AIG Specialists and the AIG Program Specialist. The log serves as a tool for recording all data and information from the formal screening process, as well as data from students who are referred by teachers and/or administrators and transfer students. The log is a critical step during transition years from fifth to sixth and eighth to ninth grades. K-5 AIG Specialists are required to share nomination logs with middle grades specialists during a required end-of-year AIG Specialists meeting. Nomination logs are helpful for master scheduling and grouping of identified students at the next grade span. The log also serves as a monitoring tool for identified students and students who did not meet district criteria for identification. End-of-Grade scores for students listed on nomination logs who did not meet criteria during the initial screening process are reviewed at the end of

the school year, often resulting in identification or further screening for potential identification based on students' academic progress.

Once the screening process is complete, the SBC-AIG committee meets to review all data captured on the nomination log. The committee makes identification decisions based on this data, as well as any alternative sources of data utilized throughout the process. Once decisions are made, district letters are disseminated to parents/guardians. AIG Specialists are available upon request to meet with parents/guardians of students who did not meet district criteria for identification. Parents/guardians of students meeting district criteria for identification are invited to a SBC-AIG meeting to discuss and complete required RCSS AIG screening/identification/placement forms. Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) for identified students are developed during SBC-AIG committee meetings. DEPs are developed for identified third graders following the screening process during first semester, which allows for gifted services to begin second semester of the third grade year. DEPs for all other identified students are developed annually during the first 30 days of the school year. DEPs for K-12 students referred for screening during designated windows of time and transfer students are developed on a case-by-case basis.

A district-developed RCSS AIG Checklist outlining specific forms and procedures for documentation purposes is available for use by the AIG Specialist at each school. Feedback from specialists regarding the use of this document is positive. School counselors annually send to the AIG Program Specialist purged records for AIG students who withdraw or graduate from RCSS. Records are retained until students are 21 years of age, and then are destroyed. Additional documentation such as checklists, and Performance Task work samples/rubrics may be included in the "blue" AIG folders within identified students' cumulative records. AIG Specialists may place in manila folders screening, referral and identification paperwork and Performance Task work samples/rubrics for students not meeting the criteria for gifted identification. The manila folders are located in the back section of students' cumulative records and travel with students as they matriculate from one grade to the next. The manila folder information may be helpful in situations when students not meeting criteria for gifted identification are reviewed at later dates. A final expectation is that AIG Specialists are required to maintain in secure locations internal rosters of identified students, as well as logs providing lists of names for students who receive nurturing services.

**NOTE:** All RCSS AIG Screening/Identification and Differentiated Education Plan documents are available in English and Spanish. Translators are available for SBC-AIG committee meetings.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**

- \* Continue to explore alternative assessments and nontraditional measures for potential gifted identification of under-represented populations of students.
- \* Create and share a flow chart outlining the screening, referral, and identification process for potential AIG identification.
- \* Provide professional development for AIG Specialists on how to utilize web-based software plan (Ellevation Education) data to review multiple data points and information specific to English Language (EL) student performance and potential.
- \* Continue to encourage and assist middle and high school teachers and counselors to identify students for Honors and Advanced Placement courses using Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test

- (PSAT), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the American College Testing (ACT) data.
- \* Utilize the online Data Manager system to fidelity by providing professional development and training for AIG Specialists.
  - \* Pilot the Primary Enrichment Thinking (PET) materials in K-3 classrooms in at least one or more elementary schools.
  - \* Explore and utilize ways to improve communication and dissemination of screening, referral, and identification information across all stakeholders (District Twitter, newsletters, emails, online communication tools and video conferencing tools).
  - \* Develop an internal auditing document for use by the AIG Program Specialist to formally document review of AIG identified student documentation.

**Sources of Evidence:**

- \* SBC-AIG Committee Forms
- \* RCSS AIG Nomination Logs
- \* AIG Checklist (Forms/Purpose/Procedures)
- \* RCSS AIG Program Identification Flow Chart: Screening/Referral/Identification Process
- \* RCSS Performance Tasks/Student Work Samples
- \* Alternative Aptitude/Achievement Assessments/Data:
  - Aptitude: Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT), Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), Reynolds Intellectual Abilities Scale (RIAS), Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC)
  - Other: Slocumb-Payne Teacher Perception Inventory, William & Mary Classroom Observation Scale, Gifted Rating Scale (GRS), subgroup data (NC End of Grade, World-class Instructional Development Assessment (WIDA) data, RCSS K-2 Checklist, RCSS Alternative Assessment Placement form)
- \* Data Manager reports/resources: CogAT scores/student profiles-instructional strategies for individual students, strategies for grouping students, parent letters/resources
- \* District Internal Program Auditing documents
- \* RCSS AIG Parent/Guardian Handbook
- \* RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22
- \* Agendas/Presentations/Materials: AIG Specialists meetings, Senior Leadership monthly/quarterly meetings, Counselor meetings, Trainings/Professional Development by AIG Program Specialist/AIG Specialists, Professional Learning Team (PLT) meeting, RCSS AIG Advisory Committee meetings

## **Standard 2: 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 an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the needs of gifted learners across all grade levels and learning environments. These services are aligned to a student's AIG identification.

### **District Response:**

Throughout the planning process for the next generation Randolph County School System AIG Plan, 2018-19 RCSS AIG Survey data were taken into consideration. Surveys were administered by grade spans to grades 3-12 identified students, certified staff, and parents of identified students. A total of 433 identified students participated in the survey. Approximately 74% of surveyed students in grades 3-5 and 61.3% of students in grades 6-12, respectively, indicate a desire to spend more time in AIG "class." Eighty-eight parents/guardians of identified students participated in the survey. Survey data reflect continued support for resource "pull out" services in grades 3-5, and clustering of identified students in grades 6-12. In addition to support for continued resource services, specific survey questions indicate parent/guardian interest in opportunities for challenging, rigorous experiences in the areas of problem-solving, Science Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), and extension/ enrichment experiences through flexible grouping within regular education core classroom instruction, as well as during designated blocks of time in the master schedule.

### **Program Service Options:**

RCSS offers a continuum of services to address the academic needs of K-12 gifted learners (Academically and/or Intellectually: AI, AG, IG) in the areas of Reading and/or Mathematics. Services are identified based on students' unique academic and social-emotional needs. Students identified as AI, AG, and/or IG are grouped together based on areas of identification in the areas of Reading/English Language Arts and/or Mathematics. AIG Specialists and regular education teachers of gifted students are expected to differentiate instruction to meet the unique needs of AI, AG, and/or IG students as outlined in their Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs). RCSS offers a continuum of comprehensive services by grade spans that align with the "big picture" programs and initiatives of the district as described in the RCSS Strategic Plan, the RCSS Framework for Continuous School Improvement, and RCSS School Improvement Plans.

### **The following program service options are available:**

#### **Grades K-2:**

Based on schedules and availability, AIG Specialists and school building administrators work collaboratively to utilize data and individual student needs to identify K-2 students for nurturing services. A point of pride is the option, based upon a referral process, for K-2 students to be formally identified for gifted services. Identified students, as well as students identified for nurturing, may receive one or more of the following services provided by AIG Specialists: Resource class "pull out" direct instruction, core classroom "push in" clustered instruction, and consultative independent study extension/enrichment assignments developed collaboratively by the AIG Specialist and regular education teachers.

### **Early Admission to Kindergarten:**

RCSS complies with state legislation [G.S. 115C-364(d)] allowing a child to enter kindergarten early if he/she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. When a parent/guardian of a student requests, the principal convenes a committee of professional educators that includes school staff, and may include the AIG Specialist at the school level, and/or the AIG Program Specialist, and district staff to consider the required five factors as outlined in state policy to determine a student's eligibility to enter kindergarten as a four-year-old. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to present information required by state policy to the principal. Early admission to kindergarten does not automatically result in gifted identification.

### **Grades 3-5:**

**Resource Classroom:** This accelerated service option is for identified students in grades 3-5. This model affords students opportunities to receive direct differentiated instruction that extends regular education core curriculum standards. This service option is provided by the AIG Specialist in a separate setting with like peers. This model is referred to as "pull out" services for students in grades 3-5.

**In-Class Cluster Grouping with Identified Students:** This accelerated service option affords identified students to be grouped for differentiated extension opportunities within the regular education classroom. The AIG Specialist serves identified students through small group instruction. This model is referred to as "push in" services for grades 3-5.

### **Grades 6-8:**

**Core Classroom Cluster Grouping:** This accelerated service option groups identified students having similar academic needs and abilities to a regular education, mixed ability English Language Arts and/or Mathematics classroom. This model is the primary service model for identified students in grades 6-8.

### **Grades 9-12:**

**Core Classroom Cluster Grouping:** Students in grades 9-12 identified as Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted are encouraged to enroll in rigorous, challenging courses. Identified students are encouraged to enroll in Honors/Advanced Placement (AP) or Career College Promise (CCP) courses when feasible. Identified students are also encouraged to explore Career Technical Education (CTE) courses, which currently include Advanced Placement courses.

### **Grades K-12:**

**Core Classroom Flexible Grouping:** All teachers are encouraged to utilize this model for all students. This accelerated service option allows learners to be flexibly grouped on a regular basis. Teachers base groupings on data, readiness, multiple intelligences, learning styles and/or interests. Flexible grouping is a fluid process allowing both identified and non-identified students opportunities to interact academically, as well as socially and emotionally.

**Cross Grade Subject Acceleration:** This accelerated service option provides students who need accelerated instruction in one more content areas to be placed in classes with older peers for part of the school day. Students remain with grade level peers for the majority of the school day.

**Whole Grade Acceleration/Grade Skipping (K-8):** Whole skipping is appropriate for a small percentage of gifted students whose academic and social-emotional needs are substantially more advanced than their age/grade peers. The Randolph County School System recognizes and utilizes the IOWA Acceleration Scale as a primary tool to guide educators in making important decisions regarding whether a particular student is a candidate for whole grade acceleration. The IOWA Acceleration Scale is administered to students by the school's AIG Specialist or other authorized staff. The principal convenes a committee of school and district staff, including the AIG Specialist, and may include the AIG Program Specialist, to review data from the IOWA Acceleration Scale and other relevant data to render a final decision regarding whole grade acceleration.

**School-wide Extension/Enrichment:** This accelerated service option provides opportunities for all students, particularly identified students, to participate in small group settings offered during the school day based on the school's master schedule.

**Extra-Curricular Opportunities:** This service option varies at schools across the district. These services are not exclusive to identified students. Extra-curricular opportunities may be aligned with academics, visual and performing arts, and/or various areas based on student expertise/passion.

**Independent Study:** This service option is available for identified students who demonstrate exceptional need for accelerated enrichment or extension on a case-by-case basis based on the unique, individual needs of academically and/or intellectually gifted students. Independent study opportunities are developed collaboratively by the AIG Specialist and regular education teachers.

### **Practice B**

Integrates and connects AIG services with the total instructional program and resources of the LEA in policy and practice.

### **District Response:**

RCSS is committed to continuous improvement. From senior leadership meetings to school-level professional learning team (PLT) meetings, conversations are focused on equity and access for all students. The district focus on equity and access creates opportunities for the AIG Program Specialist, AIG Specialists, and other stakeholders to review how policies, programs, and instructional practices align with best practices and meet the unique needs of gifted students. The AIG Program Specialist is included in district leadership meetings on a monthly basis. During these meetings, current and new policies are reviewed, and feedback is shared across stakeholders. The AIG Program Specialist is afforded opportunities during district meetings to explain the implications of district policies, programs, and instructional practices for gifted learners.

In addition to opportunities to review and provide feedback on current and new policies, the AIG Program Specialist is a member of a district professional learning team (PLT) that meets quarterly. Collaboration across all instructional departments during these meetings is rich and impactful. This PLT provides information about potential and new programs/initiatives to the entire team. District instructional leaders from English as Second Language, Exceptional Children, Career and Technical Education, Media and Technology, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) are present at each meeting. Programs and resources are shared and vetted, and decisions resulting in the identification of programs and initiatives that support equity and access across all student populations, including gifted education, are made. This

team plays a critical role in supporting how district funds and resources are spent and allocated. The work of this PLT, in conjunction with senior leadership, ensure that district and AIG funds are allocated to purchase materials, resources, and professional services that not only support gifted learners, but are aligned with programs and resources of the total instructional program of across the district.

The commitment to integrating and connecting AIG services with the total instructional program and resources does not stop at the conversation level. Conversations around district policies and practices generate and support opportunities for targeted, intentional professional development for stakeholders. The AIG Program Specialist provides ongoing professional development for administrators, beginning teachers, and instructional departments through monthly district meetings. The AIG Program Specialist works collaboratively through central services quarterly meetings with district lead teachers and directors to share AIG program services, information on the academic needs of gifted learners, and best practices that support gifted learners, particularly under-represented populations of students who often are not identified as gifted. AIG Specialists across all schools participate in district and school-level professional learning teams (PLTs) with district/school administrators and regular education teachers. AIG Specialists utilize PLT meetings to provide training/professional development on the services and characteristics of gifted learners. AIG Specialists play critical roles in helping administrators, regular education teachers, teachers of gifted students, and counselors to understand how district policies and programs align with and support gifted education. AIG Specialists work collaboratively with all staff, including media specialists and counselors, to ensure that resources are shared and accessible for use by all.

