

Overview: Mission/Vision Statement and Funding

Transylvania County Schools (880) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

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Transylvania County Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2021). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide Public School Units (PSUs) to develop, implement, and monitor 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 aligned to NC's AIG legislation, Article 9B (N. C. G. S. 115C150.5). These best practices help to clarify the standard, describe what a PSU should have in place, and guide PSUs to improve their programs. In an effort to continue to transform AIG programs and align to the NC AIG Program Standards, each PSU has participated in a self-assessment process of their local AIG program, involving multiple stakeholders. The data gathered during this process has guided PSUs in their development of this local AIG plan for 2022-2025. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's local board of education or charter school's board of directors and sent to NC DPI for comment.

For 2022-2025, the Transylvania County Schools local AIG plan is as follows:

* Mission and/or Vision Statement(s)

Mission Statement: The mission of Transylvania County Schools is to prepare students to become caring and productive citizens in an ever-changing society through the shared responsibility of students, parents, educators, and the community.

Vision Statement: Transylvania County Schools provides a bright and promising future for its students; both recruits and retains a professional, caring, and talented workforce; engages with parents, families and the community at large; drives economic development and opportunity for our citizens; and exists as the central point of pride in our community.

Motto: Teaching Everyone Takes Everyone

Goals:

1. Every Transylvania County Schools student has a personalized education graduating from high school prepared for work, higher education, and citizenship.
2. Every Transylvania County Schools student, every day has excellent educators.
3. Every Transylvania County Schools student is healthy, safe, and responsible.

Values:

- **All children can learn;** however, they learn differently, and we must value and understand those differences.
- **High expectations** will result in high achievement.

- Through the **shared responsibility** of students, teachers, parents, and community, we can reach our goals.
- **Children** are our most important resource.
- All **children deserve** a safe, comfortable, attractive, and inviting atmosphere that fosters learning.
- All educators, students, and parents deserve **respect**.
- **Minds and hearts** are the focus of education.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL AIG PROGRAM (as of 2022)

State Funding	Local Funding	Grant Funding	Other Funding
* \$ 184,254.00	* \$ 17,363.00	* \$ 0.00	* \$ 0.00

Standard 1: Student Identification

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Standard 1: Student Identification

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

* Practice A

Develops both screening and referral processes that lead to AIG identification at all grade levels. Provides opportunities for every student to show their strengths and talents.

Transylvania County Schools (TCS) serves an array of students, from those who are nurtured or identified in elementary and middle school to those who transfer in during their Senior year. Students come to TCS from home, from neighboring charter and private schools, from homeschools, from out of district, from out of state, and from military families or abroad.

Recognizing that our students have diverse educational accomplishments and experiences, and especially that students manifest strengths and gifts at different ages, TCS uses both screening and referral processes in all grade levels. With parent/guardian permission, AIG teachers and specialists include screened and referred students in the next identification cycle.

Students are referred for potential AIG identification through:

- parent/guardian or educator referral (K-12)
- student self-referral (9-12)
- observed response to gifted teaching pedagogies (K-12)
- recommendation for continuance by the building or district Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) if the previous identification process was inconclusive (K-12)

TCS actively seeks educator referrals at least once per school year within a publicized referral window, such as at the end of testing windows or semesters. However, referrals are accepted any time; a "Talent Scout" button is active year-round on the TCS AIG webpage, and teachers and school leaders are encouraged to bookmark referral form. The AIG coordinator routinely monitors referrals and communicates them to AIG teachers and specialists at each school.

Third grade students are universally screened for potential AIG identification with the CogAT Screener. Other universal screening processes include:

- high achievement scores on state tests (grades 3-12)
- high composite or subtest scores on national texts (when available)
- data trends suggesting rapid growth or high potential (K-12)

Additional K-12 screening points include:

- PowerSchool AIG Child Count report Exceptions lists

- previous identification by another school (K-12)
- participation in a talent-development program (K-12)

TCS has developed automatic email notifications alerting AIG teachers and specialists when newly enrolling students' parents/guardians indicate previous participation in gifted/talented programs.