The following examples demonstrate how stakeholder discussions around policies and practices across all stakeholders result in programs, initiatives, and best practices that integrate and connect AIG services with the total instructional program. RCSS has identified key areas of focus that align with and support the implementation of district policies and practices. For example, RCSS is committed to professional development on the Mindset research of Dr. Carol Dweck and her associates (2006, 2016). Another example is the collaborative work with institutes of higher education and subscriptions to online resources/programs for Project/Problem-Based Learning, such as Defined STEM, purchased through Career Technical Education funds, and THE PBL Project purchased through gifted funds. A focus on integrating Future Ready Skills: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity (4Cs) across all instructional areas supports increased rigor and extension of learning offered through various AIG service options for identified students. All three examples support the various AIG services models available to gifted, as well as all learners. Critical conversations and knowledge of policies and practices are paramount to ensuring that the total instructional program and resources of the district drive the decision-making process for programs and initiatives that integrate and connect services for gifted learners.

### **Practice C**

Develops procedures for intentional, flexible grouping practices to facilitate the achievement and growth of AIG and other students with advanced learning needs.

### **District Response:**

Analysis of AIG subgroup data indicate that 95% of identified students are College and Career Ready (CCR). The majority of identified students are performing at Level 4 and Level 5 (above Level 3 Proficient), indicating mastery above grade level expectations. This is a point of pride for the district.

Data from state policy mandated tests/assessments such as Grade 3 Read to Achieve (mCLASS), End-of-Grade, End-of-Course, NC Final Exams, WorkKeys Assessment System, and American College Testing (ACT) assessments for students in grades 3-12 provide valuable information regarding student achievement and are insightful when scheduling and grouping students. Analysis of reports, such as mCLASS Beginning/Middle/End-of Year assessments, and End-of-Grade/End-of-Course goal summaries, provide classroom teachers a wealth of information for instructional planning, particularly in the area of differentiating (adjusting) instruction for gifted students. Another valuable data resource useful for intentional, flexible grouping of students is the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS). Individual student prediction EVAAS data are used for scheduling and grouping students at the beginning of the year. Another source of data from state-mandated policy are data from the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS, a state mandated initiative, impacts and guides instructional decisions. MTSS is designed to meet the needs of all learners, including AIG students.

Local policies and procedures also support utilizing beginning, middle, and end-of-year mCLASS data, along with guided reading anecdotal notes, and K-2 Math assessments to gauge student growth for elementary students. These data support "push in" services by K-5 AIG Specialists for accelerated guided reading group instruction. Quarterly assessments (NC Check-Ins) in grades 3-12 provide formative assessment data to inform flexible grouping opportunities for gifted and all students. These data are beneficial for grades 6-12, where students are clustered based on areas of identification. Within clusters of identified students, levels of readiness and mastery of standards vary. Formative assessment data are also collected through daily, ongoing formative assessments such as pre/post assessments administered by classroom teachers. AIG Specialists utilize Data Manager, an online reporting tool purchased with gifted funds through the district's CogAT vendor, to generate individual student reports with specific instructional strategies that assist specialists and regular classroom teachers in making intentional, flexible grouping decisions for both resource "pull out" and core classroom "push in" clustering of identified students in grades 3-5.

While a point of pride for RCSS is that 95% of identified students are performing at levels considered to be College Career Ready, individual student growth data are now accessible through the RCSS Data Mart, an internal data base, that provides a wealth of information on individual student growth from one school year to the next. This work is believed to have significant implications for gifted learners. The work with student growth includes action research studies to explore possible connections between student academic growth and learning environments reflective of growth mindset strategies and practices, which are extremely beneficial for gifted learners. Research also supports that growth mindset strategies and practices cultivate learning environments that address the affective needs of students, especially under-represented populations of students who may demonstrate the potential for gifted identification.

The RCSS Board of Education Policy 3130 outlines expectations for grouping students. District expectations and procedures are in place to support analysis of achievement and growth data for intentional, flexible grouping opportunities for all learners. Administrators are expected to develop master schedules that afford all staff opportunities to meet collaboratively across all grade levels and subject areas, primarily through professional learning teams (PLTs) during and after the school day. Protocols to guide data discussions during PLTs are in place. Both the district and schools develop various tools for capturing multiple data points that guide decisions for intentional, flexible grouping of students.

### **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:**

Survey data indicate that 85% of certified staff agree that information about the AIG plan, differentiated services, screening, referral, and identification processes are in place. However, only 58% of certified staff indicate that they are aware of specific procedures for services, screening, referral, identification, and differentiated instruction for AIG students; and 69% indicate that they have access to Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) for identified students. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to implement specific strategies for improved communication with all staff regarding differentiated services and instruction for AIG students, regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program and plan.

The following strategies are in place for informing district stakeholders:

- \*RCSS AIG Plan is posted to district website ([www.randolph.k12.nc.us](http://www.randolph.k12.nc.us)); copies of plan are provided to each school; copies of plan are provided to district staff.
- \*RCSS AIG Parent/Guardian Handbook (English/Spanish) is accessible from website; printed copies are distributed to AIG Specialists to share with staff.
- \*AIG Specialists present RCSS AIG plan and regulations related to gifted education at back-to-school faculty meetings.
- \*AIG Specialists provide training/professional development for all staff about the differentiated services and instruction for AIG students.
- \*AIG Program Specialist shares plan with district staff through monthly/quarterly meetings.
- \*RCSS AIG Plan shared with RCSS AIG Academy participants.
- \*Information regarding suggested courses for AIG students is published in the RCSS Program of Studies.
- \*AIG Specialists provide training/professional development on the components of the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) to core teachers during professional learning team meetings
- \*AIG Specialists convene School-Based AIG Committee meetings to discuss development and distribution procedures for Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs).
- \*AIG Program Specialist provides professional development to regular education and support teachers through the RCSS AIG Academy, during which participants receive training on specific services, content modifications, and program/instructional strategies that comprise the DEP.
- \*AIG Program Specialist meets bi-annually with counselors to provide professional development on specific services, content modifications, and program/instructional strategies that comprise the DEP.
- \*Principals or a designee is expected to monitor the development and implementation of DEPs.
- \*Principals are committed to providing opportunities during professional learning team (PLT) meetings during or after the school day for AIG Specialists to meet with core teachers to discuss differentiated services and instruction outlined in identified students' DEPs.

### **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:**

Survey data indicate that 77% of certified staff agree that effective communication occurs among and between teachers and schools to promote continuity of K-12 gifted services.

The following procedures are in place for communication among and between teachers and schools to ensure effective continuation of K-12 services, especially at key transition points:

- \*K-5 AIG Specialists maintain district-developed RCSS AIG Nomination Logs that capture multiple sources of data and relevant information for each student who completes the screening, referral, and identification process.
- \*The AIG Program Specialist has access to nomination logs for review and discussion throughout the screening, referral, and identification process.
- \*During the final monthly AIG Specialists meeting, K-5 AIG Specialists share their AIG nomination logs with 6-8 AIG Specialists. Opportunities for critical conversations about individual student needs, potential clustering suggestions, and overall performance of identified students transitioning to the next grade span is provided during this meeting. Information captured through nomination logs and face-to-face conversations between the two grade bands are beneficial for middle school principals and scheduling teams when assigning students to sixth grade English/Language Arts and classes.
- \*The AIG Program Specialist meets annually with K-12 counselors to provide rosters of identified students in grades 8-11 for transitions from fifth to sixth and eighth to ninth grades, as well as reviewing clustering information, services, and expectations for identified students' enrollment in advanced courses and development of four-year plans. This meeting is especially helpful for students transitioning from eighth to ninth grade. Counselors are expected to share rosters and information regarding expectations for course registration with all staff involved in the high school registration process.
- \*Clear expectations for transitioning AIG blue folders that are filed in student cumulative folders, as well as procedures for transfer of AIG records as students transfer from one grade level to the next, particularly from one grade span to the next, are outlined through the district AIG checklist form provided by the AIG Program Specialist.
- \*AIG Specialists are expected to meet with grade levels in the spring to discuss transitions within grade spans.
- \*AIG Specialists are expected to meet during a teacher workday in August with teachers who are assigned clusters of gifted students to discuss AIG nomination log data, service models that will be required for identified students' DEPs, additional service options through flexible grouping for extensions and/or enrichment within core classes, and overall performance of transitioning gifted students.
- \*AIG Program Specialist collaborates with administrators, counselors, and teachers to strengthen the sharing of information and opportunities to visit schools at transition points. Schools are encouraged to explore additional face-to-face opportunities, as well as digital and virtual opportunities.

### **Practice F**

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

### **District Response:**

Survey data indicate that 75% of certified staff feel that the social and emotional learning (SEL) needs are supported through curricular and instructional practices. Approximately 74% of K-5 certified staff feel that AIG Specialists engage all learners in tasks that directly meet academic, intellectual, and SEL needs of students. Approximately 50% of certified staff feel that there is district support for collaboration among stakeholders to address SEL needs of students. In order for gifted students to reach their full potential, programs and services for identified students must include strategies to meet SEL needs of students. Research supports that when emphasis on SEL needs is expected, learning is maximized, and gifted students are more likely to reach their full academic potential. It is often assumed that gifted students do not exhibit social and emotional needs. However, research supports that gifted students do have SEL needs.

The RCSS AIG Program is committed to meeting SEL needs of gifted students. Addressing SEL needs is paramount to ensuring equity and access for all gifted learners. According to Neihart, Pfeiffer & Cross (2016), "Today, we believe that both ability and environment must be considered because social and emotional characteristics shape and are shaped by interactions with others. Also, development must be understood within a cultural context because so many concepts (e.g., identity, achievement) are socially constructed. It is this interaction that makes growing up gifted a qualitatively different experience."

RCSS is committed to exploration of specific SEL needs of gifted, as well as all students. The district embraces the Mindset work of Dr. Carol Dweck and her colleagues (2006,2016). Professional development occurs across all schools around the concept of cultivating a learning environment reflective of a growth mindset in classrooms and schools. Action research is underway to explore the connection between learning environments reflective of growth mindset and the academic achievement of students. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to utilize research to educate all stakeholders, creating an awareness of and strategies to support meeting the social and emotional needs of gifted, as well as all learners.

The district believes a primary approach to building the capacity of all stakeholders to meet SEL needs of identified students is through targeted professional development that not only includes high quality training, but equips stakeholders with resources and materials.

Professional development includes:

- The AIG Program Specialist provides annual SEL training and materials to K-12 counselors.
- The AIG Program Specialist provides annual SEL training and materials through a hybrid approach using the district's learning management system (Canvas) and face-to-face meetings to cohorts of regular education teachers and participants of the RCSS AIG Academy. Targeted professional development focusing on classroom learning environments shaped by a growth mindset is provided during the academy.
- AIG Specialists complete and utilize online modules created by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction AIG staff (AIG Booster Shots) that focus on SEL needs of gifted learners.
- District AIG Specialists meetings support professional development and exploration of resources to

meet SEL needs of gifted students.

\*District AIG Specialists meetings support professional development and exploration of resources to meet SEL needs of gifted students.

\*Using a train-the-trainer model, AIG Specialists and counselors provide training and resources for staff through professional learning team (PLT) meetings, staff meetings, and teacher workdays. Training may occur through a hybrid approach using Canvas modules, face-to-face meetings, and Google sites.

•Counselors are encouraged to provide classroom lessons, as well as individual counseling sessions, to meet SEL needs of gifted learners. Lessons may address SEL needs through the implementation of growth mindset strategies (Dweck, 2006,2016) and Habits of Mind (Costa & Kallick, 2008) materials, lessons focusing on specific SEL characteristics of gifted students such as perfectionism, gender differences, underachievement, peer relationships, bullying, and creativity (Niehart, Pfeiffer, & Cross, 2016).

\* Counselors are encouraged to provide information sessions and materials for meeting SEL needs of gifted students to parents through parent workshops, designated school parent nights, and Title I Parent Nights.

\*The AIG Program Specialist works collaboratively with the district's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Specialist to align and embed research and strategies for meeting the social and emotional learning needs of gifted learners in MTSS trainings throughout the district.

\*The AIG Program Specialist provides professional development across the district to multiple stakeholder groups, and works collaboratively with individual school leadership teams to plan and facilitate professional development to demonstrate the implications for meeting SEL needs of gifted learners when classroom learning environments are cultivated by a growth mindset approach.

### **Practice G**

Develops policies and procedures for a variety of acceleration opportunities, including compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, subject and/or grade acceleration.

### **District Response:**

According to Assouline, Colangelo, and Van-Tassel-Baska (2015) in a powerful report: A Nation Empowered: Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students, Vol.1, acceleration is the most effective academic intervention for gifted students. RCSS complies with state-mandated policies and also develops local policies and procedures to support opportunities for acceleration for all students. Identification of students for acceleration include: aptitude, achievement, Intelligence Quotient (IQ) testing data, and student demonstration of mastery of grade level standards. In addition to aptitude and achievement, students are exposed to acceleration opportunities such as enrichment experiences that foster the growth and development of specific academic domains that support creativity and productivity as students matriculate from kindergarten to high school (National Association for Gifted Children Talent Development Task Force, 2015). Teams of RCSS educators including AIG Specialists, the AIG Program Specialist, school counselors, regular education teachers, administrators, and parents work collaboratively to identify acceleration options that best meet the needs of qualifying students.

Local Board of Education policies and procedures provide guidance, as well as remove barriers, for accelerated opportunities for students. Policies include:

- \*Policy 3130 - Encourages and offers guidance for both heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping of students. This policy supports scheduling gifted students into core classroom clusters, as well as making decisions for flexible grouping, grade/subject acceleration, and compacted curriculum courses in middle school, and high school Honors and Advanced Placement courses.
- \*Policy 3460 - Provides guidance for high school graduation requirements and outlines plans, such as the Future Ready Core plan for students.
- \*Policy 3420 - Student Accountability and Promotion directly addresses and supports acceleration for students who demonstrate need for extension beyond grade level standards and curriculum.
- \*Policy 3101 - Dual Enrollment provides opportunities for students to enroll in rigorous, expanded classes taught by a college, university, community college or other approved entity that will adequately prepare students for future educational and workplace endeavors.
- \*Policy 3620 - Extra-curricular activities include opportunities through: clubs and societies, vocational organizations, student government, student publications, student social events, student performances and competitions, and interscholastic and intramural athletics.

Policies and procedures are critical for ensuring equitable access across all groups of students. RCSS is committed to a systemic continuum of accelerated opportunities by providing clear step-by-step procedures for acceleration to meet the needs of individual learners and provide the appropriate learning environments for all learners.

**NOTE:** Approximately 72% of identified students in grades 6-12 indicate the district uses differentiated, challenging, and rigorous curriculum and instruction to accommodate their academic needs. Approximately 37 % of identified students in grades 6-12 indicate an awareness of district policies and procedures for a variety of acceleration opportunities including: compacted content, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, subject and/or grade acceleration, and extension/enrichment opportunities built in to the master schedule or within core classroom instruction. While policies and procedures for acceleration are in place, communicating and ensuring access to accelerated courses and opportunities is an area of focus in the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22.

RCSS offers a continuum of acceleration opportunities beginning with Early Admission to Kindergarten.

### **Grades K-2**

#### **Early Admission to Kindergarten:**

RCSS complies with the state legislation [G.S. 115C-364(d)] allowing a child to enter kindergarten early if he/she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. When a parent/guardian of student requests, the principal convenes a committee of professional educators that includes school staff, and may include school level AIG Specialists and/or the AIG Program Specialist, and district staff to consider the required five factors as outlined in state policy to determine a student's eligibility to enter kindergarten as a four-year-old. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to present information required by state policy to the principals. Early admission to kindergarten does not automatically result in gifted identification.

### **Grades 3-12**

#### **AIG Program Services:**

- \*K-5 Resource (Pull Out)/Core Classroom Cluster Grouping (Push In)
- \*Core Classroom Cluster Grouping (Grades 6-12)

\*Compacted Mathematics (Grades 6-7); Math 1 (Grade 8); Advanced Mathematics Courses for students scoring Level 5 on End-of-Grade/End-of-Course Mathematics Tests

\*Core Classroom Flexible Grouping

\*Cross Grade/Subject Acceleration (Grades K-8)

\*Extension/Enrichment - regular education classrooms/designated time in master schedule

**\*Grade Acceleration/Skipping:**

Randolph County School System recognizes and uses the Iowa Acceleration Scale as a primary tool to guide educators in making important decisions regarding whether a particular student is a candidate for whole grade acceleration (grade skipping). The Iowa Acceleration Scale is administered to students by the school's AIG Specialist or other authorized staff. The principal convenes a committee of educators that includes school and district staff, and may include school-level AIG Specialists and/or the AIG Program Specialist, to review data from the Iowa Acceleration Scale and other relevant data to render a final decision regarding whole-grade acceleration.

**\*Independent Study:**

Independent Study opportunities are available for identified students who demonstrate an exceptional need for accelerated enrichment or extension on a case-by-case basis based on the unique, individual needs of academically and/or intellectually gifted students. Independent study opportunities are developed collaboratively by the AIG Specialist and regular education teacher.

**Grades 8-12**

**AIG Program Services:**

**\*Credit By Demonstrated Mastery (CDM):**

Students who can demonstrate mastery of content based on a body of evidence can be rewarded credit for the course without being required to complete classroom instruction. North Carolina State BOE policy GCS- M-001 Section 8 Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is the process by which each school district shall, based upon a body of evidence, award a student credit for a high school course without requiring the student to complete the classroom instruction or enroll in the course for a certain amount of seat time. Mastery is defined as a student's command of course material at a level that demonstrates a deep understanding of the content standards and the ability to apply his or her knowledge of the material. In other words, CDM allows students with deep understanding of the content prior to taking the course, to receive a high school course credit. The intention of this policy is to enable students to access more advanced content to meet their academic needs.

**CDM** is a multi-phase assessment process that builds a body of evidence that allows a committee to determine if a student has a deep understanding of the standards for the course or subject area, thereby earning credit for the course without experiencing it in the school setting. CDM can only be earned for standard level courses. The CDM program provides an opportunity for students to learn new content, to challenge themselves with the next level of rigor in a subject, and even graduate early. This option is not designed to replace existing accelerated pathways, such as Honors, Advanced Placement® or Career and College Promise Courses, but is intended to allow select students the opportunity to bypass a course in which they already excel.

**NOTE:** Information/Procedures for CDM applicants accessible through school counselors and/or the district website. <http://www.randolph.k12.nc.us>

**NOTE:** RCSS Program of Studies outlines policies, procedures, and detailed descriptions for the following accelerated opportunities:

Honors, Advanced Placement/AP Honors Capstone, Online courses (iLearn, North Carolina Virtual Public Schools), Dual Enrollment, Randolph County Schools Early College:

<http://www.randolph.k12.nc.us>

### **Practice H**

Implements intentional strategies to broaden access to advanced learning opportunities for under-represented AIG populations, including culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional. These strategies may include talent development efforts.

### **District Response:**

Intentional strategies to broaden access to advanced learning opportunities for under-represented populations of students include practices already in place and additional strategies to be implemented based on work that will be done in the area of talent development.

AIG identification criteria and placement continue to include aptitude and achievement testing data as primary indicators of potential academic and intellectual giftedness. The Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT) assesses students' academic and reasoning skills. A point of pride for RCSS is the universal screening process at third and fifth grades. Universal screening of fifth graders, provides opportunities for students to demonstrate potential giftedness through aptitude and achievement screening, which directly impacts scheduling for advanced learning courses such as compacted mathematics courses and high school Math 1 offered in middle school. RCSS includes the recognition and use of CogAT nonverbal (NV) partial composite aptitude scores when screening all students for potential giftedness. This practice has been in place since 2013.

Building upon this practice, the district uses alternative aptitude tests such as the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) aptitude test to assess nonverbal strengths of students. Recognizing nonverbal (NV) aptitude scores often results in under-represented populations of students such as English Learners (ELs) and Students With Disabilities (SWD) demonstrating potential giftedness resulting in formal identification and/or nurturing services for these students. RCSS Revised K-2 and Alternative Checklists for identification are also in place to provide alternative pathways for student identification and services.

RCSS isolates subgroup data for under-represented populations of students to analyze the highest performing students within the district's subgroups versus comparing these students to nationally-normed subgroup data. Analysis of individual student data within subgroups increases opportunities for students from under-represented subgroups to receive additional screening for potential giftedness. For ELs, assessment instruments such as the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA ACCESS), which is culturally sensitive and accounts for language differences, provides language acquisition data that are helpful when determining appropriate universal screening tools and alternative checklists and pathways for gifted identification and services. Exceptional Children evaluation data provides Intelligence Quotient (IQ), as well as education scores in reading, writing, and math. These data are helpful for identifying potential twice-exceptional students who would benefit from

advanced learning opportunities.

North Carolina House Bill 986 (2018) legislates that students in grade 3 and higher be enrolled in advanced mathematics courses. RCSS complies with this legislation and provides rigorous differentiated extension opportunities in the area of mathematics to students scoring a Level 5 on the North Carolina End of Grade/Course Mathematics Test. Elementary students scoring Level 5 are provided differentiated extension opportunities through core instruction, school-wide enrichment/extension, and extension opportunities provided by AIG Specialists. Middle school students scoring Level 5 are automatically enrolled in compacted mathematics courses in grades 6 – 7 and Math 1 in grade 8.

RCSS demographic data in 2018-19 continue to reflect an overall population that is predominantly White (71.25%) with a significant Hispanic population (18.57%), and a much smaller population of Black (3.88%) students. RCSS AIG percentage of gifted students remains constant at 10%. Within the total subgroup of AIG identified students, percentages of White, Hispanic, and Black students are comparable to overall percentages of total student population subgroups. Data also reflect that Students with Disabilities (SWD) represent 11.90% of the total population, and English Language (EL) students represent 5.78% of the total population. The overall percentage for free/reduced lunch students in RCSS is 54.67% with 15 of 17 elementary schools being designated as school-wide Title 1 schools. Two subgroups, Students with Disabilities and English Learners, are not demonstrating academic growth based on district accountability data. An area of focus in the RCSS 2019-22 AIG Plan is to educate all staff of the specific needs of under-represented populations, as well as developing a talent development framework across all grade spans.

### **Talent Development:**

RCSS is committed to establishing a web of communication across district/school stakeholders working collaboratively to leverage expertise across specializations and departments in order to develop the talent of all students, particularly students from under-represented populations. This group will review research such as the National Association for Gifted Children Talent Development Task Force Report (November, 2015) and the Exploratory Study on the Identification of English Learners for Gifted and Talented Programs (<http://ncrge.uconn.edu>) to create awareness of and a call to action that talent development for all students, particularly under-represented populations of students is critical to the development of all students and growing the district's AIG program.

Throughout the implementation phase of the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 the AIG Program Specialist and the AIG team will collaborate to develop a K-12 continuum representative of the talent development strategies currently implemented throughout the district, as well as additional strategies resulting from the work of this collaborative effort. The end goal is a clearly articulated continuum of talent development strategies beginning in the early grades and continuing throughout high school. Talent development strategies utilizing a growth mindset approach supports the belief that giftedness is developmental and malleable, giftedness is multi-dimensional, and should address social-emotional learning needs. Students should be provided opportunities, particularly enrichment opportunities, as they matriculate from early to later grades to demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively, and to explore specific areas of expertise and interests leading to adult careers and productivity. Opportunities for service learning, mentorships, and internships should be provided early and continued throughout students' educational experiences.

The Career Technical Education department is an example of a collaborative partner as the team works to develop a K-12 Talent Development Continuum. CTE provides opportunities in grades 6-12 through courses and pathways for students to explore their areas of academic expertise, as well as extension and enrichment experiences to pursue their personal interests and passions. For example, a Career Exploration Center is housed at one of seven middle schools in RCSS. Opportunities for talent development in the area of potential adult careers and professions begins early in RCSS. CTE sponsors an annual Truck Day for elementary students in one quadrant of the county. Plans are in the making to expand this exciting event, where elementary students are afforded opportunities to explore and ask questions about adult careers and professions. The development of a K-12 Talent Development Continuum supports a shift in mindset for looking at students through the lens of being "at potential" versus "at risk." Plans are also in place to pilot in at least one elementary school the Primary Enrichment Thinking Skills (PETS) materials for K-3 students. Primary Education Thinking Skills, or PETS, is a systematized enrichment and diagnostic thinking skills program. Lessons are presented in convergent analysis, divergent synthesis, visual/spatial thinking, and evaluation, suitable for grades K-3. The program aligns to the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. PETS helps build behavioral portfolios for talented learners that support a differentiated approach to their education, integrates flexibly into any existing primary curriculum, and offers opportunities for learners with different strengths to shine (<http://www.primaryeducationthinkingskills.com>).

### **Practice I**

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

### **District Response:**

RCSS supports and encourages extra-curricular activities. Extra-curricular activities are for all students. Feedback from online surveys across stakeholder groups, as well as feedback from administrators, counselors, and teachers during face-to-face meetings throughout the planning stage of the next generation AIG plan ensures that extra-curricular opportunities occur on a regular basis across the district.

### **Extra-curricular activities include:**

STEM experiences: Robotics, Computer Coding, Summer Enrichment  
Academic experiences: National Honors Society/Beta Club, Debate Team, Mock Trial, Battle of the Books, Science Fair, Project/Problem-Based Learning, Duke University Talent Search Program for 4th-6th graders, Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) for 7th -12th graders, North Carolina Governor's School for rising seniors, College field trips, Pre-SAT (PSAT)/Advanced Placement potential support opportunities, Newspaper/Journalism, Yearbook, various clubs in the area of visual and performing arts(FBLA, FFA, HOSA, DECA, Skills USA.), summer internships/mentoring experiences.

**NOTE:** Survey data indicate 66% of elementary students, 64% of secondary students, 53% of parents, and 42% of certified staff feel that opportunities for extra-curricular programs and activities outside of school that are interesting and challenging are provided for AIG students. Students in particular indicate a desire for extra-curricular activities that extend concepts and topics from academic courses taught during the school day, as well as opportunities to explore areas of personal interest in both academic

and non-academic areas. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to increase

extra-curricular activities across the district/schools, and to be intentional and strategic in connecting extra-curricular activities to the unique needs of gifted learners.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**

- \*AIG Program Specialist will review new and current district policies that impact gifted education with AIG Specialists during monthly meetings.
- \*District will develop a flow chart outlining the referral, screening, and identification processes for gifted identification.
- \*District and school will utilize social media (e.g. Twitter@RandolphCoSchools) to increase staff awareness of where and how to access information regarding differentiated services and instruction for AIG students, regulations related to gifted education, and the local AIG program and plan.
- \*AIG Program Specialist will utilize video conferencing, such as WebEx, Zoom, Google Hangout, to provide information and professional development to teachers of gifted students who often find it challenging to meet face-to-face.
- \*Principals will continue to explore creative ways to provide time in master schedules for collaboration between the AIG Specialists and core teachers.
- \*AIG Specialists will meet more frequently with support teachers (e.g. English as Second Language, Exceptional Children) to review alternative sources of data for potential identification of and service models for identified under-represented populations of students.
- \*The AIG Program team and district stakeholders will explore and develop a K-12 Talent Development Continuum.
- \*Explore ways to communicate not only the extra-curricular activities that are available for gifted, but equally as important, how these experiences align with and meet the unique needs of identified students.
- \*AIG Program/Department will collaborate across other curriculum departments to explore extra-curricular opportunities available through the NC Association of Scholastic Activities.
- \*Explore multiple sources for potential resources and strategies for K-12 Talent Development.