As a result of using both screening and referral processes, TCS routinely identifies students across all grade bands, with elementary grades 4 and 5, middle grades 6 and 7, and high school grades 10 and 11 becoming common points for AIG identification.

*** Practice B**

Establishes a process and criteria for AIG student identification at all grade levels that provides 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.

TCS believes each student is distinguished by a dynamic balance of strengths, interests, accomplishments, avenues for growth, and needs. This balance shifts as students gain experience and confidence; acquire academic and practical knowledge and skills; and both discover and develop their latent strengths and talents.

In striving toward an equitable identification process which includes potential for achievement, TCS also includes the following evaluations of student performance:

- growth or trend data from local or state standards-based assessments showing sustained, rapid acquisition of skills or content knowledge in comparison to local, state, or national norms (K-12)
- analysis of local norms on state or national assessments (grades 3-11)
- WIDA scores from English Learners testing (K-12)
- rapid progress through the English Learners program or exit from services
- individual assessments conducted by school psychologists (K-12)
- observational checklists of general intellectual abilities, creativity, and leadership, along with academic interests. TCS seeks observations from both a parent/guardian and educator/s who interact with the student. These educators may include academic teachers and instructional support personnel (K-12) and arts and Career/Technical Education teachers (grades 6-12).

To ensure that these indicators are consistently interpreted, TCS has developed a scale weighing evidence as “insufficient, sufficient, or compelling” to support particular designations.

To ensure that observational data is interpreted to capture potential for achievement, general population norms are used to determine whether a student is likely to be gifted. National gifted norms may be used as supplemental information to determine individual services needed.

Annually, AIG teachers and specialists examine student performance and data trends to determine whether the developing strengths of students with IG, AM, or AR designations would be more accurately described with an updated designation. For example, a student with an IG designation may later demonstrate both math and reading achievement, so the AIG teacher or specialist would present the newly emerged evidence to the evaluating team for consideration.

Because potential for achievement does not expire, all students with designations remain identified within the AIG program unless a parent/guardian requests their student be removed from the program.

Similarly, students whose identification evidences were inconclusive within the academic year may yet show potential to achieve the following year. With parent/guardian permission, the AIG teacher or specialist retains these students on a “watch list” and annually examines age- or grade-appropriate data sources for additional evidence which may support an AIG designation. If students’ aptitude test scores expire while they are on the watch list, or if evidence suggests a different aptitude test may provide a truer assessment of strengths, the AIG teacher or specialist may request parent/guardian permission to reassess with CogAT or Naglieri testing.

In TCS, formal AIG designations signal that students have demonstrated academic and/or intellectual strengths in comparison to national, state, and/or local norms. In all descriptions below, the following definitions apply:

- “academic strengths” may be demonstrated with North Carolina End-of-Grade/End-of-Course exam scores (grades 3-11) or with comparable subtest, partial composites, or overall scores on national achievement exams given in secure settings (grades 3-12)
- “reasoning/problem-solving skills” may be demonstrated with full composite scores, partial composite scores, or single-area scores on CogAT, Naglieri, or similar secure, group-administered aptitude tests
- “high level” indicates performance at or above the 90th percentile.
- “exceptionally high level” indicates performance at or above the 98th percentile

TCS criteria for identification in all grade bands (K-2, 3-5,6-8, and 9-12) are as follows:

AI (Academically & Intellectually Gifted)

- high level of academic achievement in both English/language arts and math
- AND exceptionally high levels of verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal reasoning/problem-solving skills

AG (Academically Gifted in Reading & Math)

- high level of academic achievement in both English/language arts and math
- AND/OR high level of verbal and quantitative reasoning/problem-solving skills

AM (Academically Gifted in Math)



- high level of academic achievement in math
- AND/OR high level of quantitative OR quantitative and nonverbal reasoning/problem-solving skills

AR (Academically Gifted in Reading)

- high level of academic achievement in English/language arts
- AND/OR high level of verbal OR verbal and nonverbal reasoning/problem-solving skills

IG (Intellectually Gifted)

- potential for high level of academic achievement,
- AND/OR high level of verbal, quantitative, and/or nonverbal reasoning/problem skills

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* 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.