**Sources of Evidence:**

- \*RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22
- \*Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs)
- \*Flow chart for screening, referral, and identification process/procedures
- \*Subgroup proficiency and growth data (AIG, EL, SWD, ED)
- \*Agendas/Presentations - AIG Specialists monthly meetings
- \*Sample agendas/presentations/resources - Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings
- \*Sample Master Schedules
- \*Sample classroom schedules/lesson plans - program service models/flexible grouping
- \*Sample data used to cluster and/or flexibly group students
- \*RCSS Program of Studies - accelerated/advanced course offerings
- \*Documentation of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities
- \*District/School websites, social media sites - information/resources specific to AIG

## **Standard 3: 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 North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) defines the appropriate content standards for each grade or proficiency level and each high school course to provide a uniform set of learning standards for every public school in North Carolina. These standards define what students should know and be able to do. These standards provide the foundation for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The NCSCOS is used as the entry point for differentiation. Teachers of gifted learners are expected to demonstrate the ability to differentiate standards in order to meet the academic and social-emotional learning (SEL) needs, and to extend and/or enrich learning experiences for advanced learners.

According to Tomlinson & Moon (2013), teachers of advanced learners should demonstrate skills to differentiate instruction in the follow areas:

- \*CONTENT - what a student needs to learn
- \*PROCESS - how a student will come to master and "own" knowledge, ideas, and skills
- \*PRODUCT - how a student will demonstrate what he/she learns
- \*AFFECTIVE/LEARNING Environment - the climate that encompasses the learning and interactions among students teachers: the personal, social, and physical arrangements in the classroom

In order to challenge advanced learners, teachers demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of content standards, and they assess learners to determine student mastery of grade level standards in order to plan and implement differentiated lessons to extend/enrich learning experiences. Teachers understand and respond to the academic, as well as SEL needs of their learners. Differentiation instruction is multi-faceted process. Daily differentiation is philosophy embraced by teachers who believe that students have potential and can be successful if instruction includes research-based best practices and strategies based on students' identified abilities and social-emotional learning needs. Effective differentiation results in lessons that are rigorous and challenging, and lessons that afford students opportunities to extend their learning beyond grade level standards.

Opportunities that enrich, extend, and accelerate the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for advanced, and all learners, in RCSS include all RCSS AIG Program Service Models:

- \*Resource Class "Pull Out";
- \*In-Class Classroom Cluster Grouping with Identified Students "Push In"
- \*Core Classroom Cluster Grouping
- \*Core Classroom Flexible Grouping
- \*Cross Grade Subject Acceleration

\*Whole Grade Acceleration/Grade Skipping

\*School-wide Extension/Enrichment

\*Extra-curricular Opportunities

\*Independent Study

AIG program service options provide students multiple opportunities both within and outside the regular classroom to receive differentiated instructional experiences. Identified students receive differentiated services based on their areas of identification. K-5 identified students receive differentiated services primarily through resource class with AIG identified peers and core classroom cluster grouping. Middle grades and high school identified students receive differentiated services primarily through core classroom cluster grouping with AIG identified peers.

Clustering of gifted learners is based on areas of identification (AI Reading and/or Math, AG Reading and/or Math, IG Reading and/or Math). Recommendations for clustering of identified students are as follows:

\*4-8 students (K-5)

\*8-12 students (6-12)

\*Minimum of 45 minutes twice weekly (K-5)/daily (middle/high)

Cross Grade Subject Acceleration provides advanced learners opportunities to be placed with older peers for part of the school day, while remaining with grade level peers for the majority of the day. Whole Grade Acceleration/Grade Skipping provides, on a case-by-case basis, opportunities for advanced learners who demonstrate readiness both academically and socially and emotionally to be placed in the next grade with older peers for the entire day. Extension/Enrichment and Independent Study opportunities, as well as extra-curricular opportunities, provide advanced learners opportunities to be with like peers or to work on their own, to extend their academic areas of expertise and/or individual interests and passions for personalized learning experiences that may lead to adult careers. These opportunities also occur through core classroom instruction through flexible grouping. RCSS provides blended learning opportunities for advanced learners across all grade bands through 1:1 technology devices.

RCSS offers accelerated math courses at both the middle and high school levels. Compacted Mathematics 6 & 7, as well as Math 1 in grade 8 are available for identified students and students who qualify for accelerated mathematics courses based on a district rubric that includes math placement test scores, academic performance in the area of mathematics, teacher recommendation, and Education Value-Added Assessment System mathematics prediction data. Students in grades 3-12 scoring Level 5 on End-of-Grade/Course Mathematics Tests shall be enrolled in advanced/accelerated Compacted Mathematics in grades 6 and 7, and Math 1 in grade 8 at the middle grades level and mathematics courses deemed advanced/accelerated at the high school level.

RCSS is committed to building the capacity of teachers of advanced learners in how to accelerate NCSCOS standards across all grades and subjects. Acceleration opportunities are aligned with and support the work of the Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS), district-wide professional development, and the RCSS AIG Academy. MTSS provides a platform for students' individual academic and social-emotional needs to be identified and served using research-based best practices and

instructional strategies. District-wide professional development aligned with the RCSS Continuous Improvement Framework and RCSS School Improvement Plans focus on differentiated instruction and social-emotional learning.

The RCSS AIG Academy provides intensive, hands-on learning for cohorts of regular education teachers and other support staff. The academy focuses on cultivating learning environments reflective of a growth mindset, recognition of students' multiple intelligences and learning styles, differentiated instruction strategies, and Future Ready Skills (4Cs: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity, and SEL). Academy participants spend extended time learning how to differentiate the affective/learning environment domain, as well as content, process, and product, which is critical to the success of under-represented populations of students, such as students of poverty (Slocumb-Payne, 2000). Other departments such as Exceptional Children and English as Second Language provide co-teaching training for regular education teachers.

### **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:** RCSS expects all teachers of gifted learners to employ diverse and effective instructional practices according to students' identified abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles, in order to address a wide range of academic learning needs across all grade levels. Knowledge of students' multiple intelligences, individual learning styles, and learning profiles is beneficial when planning flexible groups, cooperative learning groups, and student learning tasks that afford students choices (e.g. RAFT, Choice Boards) and personalized learning experiences.

Teachers are expected to demonstrate knowledge of how to scaffold lessons, which provides students clear learning trajectories/progressions that support student mastery of standards. Tiered lessons afford students opportunities to extend their learning through deeper and more complex experiences through concept-based units/lessons, shared-inquiry, and/or inquiry-based experiences. Tiered lessons occur during core instruction through cluster and flexible grouping of instruction, as well as through opportunities for independent, personalized learning experiences. Formative assessment strategies, particularly pre-assessment strategies (e.g. Anticipation Guides) are critical for determining students' levels of readiness for tiered lessons that extend content standards for advanced learners. Other formative assessment data, such as district NC Check-Ins and common formative assessments (CFAs) developed by teachers through professional learning team (PLT) meetings, provide data for teachers to effectively plan instruction reflective of specific research-based best practices that address the learning needs of all students.

Support for building teachers' capacity to employ diverse and effective instructional practices occurs through a variety of methods. Instructional rounds occur each semester at all schools. District and school personnel comprise teams of educators who provide specific feedback to teachers and administrators based on classroom observations. District and school staff worked collaboratively to design an online instrument (Google Form) to utilize during instructional rounds. The online form is reflective of research-based best practices that should be visible across all classrooms. Data from instructional rounds are extremely effective for school personnel to reflect upon and determine areas of

focus for PLT meetings, and professional development.

Another layer of support for all teachers is professional development provided during monthly lead teacher meetings. A lead teacher is assigned to each school in RCSS. These accomplished teachers provide coaching and feedback through professional development and face-to-face contact with teachers in their respective schools. These expert groups of educators are led by lead teachers and curriculum specialists at the district level who provide high quality professional development on research-based best practices that align with the overall instructional framework of the district. School-based lead teachers utilize their personal levels of expertise in curriculum, instruction, and assessment to provide differentiated professional development to support and meet the unique needs of their respective schools.

District lead teachers and instructional specialists provide professional development for support teachers certified in English as Second Language (ESL), Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG), and Exceptional Children (EC) through monthly meetings. Support specialists are trained in evidence-based practices and resources specific to their respective areas of expertise, as well as practices and resources relevant for all students. Professional development is also provided by district lead teachers and instructional specialists for all certified staff in specific instructional strategies and practices that are applicable for meeting the needs of all learners (e.g. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and co-teaching).

Finally, teachers across the district are afforded the following:

- \*Opportunities to participate in RCSS AIG Academy
- \*Opportunities to attend high quality professional development through the Piedmont Triad Education Consortium (PTEC), subject-area specific professional development (e.g. NC Association of Gifted and Talent annual conference for AIG Specialists, Advanced Placement summer PD, mentorships/internships through the Career Technical Education Department, district summer professional development opportunities), pursuit of National Board Certification, and Advanced degrees/certifications from community colleges and/or colleges and universities

### **Practice C**

Incorporates a variety of evidence-based resources that enhance student learning.

### **District Response:**

RCSS expects teachers of gifted and advanced learners to incorporate a variety of evidence-based resources that enhance student learning. The following resources are provided by the AIG department and are incorporated by AIG Specialists and regular education teachers across all AIG Program Service options:

- \*Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences
- \*Learning Styles: Silver/Strong/Hanson, Kolb, McCarthy, Gregorc
- \*Mindset: Dweck
- \*Revised Bloom's Taxonomy
- \*Webb's Depth of Knowledge
- \*Kaplan's Depth and Complexity
- \*Parallel Curriculum: Tomlinson, Kaplan, Renzulli, Purcell, Leppien, Burns
- \*Junior Great Books
- \*Jacob's Ladder materials

\*Socratic Seminars

\*Literature Circles

\*Problem/Project-Based Learning: Defined STEM, The PBL Project, NCDPI AIG-IRP Lessons, Gallagher's PBL for Middle Grades Core Subjects

\*Costa and Kallick's Habits of Mind

These resources are incorporated into instruction through a variety of ways. Identified resources are primarily used to extend the learning of core standards through resource classes, cluster classes, and enrichment/extension opportunities within the master schedule. Junior Great Books and Jacob's Ladder materials are used primarily by AIG Specialists in resource or in-class cluster group settings. District curriculum and pacing guide work focus on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge. This work aligns with the instructional planning process of both AIG Specialists and regular education core teachers, as they plan extended lessons incorporating the highest levels of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge. Resources such as Socratic Seminars, Problem/Project-Based Learning, and Parallel Curriculum are encouraged across all classrooms as evidence-based best practices that are beneficial for all students.

AIG Specialists at each school maintain AIG classroom libraries. Materials are also accessible through online resources on the district website, the district learning management system (Canvas) courses/sites, Google sites, and online subscriptions/memberships purchased through gifted and/or other curriculum departments.

**NOTE:** An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is middle grades identified/advanced learners. The AIG Program Specialist will work collaboratively with middle grades core classroom teachers, who serve as AIG Specialists at their respective schools, and middle grades lead teachers to provide blended professional development through face-to-face, as well as online (Canvas courses, video conferencing) opportunities, to build teachers' capacity to incorporate a variety of evidence-based resources (e.g. Gallagher's PBL for Middle Grades Core Subjects, Socratic Seminars, Kaplan's Depth and Complexity).

#### **Practice D**

Fosters the development of future-ready skills including critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and leadership.

#### **District Response:**

RCSS is committed to graduating students who are prepared for post-secondary education and/or careers. Essential to being future-ready are specific skills such as critical communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and leadership. In order to develop curriculum that is rigorous and challenging, and curriculum that enables students to go beyond proficiency (mastery of grade level standards), future-ready skills should be integrated into units and lessons. According to Gregory, Kaufeldt, & Mattos, (2016), the benefits of incorporating 21st century skills, particularly the 4Cs, "go well beyond initiating students in a basic understanding of the skills and concepts included in the standards. The 4Cs are, in fact, survival (life) skills that will prepare students for an ever-changing digital world and help students think for themselves and eventually succeed in the workforce and everyday life. Incorporating these skills into the curriculum, therefore, adds rigor to the instructional plan and develops students' cognitive depth and understanding."