TCS acknowledges that barriers to accurate and equitable identification continue to exist; therefore, TCS will continue to follow evidence-based guidelines and seek research-based insights from professional organizations such as NCDPI's Division for Advanced Learning and Gifted Education (DALGE) and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).

Although the TCS AIG program has been relatively successful in identifying students who are highly gifted and twice exceptional, the district leadership, principals, and AIG teachers and specialists are aware that students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and English language learners remain under-represented.

TCS has implemented the following practices to promote more equitable identification:

- universally screening of 3rd graders in the spring, with students invited to participate in full testing as 4th graders in the fall
- extending invitations for 4th grade testing based on either:
 - using a cut-score of 75th percentile, which local data analysis (2018) revealed as the lowest screener score point from which subsequent 4th grade testing generated potentially qualifying verbal, quantitative, or nonverbal battery scores
 - using data visualization (such as clusters) to adjust the cut score, as long as the adjustment does not raise the cut score higher than the 75th percentile
- using verbal, quantitative, or nonverbal batteries from aptitude testing or partial composites of those batteries as evidence for identification, rather than total composites alone
- using checklists to elicit observations of behaviors which suggest latent giftedness/talents from parents/guardians as well as the following educators:
 - academic, arts, Career/Technical Education, English Language, and/or inclusion teachers
- considering observations of general intellectual abilities, creativity, and leadership, along with specific academic-area interests as indicators for potential achievement or latent gifted/talent, and
 - using general population norms to interpret observations for identification but reserving use of gifted population norms to refine service options

*** Practice D**

Monitors the screening, referral, and identification processes for consistent implementation across the LEA.

TCS uses shared spreadsheets, flow charts, and an annual internal audit process to ensure that screening, referral, and identification processes are consistently implemented across all schools.

TCS uses a shared spreadsheet to analyze elementary schools' CogAT screener scores to determine whether to refine the "cut score" used for offering full CogAT testing. For students referred for testing, TCS uses a shared spreadsheet to capture demographic data, analysis of which may show trends in referrals and identification outcomes.

For identification processes, TCS has developed two flow charts to ensure that all data and factors are thoroughly considered when matching students to services.

The "AIG Pathways to Service" flow chart summarizes how aptitude and achievement scores, behavioral inventories, and portfolio or other evidences lead to suggested AIG designations. If a student's identification evidence may yield two or more possible designations, the AIG teachers and specialists confer to determine which designation best reflects the student's strengths and needs for service and continued growth.

The "Service Considerations" flow chart lists service suggestions for strengths in aptitude, achievement, or behaviors/interests. The school's AIG teacher or specialist and Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) use the flowcharts when:

1. developing identified students' Differentiated Education Plans
2. nurturing students who are Intellectually Gifted (IG) toward an academic designation
3. nurturing students who are Academically Gifted in Math or Reading (AM or AR) toward the broader designation of academically gifted in both (AG)
4. nurturing non-identified students toward future identification

At the end of the identification process, packets comprised of all identification evidence and flow charts are either included in identified students' individual DEP folders or, for students who are not identified, retained in a "Class of 20__" folder which accompanies DEP folders as cohorts of students move from elementary to middle to high school. AIG teachers or specialists thus have relevant aptitude, achievement, and other evidence available to monitor growth of identified and nurtured students.

Over the course of the academic year, the team of AIG teachers and specialists audit all schools' DEP folders against the current AIG headcount, ensuring:

- identification in electronic records matches documentation
- every identified student has a current DEP with services aligned to the identification
- any revisions to identification are supported by evidence and approved by the district Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) and parent/family
- any program withdrawals stemmed from parent/family written request

The annual audit process also encompasses review of the shared spreadsheet of nurtured students, ensuring that their response to service is monitored and, when appropriate, they are formally reconsidered for identification.

*** Practice E**

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

large

TCS disseminates screening, referral, and identification information through varied channels to reach different audiences as it strives to match new students with AIG services in all grades.

School personnel receive an overview of the screening, referral, and identification processes at their school at the beginning of each school year and specific information about “talent scouting” for gifted characteristics and avoiding bias as their school’s annual or semiannual referral window opens.

Parents/guardians and students may learn about AIG referral, nomination or self-nomination, identification processes, and services during orientation/opening and school registration events. The information is also annually disseminated in each school’s student/parent handbook.

The student information packet for all enrolling students, across all grade bands, includes the question, “Has your child been identified for or been served through a gifted program in the past?” If the parent responds yes, TCS automatically routes an email alert to the AIG teacher or specialist of that school, prompting them to share AIG program information with potentially eligible students.

The current AIG Plan is posted in English and Spanish on the webpage, and a nearby “Talent Scouting” tab allows parents/guardians or school personnel to refer a student for consideration at any time.

TCS also encourages parent/guardian and student inquiries by freely distributing “AIG & Advanced Learning” events calendars and using weekly principal phone calls and electronic flyers to publicize clearly that opportunities such as Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, dual enrollment, Governor’s School, and honors or Advanced Placement courses are open to all students.

*** 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.

Beginning with parent/guardians’ signed statements of informed consent and permission to test, the AIG teacher or specialist collects all evidence gathered during the identification process and maintains it in student records.

As described above, if a student is identified, all the supporting data is transferred to a Pathways flowchart which serves both as a cover sheet for all identification evidence and as a summary detailing how that evidence was interpreted to yield an AIG designation. The AIG teacher or specialist reviews the identification evidence and interpretation with the parent/guardian during an initial conference, at which time the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) is developed with specific reference to the flow chart so that services clearly align with the identification evidence and needs.

If aptitude testing was used in the identification process, the original, official score report is provided to the parent/guardian during the initial parent conference described above, while a copy is included in the Pathways flowchart packet described above. Additionally, data from the official score report are entered into PowerSchool by the AIG Coordinator so that students’ scores are accessible to authorized personnel if the student transfers to another school or another LEA.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- update testing and screening materials regularly in accordance with guidelines established by American Psychological Association, and use the most up-to-date norms for interpreting test data, specifically subgroup norms when available
- continue to develop the portfolio option for identification evidence, incorporating student artifacts or data from talent development activities

- conduct ongoing parent awareness/informational sessions to complement the “AIG Progress Report” and “Nurturing Progress Report”

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * Shared spreadsheet documenting annual screening, referral, and identification process
- * Shared spreadsheet of nurtured students and "watch list" students
- * Signed, dated audit sheets in all DEP folders

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

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Standard 2: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community

The LEA provides a K-12 AIG program with an array of services by the total school community to meet the diverse academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners. These services will develop students' strengths through intentional learning experiences in various domains that are not dependent on the students' demographic background or economic means.

*** Practice A**

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners, across all grade levels and learning environments through collaboration with a variety of personnel. Services are aligned to students' advanced learning needs and AIG identification.

Transylvania County Schools recognizes that gifted and other advanced learners' interests and abilities lead them on diverging paths as they move through school. To foster these students' cognitive and social-emotional development, TCS seeks to ensure they have both appropriate challenge and support in all learning environments, grade levels, and settings.

Through AIG and other programs, TCS provides a comprehensive range of opportunities for students either to explore or to pursue multi-year, sustained study of academic, arts, Career/Technical Education (CTE), leadership, STEM, and world language fields. TCS has also begun building a multi-year coding and computational thinking curriculum by aligning efforts of its Instructional Technology, CTE, and Advanced Placement programs and its partnership with the NC School of Science and Math.

TCS strives to meet gifted and advanced learning needs in all academic classes in all grade levels daily by differentiating curriculum and instruction with enrichment, extension, and/or accelerated curricula. Students may access accelerated curriculum through early admission to kindergarten, continuous progress, cross-grade grouping, subject area acceleration, classes with compacted curriculum, early entrance to high school classes, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery for high school courses, Advanced Placement courses, and dual enrollment courses with college partners. Enrichment and/or extension may be provided through flexible grouping, AIG consultation or co-teaching, interdisciplinary or thematic units, project-based learning, and independent learning.