AIG Specialists integrate the 4Cs into daily instruction for identified students. The AIG Program

Specialist incorporates into the RCSS AIG Academy an intentional focus on not only a basic understanding of the skills, but what the skills look like when applied in classrooms. By adding the 4Cs into lessons, teachers add value and rigor. Initially, when educators begin to explore the 21st century skills (<http://www.battelleforkids.org/networks/p21>), they connect 21st century skills to technology and computers. A deep dive into the 4Cs reveals that while various technology devices are tools that can be utilized by students and teachers to explore the 21st century skills and 4Cs, incorporating the 4Cs into daily instruction is accomplished through intentional instructional strategies. For example:

- \*Critical Thinking strategies: Problem/Project-based learning; real-world experiences; authentic tasks
  - \*Communication: Close reading, blogging, oral presentations, debates, Socratic Seminars, RAFT writing
  - \*Creativity: Problem/Project-Based Learning experiences - economic and social entrepreneurialism; Service Learning Projects, artistic tasks, musical tasks
  - \*Collaboration: Cooperative learning, Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaws, Tweets, Clock Buddies
- (Examples of 4Cs excerpted from Best Practices at Tier 1: Daily Differentiation for Effective Instruction, Gregory, Kaufeldt, & Mattos, 2016. This text is a core text for the RCSS AIG Academy and district Multi-Tiered Support System - MTSS.) The RCSS AIG Academy participants are trained on the 4Cs and are expected to develop and present lessons demonstrating the incorporation of the 4Cs. Academy time is spent exploring multiple resources that provide models of how to integrate the 4Cs, along with Kaplan's Depth and Complexity, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, and Webb's Depth of Knowledge to extend students' learning beyond proficiency.

The AIG Program Specialist works collaboratively with district departments and district lead teachers/specialists to align the work of the gifted education department with programs/initiatives and expectations for daily core instruction to include the 4Cs. AIG Specialists are expected to incorporate the 4Cs across AIG Program service options for identified, as well as all students (e.g. Resource and Core Cluster Classrooms, Extension/Enrichment, Extra-curricular activities, Independent Study). Specific instructional strategies, such as inquiry-based experiences (e.g. Problem/Project-Based Learning experiences), and shared inquiry experiences, (e.g. Socratic Seminars) are reflective of how the 4Cs promote and foster opportunities for students to grow their leadership skills.

RCSS is committed to a continued focus on and expectation that the 4Cs and opportunities for leadership are developed in all students. Talent development opportunities such as mentorships and internships offered through College & Career Pathways, as well as Career Technical Education courses, provide secondary students meaningful real-world experiences that support the development of the 4Cs and leadership opportunities.

### **Practice E**

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

### **District Response:**

Analysis of AIG subgroup data indicate that 95% of identified students are College and Career Ready (CCR). The majority of identified students perform at Level 4 and /or Level 5 (above Level 3 Proficient), indicating mastery above grade level expectations. This is a point of pride for the district. Data from state policy mandated tests/assessments such as Read to Achieve (mCLASS) for students

in grade 3, End-of-Grade, End-of-Course, NC Final Exams, WorkKeys Assessment System, and American College Testing (ACT) assessments for students in grades 3-12 provide valuable information regarding individual student achievement and are insightful for planning differentiated classroom curriculum and instruction, as well as grouping students in classrooms at the beginning of the year, and flexibly grouping of students throughout the school year.

RCSS teachers utilize professional learning team (PLT) meetings to analyze data in order to flexibly group students for differentiated instruction. Flexible grouping of identified and students demonstrating mastery of core standards affords students opportunities for accelerated extension instruction. Principals are expected to provide opportunities during and/or after the school day for AIG Specialists to participate in PLTs that focus on data analysis and flexible grouping of students. AIG Specialists also provide data from Cognitive Aptitude Tests (CogATs) reports generated through Data Mart, an online reporting system, as well as data for K-2 students recommended for formal AIG identification screening. CogAT data provide individual student profiles with specific instructional strategies that provide AIG Specialists and regular core teachers with data that inform flexible grouping of students. Analysis of reports, such as mCLASS Beginning/Middle/End-of Year assessments, and End-of-Grade/End-of-Course (EOG/EOC) goal summaries, provide classroom teachers a wealth of information for differentiated instructional planning. Another valuable data resource useful for intentional, flexible grouping of students is the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS). Individual student prediction EVAAS data are used for scheduling and grouping students at the beginning of the year. Another source of data from state-mandated policy are data from the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS, a state mandated initiative that impacts and guides instructional decisions. MTSS is designed to meet the needs of all learners.

Analysis of these data support "push in" services by K-5 AIG Specialists for accelerated guided reading group instruction. Quarterly assessments (NC Check-Ins) in grades 3-12 provide formative assessment data to inform flexible grouping opportunities for gifted, as well as all students, Data are beneficial for grades 6-12, where students are clustered based on areas of identification. Within clusters of identified students, levels of readiness and mastery of standards vary. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate formative assessment in their daily instructional planning and delivery. Data collected through ongoing formative assessments such as pre/post assessments are extremely beneficial for adjusting instruction in order to differentiate curriculum and instruction, which often provides opportunities for fluid, flexible grouping of students.

While a point of pride for RCSS is that 95% of identified students are performing at levels considered to be College Career Ready, individual student growth data accessible through the RCSS Data Mart, an internal data base, and the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), provide a wealth of information on individual student growth from one school year to the next. This work is anticipated to have significant implications for gifted learners. Research also supports that growth mindset strategies and practices cultivate learning environments that address the affective needs of all students, especially under-represented populations of students who may demonstrate the potential for gifted identification. On-going assessment, both formative and summative, to differentiate classroom curriculum and instruction and inform flexible grouping practices is a continued area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22.

### **Practice F**

Addresses the social and emotional needs of AIG students through affective curricular and instructional practices.

### **District Response:**

Survey data indicate that 75% of certified staff feel social and emotional learning needs (SEL) are supported through curricular and instructional practices. Approximately 74% of K-5 certified staff feel that AIG Specialists engage all learners in tasks that directly meet academic, intellectual, and SEL needs of students. Approximately 50% of certified staff feel that there is district support for collaboration among stakeholders to address SEL needs of students. In order for gifted students to reach their full potential, programs and services for identified students include strategies to meet SEL needs of students. Research supports that when emphasis on SEL needs is expected, learning is maximized and gifted students are more likely to reach their full academic potential. It is often assumed that gifted students do not exhibit SEL needs. However, research supports that gifted students do have SEL needs, some that are particularly unique to gifted learners, and some that are unique to all learners.

The RCSS AIG Program is committed to meeting SEL needs of gifted students. Addressing SEL needs is paramount to ensuring equity and access for gifted learners. According to Neihart, Pfeiffer & Cross (2016), "Today, we believe that both ability and environment must be considered because social and emotional characteristics shape and are shaped by interactions with others. Also, development must be understood within a cultural context because so many concepts (e.g., identity, achievement) are socially constructed. It is this interaction that makes growing up gifted a qualitatively different experience." RCSS believes it is critical to balance addressing SEL needs of identified learners with academic instruction.

Counselors are encouraged to provide classroom lessons, as well as individual counseling sessions, to meet SEL needs of gifted learners. Lessons may address:

\*SEL needs through Growth Mindset (Dweck, 2006,2016) and Habits of Mind (Costa & Kallick, 2008)

\*Materials, lessons focusing on specific SEL characteristics of gifted students such as perfectionism, gender differences, underachievement, peer relationships, bullying, and creativity (Niehart, Pfeiffer, & Cross, 2016)

Resources available for AIG Specialists' and regular education core teachers' use include:

\*Social Emotional Curriculum With Gifted and Talented Students (VanTassel-Baska, Cross, & Olancho, 2009)

\*All Learning is Social and Emotional: Helping Students Develop Essential Skills for the Classroom and Beyond (Frey, Fisher, & Smith, 2019)

\*The Social and Emotional (SEL) Competencies developed by researchers at the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning ([www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)) that include specific strategies for developing self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, and relationship skills that when incorporated into daily academic instruction address SEL needs of students

An intentional focus during the RCSS AIG Academy is to provide professional development on how to

differentiate not only content, product, and process, but also learning environments as an opportunity to meet the affective needs of gifted learners, particularly identified students from under-represented populations of students. According to VanTassel- Baska, Cross, & Olenchak (2009), social and emotional curriculum and instruction for gifted learners includes opportunities for student self-assessment (e.g. Multiple Intelligences, Learning Styles, interest surveys), opportunities to make meaning from their learning (e.g. Bibliotherapy, Literature Circles), Talent Development (e.g. portfolios, journals, mentorships/internships), opportunities to grow emotional intelligence (e.g. differentiated curriculum and instruction that includes strategies and tasks that address students' affective needs).

### **Practice G**

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

### **District Response:**

RCSS is committed to cultivating and developing the potential of young (K-3) students through purposeful and intentional differentiated curriculum and instruction. RCSS elementary schools vary in the total number of students and student demographics. A point of pride in RCSS is the opportunity for K-2 students to participate in formal screening and identification processes for potential giftedness. However, the number of K-2 students meeting formal gifted identification criteria is small. Therefore, strategies to grow the potential of K-2 students are also in place. AIG Specialists may nurture individual and/or small groups of K-2 students through resource class "pull out" and/or core classroom "push in" instruction. AIG Specialists also consult with regular education core teachers to provide input on differentiated extension/enrichment opportunities for all students that include talent development strategies within the regular education class. Differentiated curriculum and instruction reflect incorporation of Future-Ready Skills (4Cs: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity, problem/project-based learning experiences, and exposure to potential adult careers.

Throughout the implementation of the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22, the AIG Program Specialist and the AIG Specialists team will review research from the National Association for Gifted Children Talent Development Task Force Report (November, 2015) and the Exploratory Study on the Identification of English Learners for Gifted and Talented Programs (<http://ncrge.uconn.edu>) to create awareness of and a call to action that talent development for all students, particularly young (K-3) students, is critical. A pilot at one elementary school will take place during the 2019-2020 school year. This pilot will focus on implementing the Primary Enrichment Thinking Skills (PET) materials with K-3 students. Primary Education Thinking Skills, or PETS, is a systematized enrichment and diagnostic thinking skills program. Lessons are presented in convergent analysis, divergent synthesis, visual/spatial thinking, and evaluation, suitable for grades K-3. The program aligns to the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. PETS helps build behavioral portfolios for talented learners that support a differentiated approach to their education, integrates flexibly into any existing primary curriculum, and offers opportunities for learners with different strengths to shine (<http://www.primaryeducationthinkingskills.com>). The district is committed to the development of a K-12 Talent Development Continuum. Therefore, an area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to explore ways to differentiate curriculum and instruction to develop the potential of K-3 students.

### **Practice H**

Develops and implements differentiated curriculum and instruction through collaboration among regular education teachers, AIG personnel, and other related instructional staff.

### **District Response:**

RCSS is committed to all teachers working collaboratively through professional learning teams (PLTs) and district professional learning communities (PLCs) to develop differentiated curriculum and instruction for gifted, as well as all learners. Using the work of Dufour & Dufour (1998), RCSS PLTs/PLCs focus on four essential questions:

1. What do students need to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know when they have learned it?
3. What will we do when they haven't learned it?
4. What will we do when they have learned it?

AIG Specialists collaborate with regular education teachers to provide insight on specific differentiated instructional strategies that meet the academic and social-emotional learning needs of gifted students. By providing PLT/PLC time for AIG Specialists to meet with regular education teachers both in their respective schools and across the district, an intentional focus is on the fourth essential question: What will we do when they have learned it?

The AIG Program Specialist collaborates with district leadership and district lead teachers/specialists through ongoing informal conversations, and monthly and quarterly district meetings to ensure that leadership across the district receives professional development and exposure to differentiated curriculum and instructional practices for gifted learners. Communication and collaboration with specialists from various departments (e.g. English as Second Language, Exceptional Children) provide opportunities for specialists to crosswalk and align best practices across multiple groups of students.

As current and revised standards are implemented across all grades and subjects, AIG Specialists will engage in summer work to develop differentiated extension lessons, particularly in the area of K-5 mathematics for use by regular education core teachers. Identification of resources and the development of differentiated extension lessons for middle school core teachers are areas of focus in the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22. Resources, such as Dr. Shelagh Gallagher's Problem-Based Learning materials for middle grades core teachers and Eidson, Iseminger, and Taibbi's Demystifying Differentiation in Middle School (2007), will be utilized by AIG Specialists and regular education teachers to develop differentiated curriculum and instruction for middle school students.

### **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:** Once the screening process is complete, the School-Based AIG (SBC-AIG) committee (SBC-AIG) meets to review all data captured on the RCSS AIG Nomination Log. The committee makes identification decisions based on these data, as well as any alternative sources of data

utilized throughout the process. Members of the SBC-AIG committee, determine whether students meet district AIG criteria for each grade span based on data provided through the screening process. Once decisions are made, district letters are disseminated to parents/guardians. AIG Specialists are available upon request to meet with parents/guardians of students who did not meet district criteria for identification. The RCSS AIG Screening/Identification/Placement forms are completed by the SBC-AIG committee once screening is complete. These forms require signatures of SBC-AIG Committee members, as well as parents/guardians. Signed, original forms are placed in students' AIG "blue" folders located in students' cumulative record folders in secure locations at schools.

Parents/guardians of students meeting district criteria for identification are invited to a SBC-AIG committee meeting to discuss and complete required AIG screening/identification/placement forms. Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) for identified students are developed during SBC-AIG committee meetings. AIG Specialists also gather feedback and input during the development process, and they share completed DEPs outlining a) Service Options, b) Content Modifications, and c) Programs/Instructional strategies with teachers of gifted students. DEPs include strategies for addressing SEL needs of identified students.

DEPs are developed for identified third graders following first semester screening, which allows for gifted services to begin second semester of the third grade year. DEPs for all other identified students are developed annually during the first 30 days of the school year. Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) for K-12 students referred for screening during designated windows of time and transfer students are developed on a case-by-case basis. DEPs are reviewed annually by AIG Specialists and teachers of gifted students during the August workdays and/or the first weeks of school. DEPs are reviewed with parents/guardians through student conferences, parent nights, Title I Parent Nights, and upon request by SBC-AIG committee and/or parents/guardians. Once the DEP process is complete, copies of identified students' signed DEPs are submitted by SBC-AIG committee to the district office of the AIG Program Specialist for review and approval. Copies of identified students' DEPs are maintained in a secure location in the AIG Program Specialist's office.

**NOTE:** Intellectually Gifted (IG) students may be served through any one or more services models; however, in order to meet the unique needs of IG students, development of the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) requires a team approach and includes specific strategies to address possible factors that impact IG students' lower academic performance (i.e. study skills, organizational skills, social emotional needs of twice-exceptional characteristics, highly-gifted characteristics).

**NOTE:** DEP documents are available in English and Spanish. Translators are available for SBC-AIG committee meetings.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**

- \*Explore Pre-AP/Springboard resources for middle grades English Language Arts.
- \*The AIG Program Specialist and AIG Specialists will provide training and professional development for regular education teachers on the 4Cs: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity.
- \*Develop a K-12 Talent Development Continuum reflective of opportunities to develop future-ready skills (4Cs and leadership skills) of identified and all students.
- \*Explore Talent Development curriculum and instructional strategies to grow the potential of young (K-3) learners.
- \*Collaborate across departments to explore specific resources to support K-12 Talent Development.

- \*The AIG Program Specialist and AIG Specialists will collaborate with regular education teachers to develop differentiated curriculum and instruction units/lessons.
- \*Revise Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) to reflect designated sections within the DEP for strategies specific to Intellectually Gifted (IG) students and strategies for meeting (SEL) needs of all identified students (Comment boxes are currently used within the DEP are available for documenting specific strategies for IG students and SEL strategies for all identified students).

**Sources of Evidence:**

- \*Professional Development Agendas/Presentations: Future-ready skills (4Cs); Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
- \*Differentiated Units/Lesson Plans
- \*K-5/6-8 Extension lessons
- \*K-12 Talent Development Continuum
- \*Revised Differentiated Education Plan template
- \* Differentiated Lesson Plans (DEPs)
- \*Notes/Minutes/Agendas from professional learning team (PLT) meetings at schools/professional learning community (PLC) meetings at the district level
- \*Sample rosters: flexible groups of students
- \*Summative/Formative data used to adjust (differentiate) instruction and flexibly group students
- \*List of Extra-curricular activities aligned with the needs of gifted learners

## Standard 4: 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 Randolph County School System employs an AIG-licensed educator who guides, plans, develops, implements, revises, and monitors the local AIG program. The AIG Program Specialists meets and demonstrates requirements as outlined in the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System.

The AIG Program Specialist in the RCSS has the following responsibilities:

- \*Collaborates and coordinates the screening, referral, identification, and placement of gifted students.
- \*Reviews and audits for compliance purposes all AIG paperwork submitted by AIG Specialists and other designated personnel (e.g. high school counselors serving as AIG contacts).
- \*Advocates for gifted learners and serves as a liaison across all stakeholders: district departments, schools, parents, and the community.
- \*Communicates with and seeks partnerships between the district and institutes of higher education and other community businesses and organizations.
- \*Oversees the implementation of RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22.
- \*Participates in the annual NCDPI state meeting; quarterly regional meetings; and the annual NCAGT Conference.
- \*Participates in the development and monitoring of the AIG budget and funds: allotments, professional development, purchasing of materials for district and schools, and testing materials.
- \*Maintains and updates the AIG website, district forms, brochures, and parent handbook.
- \*Coordinates the NC Governor's School selection process.
- \*Coordinates the annual district K-8 Spelling Bee.
- \*Plans and facilitates monthly K-8 AIG Specialist Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings to develop capacity and leadership potential among AIG Specialists and to ensure the academic and social-emotional needs of gifted learners are being met.
- \*Plans and facilitates professional development within the district: the district AIG Academy, bi-annual counselor meetings, district curriculum departments, monthly administrative team meetings, quarterly district lead teacher meetings, and K-12 professional development (summer/school year).
- \*Observes and provides feedback across grade spans to teachers of gifted students: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12.
- \*Participates in district instructional rounds conducted at all schools.
- \*Communicates and provides professional development for evidence-based curriculum strategies and practices for gifted learners across all stakeholders.
- \*Aligns communication and professional development for evidence-based curriculum and practices for gifted learners with "big picture" programs and initiatives, as outlined in the RCSS Strategic Plan and the RCSS Continuous Improvement Framework.

### **Practice B**

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

### **District Response:**

RCSS AIG Specialists roles and responsibilities include:

- \*Must hold a valid North Carolina teaching license.
- \*Must hold a North Carolina add-on license for Academically Gifted (License Area Number 88087).
- \*Must demonstrate and meet required expectations through the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (professional growth plan, evaluation).
- \*Coordinates the screening/referral/identification/placement process for gifted students.
- \*Coordinates and facilitates School-Based AIG Committee meetings that include parents/guardians throughout the school year.
- \*Develops and monitors required AIG paperwork: Screening/referral/identification placement paperwork; Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs); Performance Task work samples; RCSS AIG Nomination Log; Nurturing Logs; NC AIG Headcount reports.
- \*Reviews DEPs with regular education teachers of gifted students on an annual and as needed basis.
- \*Reviews identified student summative/formative data with regular education teachers of gifted students through Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings both during and after school.
- \*Collaborates with regular education teachers of gifted students to provide training and professional development for: the AIG screening, referral, identification, and placement process; AIG service models; AIG content modifications; AIG curriculum strategies, resources, and practices.
- \*Collaborates with regular education teachers of gifted students to analyze district subgroup data for under-represented populations of students who may demonstrate potential gifted identification.
- \*K-5 AIG Specialists provide direct services to identified students through resource, core classroom cluster grouping, core classroom flexible grouping, extension/enrichment opportunities, Subject/Grade Acceleration, Whole Grade Acceleration/Grade Skipping, and/or Independent Study.
- \*6-12 AIG Specialists provide direct services through core classroom cluster grouping, core classroom flexible grouping, extension/enrichment, and accelerated courses (e.g. Compacted Mathematics 6/7, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math 1, Honors/Advanced Placement, Credit By Demonstrated Mastery, College Career Promise Pathway Courses, Online Course support, Independent Study.)
- \*Models/Demonstrates evidence-based curriculum strategies, resources, and practices in their personal instructional planning and delivery.
- \*Demonstrates ongoing review of current research and evidence-based curriculum strategies, resources and practices (e.g. NCDPI AIG Booster Shots, NAGT and NAGT websites/conference materials, and online resources such as [www.pblproject.com](http://www.pblproject.com); [www.byrdseed.com](http://www.byrdseed.com)).

### **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:**

2018-19 certified staff survey indicate the following:

- \*53% indicate that professional development requirements are specific and appropriate for personnel involved in AIG programs and services.

\*54% indicate that professional development is aligned between AIG programs and services and district initiatives (state/local).

Certified staff requested professional development in the following areas in order to strengthen their capacity to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of gifted students:

- \*Differentiated Instruction (specifically for Tier 1 Core Instruction - MTSS)
- \*Characteristics and needs of gifted students (specifically the Social-Emotional Learning - SEL needs of gifted learners)
- \*Strategies for extension and/or enrichment opportunities for gifted learners
- \*Growth Mindset;
- \*Evidence-based curriculum strategies, resources and practices (e.g. Depth and Complexity, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Depth of Knowledge, Multiple Intelligences, Learning Styles, Adjusting Instruction -scaffolding, tiered assignments, assessment)

Professional development for AIG programs and services should include all personnel serving gifted students, which includes: AIG Specialists, regular classroom teachers, support teachers (e.g. ESL, EC), counselors, and school administrators. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to ensure alignment of professional development across all grade bands between evidence-based curriculum, resources, and practices for gifted learners with the "big picture" programs/initiatives across the district.

A primary strategy for delivery of professional development is the RCSS AIG Academy. The AIG academy is open to regular education teachers, as well as support teachers. The AIG Program Specialist collaborates annually with school administrators to recruit two cohorts of teachers (K-5/ 6-12) to participate in the three-day academy experience. The academy is offered either during the summer months or during the school year. Whenever possible, the academy is offered during the school year in order for participants to conduct action research implementing evidence-based curriculum, resources, and practices explored during the academy experience. The RCSS AIG Academy focuses on the following:

- \*NC General Statute 115C-150.5-.8 (Article 9B) requirements/expectations for Academically and Intellectually Gifted Students
- \*Characteristics/Needs of Gifted Students (specifically social-emotional learning of under-represented populations of gifted students)
- \*Differentiated Instruction
- \*Growth Mindset
- \*Multiple Intelligences/Learning Styles
- \*Adjusting Instruction: Assessment, Flexible Grouping, Scaffolding, Tiered Assignments;
- \*Extension/Enrichment Strategies
- \*Future Ready Skills (specifically the 4Cs: Critical Thinking, Communication, Creativity, and Collaboration)
- \*Problem/Project-Based Learning

Other professional development provided by the AIG Program Specialist and AIG Specialists includes:

- \*PD for counselors and other support teachers (ESL, EC) a minimum of two times per year - 1 PD focusing on the RCSS AIG Plan/Identification/Services, and 1 PD focusing on evidence-based curriculum, resources,

and practices (e.g. Growth Mindset, Social-Emotional Learning - particularly for under-represented populations, Differentiated Instruction, Adjusting Instruction, Extension/Enrichment research/strategies).

\*PD for district/school instructional lead teachers and school administrators focusing on the district's gifted program and plan, services, and evidence-based curriculum, resources, and practices (e.g. Growth Mindset strategies, Social-Emotional Learning strategies - particularly for under-represented populations, Differentiated Instruction, Adjusting Instruction, Extension/Enrichment research/strategies).

**NOTE:** Professional Development materials and resources are accessible through the district's learning management system (Canvas), the district website, and digital resources such as Google Drive.

### **Practice D**

Provides general education services by personnel who have earned an AIG add-on license or have met the LEA requirements for that position.

### **District Response:**

RCSS requires teachers of gifted learners (both AIG Specialists and regular education teachers, particularly Mathematics and English/Language Arts teachers, to successfully complete one or more of the following preparation paths:

- 1) AIG add-on license through an institute of higher education
- 2) AIG add-on license by earning required score on PRAXIS test
- 3) Successful completion of the RCSS AIG Academy (which does not result in an add-on AIG license)

**NOTE:** Teachers participating in the RCSS AIG Academy receive information for how to pursue add-on AIG licenses through institutes of higher education and/or by taking the required PRAXIS.

Students identified as academically and/or intellectually gifted are clustered in core classrooms at grades 3-5, grades 6-8, and grades 6-12. Identified students are served by teachers who have successfully completed at least one of the three preparation paths for teaching AIG students. Services vary based on grade spans. For example, clusters of gifted students in grades 3-5 receive direct services from a district-funded AIG Specialist assigned to the school. Middle grades students identified in the areas of Mathematics and/or Reading are strategically clustered for Math and English/Language Arts courses. Identified students in grades 9-12 are encouraged and counseled during the annual registration process to enroll in challenging, rigorous high school courses. Identified students are clustered in high school courses based on enrollment.

The AIG Program Specialist collaborates with school administrators to provide oversight, guidance, and monitoring of both the scheduling of identified students, and the delivery of program services for identified students. The AIG Program Specialist monitors through reports generated by the RCSS Human Resource department the number of AIG licensed teachers. The AIG Program Specialist monitors through NC PowerSchool classroom enrollment of identified students. K-5 and 6-8 AIG Specialists collaborate with administrators and scheduling teams to ensure that identified students are clustered according to the district's AIG plan. Specialists also monitor the academic progress of AIG students in all classes. Designated high school counselors work with all counselors and teachers of

identified

students to ensure students are scheduled and clustered according to AIG plan. High school counselors monitor the academic progress of AIG students.

### **Practice E**

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

### **District Response:**

RCSS Program Goals include:

- \*Implement a consistent screening, referral, and identification process to ensure equity and access across all grade levels.
- \*Utilize multiple sources of data for students, particularly under-represented populations of students, to demonstrate potential giftedness.
- \*Provide a variety of program services that meet the unique, individual academic and social-emotional learning needs of gifted learners.
- \*Utilize multiple sources of both summative and formative assessment data to cluster and flexibly group students for instruction.
- \*Implement evidence-based curriculum strategies, resources, and practices that are rigorous and challenging in order to increase student achievement and growth of gifted learners.
- \*Build the capacity of all teachers of gifted learners to differentiate instruction in order to accelerate and extend their learning beyond mastery of grade level standards.
- \*Build the capacity of all personnel working with gifted learners to meet the social-emotional needs of identified students.
- \*Promote enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities that align with the needs of gifted learners.
- \*Develop a K-12 Talent Development Continuum for all students.
- \*Increase opportunities for AIG Specialists to collaborate with regular education teachers.
- \*Increase the number of certified staff who earn an add-on AIG license.
- \*Provide intensive professional development through the RCSS AIG Academy for regular education teachers, as well as support teachers, to build their capacity to meet the unique academic and social-emotional learning needs of gifted learners.
- \*Continue to grow partnerships with institutes of higher education and other community businesses and organizations.
- \*Implement the RCSS AIG Plan to fidelity, through data-driven decisions and specific strategies to monitor and evaluate the AIG plan.