With its strong middle and high school CTE program, TCS offers 21st-century curricula with school-, work-, and/or community-based learning opportunities in eight fields: agriculture, business and information technologies, career development, family and consumer sciences, health science, marketing and entrepreneurship, technology engineering and design, and trades and industries. Students may simply explore a field or complete a four-course concentration.

As they take CTE courses, students may elect to earn state licenses or national/industry credentials prior to graduation. Additionally, the Workforce Development Coordinator arranges job-shadowing and internships for interested students once they are 16 years old and have completed requisite CTE course(s) related to the field. Moreover, TCS has defined hybrid CTE Pathways, enabling students to combine art or foreign language studies with CTE specializations. Together, these offerings allow all students, including gifted learners, the opportunity to enrich their academic learning with real-world perspectives or accelerate toward career goals.

TCS AIG teachers and specialists work with parents/families and students to create Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs), their focus is the "whole child." DEPs map out optimal blends of services from across all of TCS's programs in order to address AIG needs, capitalize on strengths and interests, and meet personal goals.

When AIG students are served by the Exceptional Children's program or an individualized 504 plan, AIG teachers and specialists may, with parent consent, collaborate with EC teachers or student counselors to plan complementary services or accommodations. When AIG students are enrolled for full-day or half-

day classes at Davidson River School, the LEA's alternative school, the DRS principal or guidance counselor shares the DEP with teachers, and the AIG Specialist maintains contact with students and parents/families to ensure continuation of services.

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*** Practice B**

Delivers an AIG program with comprehensive services that address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners, across all grade levels and learning environments through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.

The social and emotional needs of AIG students are as complex and dynamic as their academic, family, and cultural contexts.

Meaningful differentiation, flexible grouping, substantive extension, academic acceleration, intentionally designed enrichment, purposeful scheduling, extracurricular involvement, and annual reflection and planning with students and parents/families--together this network of practices and services supports AIG students' social and emotional health by embracing interests, increasing strengths, building self-awareness and self-advocacy, and affirming developing identities.

However, children and adolescents can experience stress, confusion, and even trauma as they move through different periods and circumstances in life. TCS acknowledges that its network of AIG practices and services may not fully address gifted learners' affective needs, so TCS responds with informed, professional collaboration among instructional leaders, regular teachers, AIG teachers and specialists, and student counselors. Teachers and counselors received training in and are encouraged to use Restorative Practices and Circles to promote social emotional learning and positive learning environments.

Beginning in the fall of 2022, TCS will expand high school student counseling services by employing an Academic Process Counselor. Duties of this new role will include assisting with college, FAFSA, and scholarship applications; scheduling and four-year planning; state and national assessments; collaborating with school administrators and staff; and monitoring student academic progress.

To create a common understanding of AIG students' unique needs, AIG teachers and specialists will continue to facilitate evidence-based, professional dialogue with: instructional leaders; building Teams for Academically Gifted (TAGs); school counselors including the Academic Process Counselor; Exceptional Children's teachers; and English Language Learners' teachers.

TCS staff recognize and observe the limits of their roles and ethical codes of conduct when responding to student needs. TCS informs all staff about legal obligations and protocols for contacting the Department of Social Services, has provided some staff with trauma/resiliency training, participates in the interagency C.A.R.E. coalition of Transylvania County, and contracts mental health services with a partner agency.

TCS has used Classroom Wise to deliver mental health professional development to all teachers, grades K-12 and has delivered QPR Institute suicide prevention training to personnel for grades 6-12.

*** Practice C**

Integrates and connects the AIG program and services with the district's priorities and resources through policy and practice.

TCS AIG teachers and specialists and the district TAG harness the instructional program and resources of the LEA and each building to ensure that students' gifted and advanced learning needs are met daily and that their growth and development are sustained over their entire school career.

TCS elementary schools use the continuous progress model for reading and math instruction in regular education settings. Grade level teams work with instructional coaches or lead teachers to monitor students' individual performance and use flexible grouping practices within classrooms and teams to deliver appropriate curricula and instructional materials and resources.