RCSS is committed to increasing the academic growth of all identified students. Professional development for teachers is critical. The AIG Program Specialist collaborates with all district departments, district and school lead teachers, and school administrators to provide research and resources, as well as high-quality professional development that meets the academic and social-emotional learning needs of gifted students. Research, resources, and PD align with the "big picture" programs/initiatives of the district. For example, the AIG Program Specialist collaborates with the district English as Second Language lead teacher to facilitate professional development for ESL teachers on how best practices in gifted education (e.g. Growth Mindset and Social-Emotional Learning) align with and meet the needs of culturally-ethnically diverse students.

AIG Specialists collaborate at the school level providing research and resources, as well as training and professional development around best practices in gifted education. For example, AIG Specialists provide research and resources on using Kaplan's Depth and Complexity icons to increase rigor and extend the learning for gifted, as well as all students.

### **Practice F**

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

### **District Response:**

The AIG Program team meets monthly. Designated time during monthly meetings includes opportunities for the team to function as a professional learning team (PLT). Specialists utilize this time to develop evidence-based AIG curriculum, resources, and practices that include:

- \*Differentiated Units/Lessons that are concept-based (e.g. Scaffolding, Formative Assessment, Tiered Assignments)
- \*Extension/Enrichment lessons that incorporate Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Webb's Depth of Knowledge Kaplan's Depth and Complexity Icons, and the 4Cs: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity
- \*Socratic Seminars
- \*Project/Problem-Based Learning
- \*Multiple Intelligences/Learning Styles
- \*Growth Mindset strategies
- \*Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies

Specialists utilize Google Drive shared and team folders to upload exemplar units/lessons and resources. During monthly AIG Specialists meeting, PLT time is spent not only developing, but also sharing, reflecting, and refining exemplars uploaded to the Google Drive. AIG Specialists also share exemplars and resources from the Google Drive with regular education teachers and other personnel directly involved with gifted learners.

Principals are expected to provide time for AIG Specialists to meet with regular education teachers during grade/subject level PLTs. During PLT meetings, AIG Specialists share exemplar units/lessons, as well as resources, with regular education teachers. District Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are also opportunities for all teachers to collaborate and develop units/lessons that include extension/enrichment activities/assignments for gifted learners. Participants in the RCSS AIG Academy are expected to apply what they learn during the academy experience in their respective classrooms. Time is provided during the academy for teachers to collaborate and plan differentiated units/lessons that extend grade level standards and incorporate strategies that meet SEL needs of gifted learners.

### **Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**

- \*Utilize AIG monthly meetings to explore research and resources to further support meeting the academic and social-emotional learning needs of gifted learners (e.g. NCDPI AIG Booster Shots).
- \*Provide additional resources and professional development for middle grades core subject cluster teachers (e.g. Inclusion of middle grades AIG Specialists in the district back-to-school meeting with K-5 AIG Specialists in order to receive professional development on Project-Based Learning).

- \*Provide access to evidence-based AIG curriculum, resources, and practices for all staff through face-to-face professional development and online courses and digital resources.
- \*Explore fiscal and/or human resource support for teachers interested in taking the PRAXIS test (5358) for an add-on AIG license (e.g. coaching sessions, practice tests, study guides).
- \*Explore and utilize video conferencing and the district's learning management system, Canvas, to provide virtual professional development and resources for AIG Specialists and/or regular education teachers.

**Sources of Evidence:**

- \*Rosters of AIG certified staff
- \*Roles/Responsibilities of AIG Program Specialist and AIG Specialists
- \*PLT/Professional Development agendas, presentations, resources
- \*Exemplar units/lessons developed by both AIG Specialists and regular education teachers
- \*Online resources (e.g. Google Drive, Canvas)

## **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 that are intentional and meaningful to support the following needs of AIG students:

- \* academic and intellectual
- \* social and emotional.

### **District Response:**

RCSS is committed to continued development of partnerships with parents/families to support the needs of gifted learners. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to implement specific strategies to move beyond the communication level to developing intentional and meaningful partnerships with parents/families. 2018-19 parent survey data support that communication regarding screening and identification occurs. Parents/families indicate involvement in and opportunities to review their students' Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs). Parents/families also indicate awareness of extra-curricular activities for their gifted students. 2018-19 parent survey data indicate that 61% of parents/families agree that their students' DEPs address both academic and social-emotional learning (SEL) needs, and that strategies to meet their academic and SEL needs are adequately implemented in all classroom scenarios. 53% of parents/families indicate that the district partners with them to ensure their students receive the most appropriate services.

Throughout the development of the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22, the AIG Program Specialist, as well as the school level AIG Specialists worked diligently to share parent survey data, and to gather feedback and input from administrators and teachers for ideas to move beyond communication to the development of partnerships. Strategies to be implemented include:

- \*Increase opportunities by the district to provide specific sessions for gifted parents/families to learn from guest speakers (e.g. Duke Tip) about summer opportunities outside the school setting.
- \*Offer specific breakout sessions for parents/families of gifted learners during school-wide events, Open Houses, parent nights, Title I parent nights, where AIG Specialists provide information/training on evidence-based AIG curriculum, resources, and practices utilized by all staff involved with gifted learner.
- \*Offer specific breakout sessions for parents of gifted learners during school-wide events/ Open Houses, parent nights/Title I parent nights, where AIG Specialists provide information/training on meeting SEL needs of gifted learners.
- \*Strengthen communications from district/schools (e.g. newsletters, AIG newsletters, district/school websites, district social media) to better inform parents how to access resources to support academic and SEL needs of their gifted learners.
- \*Strengthen the RCSS School-Based AIG (SBC-AIG) Committee process by revising the DEPs to reflect strategies that support SEL needs.
- \*Partner with district departments, building on professional development provided by the AIG Program Specialist with departments that serve under-represented populations of students, and to integrate information/training during parent/family meetings/events strategies to meet the academic and SEL needs of under-represented gifted learners.

\*Notify and encourage parents/families through all communications of opportunities for both gifted students and their parents/families to participate in activities and events available through community partnerships with institutes of higher education, community/business organizations, and faith-based partners.

### **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 Randolph County School System AIG Plan 2019-22 and the RCSS AIG Parent Handbook are posted and accessible to parents/families through the district website. The AIG Program Specialist and AIG Specialists utilize district and school meetings and events to share with all stakeholders, including students' parents/families, information on how to access the district's AIG plan, specific policies and procedures that support gifted learners (e.g. policies for grouping students, accelerating students - Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, extra-curricular activities, Dual Enrollment). School Messenger, an automated phone message system, is utilized to notify parents/families of gifted learners information regarding the local AIG program, plan, and opportunities. School newsletters and individual AIG Specialists' newsletters are utilized to share information with parents/families. Brochures and pamphlets/fliers also communicate AIG program information to parents/families.

### **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:**

Parent survey data indicate that communication of the AIG program and plan to parents/families does occur. However, an area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to ensure that communication is two-way. RCSS establishes and utilizes an advisory committee to develop the local AIG program and plan. The advisory group is established through both written and electronic invitations from the AIG Program Specialist. The AIG Program Specialist invites AIG Specialists, a limited number of administrators and teachers by grade spans and geographic quadrants, and parents/guardians identified by AIG Specialists to join the group. The advisory group meets a minimum of two times during the school year, typically once in the fall and once in the spring.

The advisory group was expanded this year to include additional district staff (e.g. English as Second Language and Exceptional Children district lead teachers, and Student Services personnel). K-12 administrators and teachers at each grade span are also members of the advisory committee. Parents/Guardians of students at each grade span are invited to participate on the advisory committee. This group is representative of student demographics in RCSS. The advisory committee reviews survey data, participates in activities to "unpack" program standards, and provides input and feedback on how to improve. Improved two-way communication allows parents/families opportunities to provide feedback during the development of, and the implementation process, as well as during monitoring phase of the plan.

### **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:**

RCSS is committed to providing information in native languages to parents/families. English continues to be the primary language in RCSS. There are sixteen languages spoken in RCSS. The top six languages spoken are: English, Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, Chinese, and Vietnamese. Hispanic students represent 18.57% of the total population. Approximately 5.78% of RCSS students are identified as English Learners(ELs).

Survey data indicate that parents/families receive limited information in their native language. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to provide information to parents/families and the community on an ongoing basis in their native languages. Specific strategies include:

- \*Identify and translate additional information for parents/families and the community on an ongoing basis. This includes printed copies (e.g. newsletters, brochures, pamphlets/fliers), as well as digital notifications (e.g. School Messenger, district/school websites).
- \*Ensure translators are available for district/school parent meetings/events.
- \*Collaborate with departments such as Career Technical Education to inform parents/families of opportunities for mentorships, internships, and job shadowing experiences available to develop the talent of all students, particularly gifted learners. CTE opportunities afford students opportunities to explore extension/enrichment opportunities in their individual areas of academic expertise, interests/passions, and potential adult careers.

### **Practice E**

Partners with community stakeholders, such as institutions of higher education, local business and industry partners, and others to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services.

### **District Response:**

RCSS is committed to establishing partnerships with community stakeholders, such as institutions of higher education, local business and industry partners, and others, to enhance and gain support for AIG programs and services. 2018-2019 AIG Program Survey data across all stakeholders indicate a strong desire for gifted learners to participate in opportunities beyond the regular school day that will challenge them beyond their learning experiences during the school day. Partnerships that include opportunities for students to participate in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) experiences are requested. Partnerships that grow and showcase the artistic and creative talents of gifted learners are also requested.

An extensive list of community partners is maintained through the office of the RCSS Public Information Officer. This list serves as a valuable resource for all stakeholders. This list is updated on a regular basis. Partnerships range from a long-standing, highly efficient and effective partnership with the Randolph Community College, to local businesses/industries, and organizations that provide support and opportunities for students, staff, and parents/families, the Randolph County Arts Guild, Junior Achievement, a strong partnership with the Randolph County Community In Schools, and faith-based organizations that provide human resource support in the form of mentors, tutors, and student buddies. The AIG program collaborates with the CTE department to explore mentorships, internships,

job shadowing experiences, and programs/opportunities outside the school day that afford gifted learners opportunities to explore extension/enrichment opportunities in their individual academic areas of expertise, personal interests/passions, and potential adult careers.

Throughout the development and implementation of the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22, feedback was solicited from various stakeholder groups: the RCSS AIG Advisory Committee, district/school administrators, teachers, and parents/families regarding partnerships. The AIG Program Specialist, for example, worked with district and school administrators to not only identify all the partnerships that exist at their respective schools and across the district, but to also increase their understanding of the importance of aligning partnerships, which often overlap with extra-curricular activities and opportunities, with the needs of gifted learners. Professional development provided to administrators focused on research that defines the terms "extension" and "enrichment," as well as SEL needs of gifted learners. Once administrators' understanding of the two gifted terms was established, administrators connected the menu of existing partnerships with the academic and SEL needs of gifted learners. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to continue to build on this knowledge to not only grow, but to strengthen partnerships to enhance and gain support for the AIG program and services.

#### **Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**

- \*Use school websites, social media (Twitter), and newsletters to provide links to AIG Plan on district website.
- \*Explore preparing digital presentations to be shared through district and school communications that outline where to find information on the district and school websites regarding the AIG program and plan.
- \*Explore translating the entire AIG plan and any brochures, pamphlets/fliers and digital presentations focusing on the AIG program and plan (NOTE: RCSS AIG Parent Handbook and all AIG forms are available in English and Spanish).
- \*Explore and implement specific strategies to increase two-way communication between the district/schools and parents/families of gifted learners.
- \*Explore and implement specific strategies to increase two-way communication and participation between parents, district/school administrators, teachers who serve on the RCSS AIG Advisory Committee.
- \*Explore the possibility of including student members on the RCSS AIG Advisory Committee.
- \*Explore potential summer camps/expos that focus on meeting the academic and SEL needs of gifted learners.
- \*Explore partnerships and opportunities for gifted learners that afford students opportunities to demonstrate their individual areas of academic expertise, as well as to extend and enrich their personal interests/passions, and potential adult careers.
- \*Explore opportunities to re-instate partnerships with institutes of higher education beyond the local community college.

#### **Sources of Evidence:**

- \*RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 (district website)
- \*RCSS Website: communications, Twitter link, AIG and other department links to resources  
RCSS AIG Program communications: brochures, pamphlets/fliers, newsletters (English/Spanish)
- \*RCSS AIG Advisory Committee rosters, agendas, presentations
- \*RCSS Partnerships List (district website)
- \*Presentations, resources, materials: Professional development for administrators and staff

## **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 local board of education and sent to SBE/DPI for review and comment.

### **District Response:**

RCSS develops a written AIG plan to describe the local AIG program, in accordance with state legislation and State Board of Education policy (N.C.G.S. 115C-15-.5-8 {Article 9B}), which was approved by the Randolph County School System Board of Education on June 17, 2019, and was submitted to the State Board of Education/Department of Public Instruction for review and comment. The AIG plan was created by a team representing a variety of stakeholders, led by the RCSS AIG Program Specialist. The process used to develop the plan was comprehensive, as input and feedback were solicited from multiple groups of stakeholders. 2018-2019 RCSS AIG Program Survey data were analyzed and taken into consideration, as specific strategies and ideas for strengthening the next generation AIG plan were identified and written into the plan. The RCSS AIG Advisory Committee met twice. The first meeting took place on October 22, 2018. The second meeting was held on April 24, 2019.

The AIG Program Specialist facilitated monthly meetings with school level K-8 AIG Specialists. During each meeting AIG program standards were addressed, strategies and ideas for strengthening each standard were identified, survey data were analyzed, and drafts were developed and revised. A self-assessment was completed by the district AIG team during monthly meetings in the fall. The AIG Specialists also assisted with facilitating the AIG advisory committee meetings. In addition to the RCSS AIG Advisory Committee and AIG Specialists meetings, the AIG Program Specialist met with K-12 counselors, K-12 English as Second Language teachers, district and school lead teachers, and district/school administrators to solicit input and feedback. Focal Points, capturing the highlights of the new plan, were created and distributed to groups of stakeholders and were available for the RCSS Board of Education prior to approving the plan. The AIG Program Specialist attended state and regional meetings and participated in webinars focusing on the development of the local plan.

### **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:**

RCSS is committed to monitoring the implementation of the local AIG program and plan in accordance with current legislation and state policies. The AIG Program Specialist oversees monitoring the implementation of the AIG plan. District developed reflection and action plan guides ensure a systematic way of monitoring and reporting progress to all stakeholders. The AIG Program Specialist utilizes AIG Specialists meetings to identify specific action steps and to review progress made towards full implementation of the AIG program components. Monitoring tools utilized by the AIG

Program Specialist and the AIG team provide a systemic way to analyze data for annual updates to the AIG advisory committee and various stakeholder groups, including community partners, businesses, and organizations. Interim reports provided by NCDPI are completed and used as data for monitoring progress and updating stakeholders.

AIG Specialists at the school level are expected to utilize progress monitoring tools and data to support training/professional development with administrators and teachers at their respective schools. This may occur during after school faculty/professional learning team (PLT) meetings and/or grade level/subject PLT meetings during the school day. The AIG Program Specialist represents the AIG program during district leadership team meetings, and participates in the development and review of policies that impact gifted education. The Program Specialist reviews all new and revised policies with AIG Specialists during monthly meetings.

### **Practice C**

Develops and monitors a budget using allotted state funds, and local funds if applicable, to address the needs of the local AIG plan in accordance with state policy.

### **District Response:**

RCSS utilizes all allotted state funds (O34) for salaries, benefits, professional development, screening and identification assessments and tools, and the RCSS AIG Academy. The AIG Specialist works in conjunction with the district finance officer, and district leadership staff, to develop and monitor the AIG budget. Expenditures are reviewed for alignment with the AIG program goals and the contents of the AIG plan. The budget is monitored through monthly financial reports. The AIG Program Specialist collaborates with all district departments and schools to integrate AIG program goals and specific strategies of the AIG plan with other program areas that utilize other funding sources (e.g. Title I, II, III).

### **Practice D**

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

### **District Response:**

RCSS maintains, analyzes, and shares student achievement, student growth, and annual drop-out data for AIG students. The AIG Program Specialist collaborates with the Director Testing and Accountability, the Director for Student Services, the director for Career Technical Education, district directors and district lead teachers to collect and analyze AIG student achievement and growth data. Data include:

- \*North Carolina End-of-Grade/End-of-Course data in English Language Arts and Mathematics grades 3-12, and End-of-Grade Science data for grades 5 and 8
- \*North Carolina Final Exams
- \*WIDA ACCESS 2.0 data
- \*North Carolina Dropout Report reported on NCDPI website and through PowerSchool
- \*Local Database Warehouse to generate subgroup specific reports (e.g. reports utilized Normal Curve Equivalents- NCEs) to analyze individual student growth
- \*Educator Value-Added Assessment System (EVASS) subgroup growth data
- \*Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), American College Testing (ACT) data, and CTE WorkKeys data

The AIG Program Specialist reviews and shares AIG student achievement, student growth, and annual drop-out data with AIG Specialists, district directors and lead teachers, and school administrators.

**NOTE:** Student data are confidential. All staff adhere to the rules of Family Education and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) when sharing student data with the public.

### **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:**

Monitoring the representation, performance, and retention of gifted learners is critical to the overall success of the AIG program. RCSS monitors subgroup demographic data of students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, high gifted, and twice-exceptional to compare performance and retention of under-represented populations to the overall population of gifted students. Data for under-represented populations of students (e.g. English Learners, Twice Exceptional, Students With Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged students) are valuable when grouping students for instruction, nurturing, and specific talent development experiences.

Monitoring representation, performance, and retention of under-represented populations in the AIG program and across the entire district is indicative of a commitment to ensure equity and access to all students, and is an important reason why RCSS focuses on program accountability. Program accountability data impact the screening, referral, and identification process, specific evidence-based AIG curriculum strategies, resources, and practices, as well as the development of a district K-12 Talent Development Continuum. For example, data analysis of under-represented populations has resulted in the AIG team comparing under-represented student performance data within subgroups versus comparing these students' data to all students in the district or state. Demographic, performance, and retention data for under-represented populations of students offer insight when selecting alternative assessments and developing alternative checklists for potential gifted identification. The AIG Program Specialist collaborates with district personnel (e.g. ESL Lead Teacher) to analyze data of under-represented populations of students.

### **Practice F**

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

### **District Response:**

RCSS requires teachers of gifted learners (both AIG Specialists and regular education teachers, particularly Mathematics and English/Language Arts teachers) to successfully complete one or more of the following preparation paths:

- 1) AIG add-on license through an institute of higher education
- 2) AIG add-on license by earning required score on PRAXIS test specific to gifted education
- 3) Successful completion of the RCSS AIG Academy (which does not result in an AIG add-on license)

The AIG Program Specialist works collaboratively with the district's human resources department to maintain current data regarding the credentials of personnel serving AIG students. The AIG Program Specialist requests an annual report from the human resources department that reflects the number of AIG certified staff by school and the district office. The AIG Program Specialist also maintains rosters by schools of certified staff who successfully complete the three-day RCSS AIG Academy. Identified students are assigned to teachers who have completed one or more of the designated AIG preparation paths.

Human resource report data indicate that approximately 10% of RCSS certified staff hold AIG add-on licenses, which reflect a 10% increase since 2017. This increase is largely attributed to the completion of approximately 20 teachers who comprised a cohort of teachers funded by RCSS to earn AIG add-on licenses through UNC-Pembroke. Approximately 103 teachers hold AIG add-on licenses: 4 central services staff, 52 elementary staff, 33 middle grades staff, and 14 high school staff. This annual report is analyzed by the AIG Program Specialist and shared with principals and AIG Specialists.

### **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:**

RCSS administers annual AIG program surveys to all certified staff, identified students grades 3-12, and parents/families of identified students grades 3-12. Surveys are developed and administered by grade spans, using NCDPI AIG program survey questions that align with the NC AIG Program Standards. Surveys include multiple choice and open-ended response questions. Surveys are completed electronically. Links to the surveys are accessible through the district website. District letters developed by the AIG Program Specialist with directions for accessing and completing surveys are sent home to parents/families of identified students in grades 3-12. High school counselors serving as AIG contacts disseminate letters to identified students in grades 9-12. AIG Specialists and regular education teachers provide computers for students in grades 3-5 to complete surveys during the school day. Middle grades AIG Specialists, who are full-time classroom teachers, utilize time during 6-8 gifted cluster classes for students to complete surveys during the school day. High school students are encouraged to complete surveys during the school day, or at home.

The AIG Program Specialist sends detailed emails to all schools with parent/student letters attached and provides direct links to the surveys in the emails. All certified staff, including counselors, lead teachers, support teachers involved with gifted learners, and administrators are encouraged to complete surveys. The district requests schools to make available in the office and/or student services areas computers for parents, staff, and students to complete surveys. Schools are also asked to make computers accessible for parents during school-wide meetings and events that may occur during the survey window.

Throughout the school year, the AIG Program Specialist and AIG Specialists review the district's AIG plan by standards and practices, which allows the team to gather ongoing informal data regarding the implementation of the district AIG plan, and the overall effectiveness of the RCSS AIG Program. Interim progress reports and self-assessments provided by NCDPI AIG are completed throughout the year, which provides another layer of gathering data and feedback on the district's AIG plan.

### **Practice H**

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

### **District Response:**

RCSS is committed to continuous improvement. The district focuses on establishing a culture of data-rich discussions with all stakeholders to guide practices and program improvements across all programs and initiatives. The process to evaluate the local AIG program and plan includes multiple perspectives using an array of data points. Annual AIG Program surveys align directly with the NC AIG Program Standards, provide AIG program specific feedback, and are used to review and revise the local AIG program and plan. Survey response data are analyzed from one year to the next in order to identify areas of improvement and areas needing improvement.

District Testing and Accountability/PowerSchool staff train AIG Specialists how to analyze AIG subgroup academic and growth data through the district's local data warehouse, Data Mart. AIG Specialists work collaboratively with principals to create reports and share data with regular education teachers. Survey responses are shared with the RCSS AIG Advisory Committee each year and feedback is solicited that impacts revisions to the local AIG program and plan. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is for AIG Program Specialists to be provided time to meet collaboratively with regular education teachers through professional learning team (PLT) meetings during and after school. This collaboration supports the district's commitment to establishing a culture of data-rich discussions, and will strengthen the review and revision of the AIG program and plan.

### **Practice I**

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

### **District Response:**

RCSS AIG Program annual survey results are posted to the district website, and are accessible to all stakeholders. AIG Specialists share survey responses with administrators and staff at their respective schools. Data are reviewed annually with the AIG advisory committee. The AIG Program Specialist shares survey results with district stakeholders through monthly administrative leadership team meetings, quarterly district lead teacher meetings, and with curriculum and instruction directors during designated planning meetings throughout the year. An area of focus for the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22 is to explore additional ways to communicate and share with stakeholders survey results, as well as other AIG subgroup academic and growth data.

### **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:**

RCSS has clearly written policies, procedures, and practices in place to safeguard the rights of all AIG students and their parents and families.

**Randolph County Schools Appeal Process for Parents/Guardians:  
N.C. General Statutes 115C-150.8. Review of Disagreements.**

In the event that the procedure developed under G.S. 115C-150.7(b)(7) fails to resolve a disagreement, the parent or guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The scope of review shall be limited to (i) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted student, or (ii) whether the local plan developed under G.S. 115C-150.7 has been implemented appropriately 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 decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on the parties, and is not subject to further review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. (1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 18.24(f).)

If Parents/Guardians have a disagreement regarding screening, nomination, identification, or service options, they may appeal by following these procedures:

**STEP I Appeal to the SBC-AIG.**

- Parents/Guardians must send a written request for a conference to the SBC-AIG. The request must address the nature of the appeal. The SBC-AIG will schedule a conference with the parents within ten (10) days of the written request.
- Prior to the scheduled conference, the SBC-AIG will review all relevant information and determine if any additional information is needed.
- SBC-AIG will then discuss their decision concerning placement with the parents.

If parents/guardians wish to appeal the SBC-AIG decision, they may proceed to STEP II.

**STEP II: Appeal to the AIG Program Director.**

- Parents/Guardians have up to five (5) working days after the SBC-AIG conference to make a written appeal to the AIG Program Director.
- The AIG Program Director will review the grievance and respond to the parents/guardians and the SBC-AIG in writing within ten (10) working days.

If parents/guardians wish to appeal the AIG Program Director's decision, they may proceed to STEP III.

**STEP III: Appeal to the Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent.**

- Parents/Guardians may appeal the decision by the Director to the Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent within five (5) working days of receiving the response. Appeal should be in writing.
- The Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent will review the grievance and respond in writing to the parents/guardians and the Director within ten (10) working days.

If parents/guardians wish to appeal the decision by the Assistant Superintendent or the Superintendent, they may proceed to STEP IV.

**STEP IV: Appeal to the Randolph County School System Board of Education.**

- The Randolph County School System Board of Education will review the grievance and respond in writing to the parents/guardians and the Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent and the Director of Instruction within ten (10) working days.

If parents/guardians wish to appeal the decision by the local Board of Education, they may proceed with STEP V.

**STEP V: Appeal to the State.**

The parents/guardians may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The scope of the review shall be limited to :

- (i) whether the local school administrative unit improperly failed to identify the child as an academically or intellectually gifted student.
- (ii) whether the local plan has been implemented appropriately.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:**

\*Develop and utilize a district reflection guide based on NCDPI feedback and recommendations to be utilized by AIG Specialists, the RCSS AIG Advisory Committee, and other stakeholders to monitor the implementation of the RCSS AIG Plan 2019-2022.

\*Develop and utilize a district action plan guide based on information from the reflection guide to monitor progress and to provide updates to stakeholders.

\*Collaboration time built into the master schedule for AIG Specialists to collaborate with regular education teachers and support teachers to review Multi-Tiered Student Support (MTSS) data, which may serve as early warning indicators for student dropout prevention.

\*Share research on strategies for identifying English Learners for gifted services and talent development across stakeholders (Exploratory Study on the Identification of English Learners, National Center for Research on Gifted Education/ National Association for Gifted Children Talent Development Task Force, 2015).

\*Explore additional ways beyond surveys to elicit feedback from students, parents/families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG plan.

**Sources of Evidence:**

\*RCSS AIG Plan 2019-22

\*Completed Interim Progress Reports provided by NCDPI

\*RCSS AIG Reflection Guide

\*RCSS AIG Action Plan Guide

\*RCSS AIG annual budget/expenditures

\*RCSS AIG subgroup student achievement, growth, and dropout data

\*Research, Professional Development presentations/resources/strategies for identifying and serving under-represented populations of students

\*Annual RCSS Human Resources report reflecting number of certified staff by grade spans and district office who hold add-on AIG licenses

\*Annual RCSS AIG Program Survey Results (parents/families, certified staff, students)

\*RCSS written Appeal Process for students, parents/guardians

**Glossary (optional):**

**Appendix (optional):**