TCS also applies flexible grouping practices to AIG settings in elementary schools, in addition to applying them in regular education settings. AIG teachers and specialists work with instructional leaders to establish and periodically revise their Intervention & Enrichment (I&E) schedules and rosters of students using Multi-Tiered Systems of Response (MTSS) practices. K-5 students may receive extension or enrichment in particular subject or school-based focus areas, according to their needs, whether or not they have AIG identifications.

In response to Advanced Math Legislation (HB 986/SL 2018-32), elementary AIG teachers and specialists provide regularly scheduled math instruction to rostered groups of grade 3-5 students who scored at the highest levels on math tests the previous year. Elementary instructional leaders annually determine the most effective configurations to provide homogeneous learning environments for these students: they may best be served by push-in/coteaching in their math classrooms or by pull-out to the AIG teacher's classroom.

Also in response to Advanced Math Legislation, TCS elementary AIG teachers and specialists use the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test (IAAT) with 5th grade students in order to help inform placement into compacted/accelerated middle school math courses, even if those students do not score a Level 5 on their 5th grade math End-of-Grade exam. Similarly, middle schools may use the IAAT with 6th and 7th graders to identify students who are ready for compacted/accelerated middle school math curriculum, again even without a Level 5 math EOG score.

TCS middle and high schools use their course offerings as the primary vehicle to meet gifted and advanced learners' needs. Math acceleration is a key feature of middle and high schools' course offerings, and middle schools also may use semester-long North Carolina Virtual Public School online classes to complement schedules when their students enroll early in face-to-face classes at the high schools. Both middle schools are exploring offering face-to-face high school English 9 on their campuses.

Beyond accelerated access to high school courses, TCS middle schools offer gifted and advanced students enrichment and/or extension with the AIG teacher or specialist during scheduled I&E periods. Brevard Middle School has begun exploring the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping model to replace AIG clusters or AIG teams; using either schoolwide or AIG clustering, the AIG Specialist will continue to serve gifted and advanced learners by coteaching in academic classes.

TCS high schools have added open enrollment/open campus policies to augment their own master schedules, allowing students at either high school to enroll in advanced course offerings at the other high school or even elsewhere. High school campus-based advanced course offerings include Advanced Placement courses, CTE advanced/independent studies, Marine Corps Junior ROTC program, and the North Carolina School of Science and Math's open enrollment courses. Off-campus options include CTE internships and dual enrollment and college courses at Blue Ridge Community College and Brevard College. "Fifth period" options may include North Carolina Virtual Public School online courses and dual enrollment courses. TCS high schools rely on the Purdue Secondary Model for Gifted Education to organize and prioritize AIG services that complement course offerings and open enrollment/open campus options.

Open enrollment is not limited to high schools in TCS: each elementary school has a thematic program making it distinct from the others, and families may select which school their children will attend. Brevard Elementary is an A+ School, integrating arts education into all its programs. Pisgah Forest Elementary wants "No Child Left Inside," connecting outdoor education to academic curricula in outdoor learning spaces and excursions. Rosman Elementary teaches students to "ROAR even when no one is watching" (Respect, Organized, good Attitude, Responsibility) and has explored linking that effort more closely to The Leader In Me framework. TC Henderson Elementary is developing into a magnet school for science and technology. These themes drive particular options for delivering enrichment to flexible groups.

*** Practice D**

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

TCS understands that gifted and advanced learners perform best when they regularly receive appropriately challenging academic instruction with their intellectual peers. Each school uses its annual scheduling process as an foundation to meet this need.

Elementary and middle schools use achievement and other data points when initially assigning students to classrooms or teams for academic instruction; in response to HB986/SL2018-32, these considerations also include specific scheduling plans for advanced math instruction.

In high schools, student demand drives course offerings and scheduling. Prior to registration, the AIG specialists and Blue Ridge Community College liaison host open-interest meetings and work with individuals and small groups of students and parents/families to highlight points of access and relative advantages of the schools' advanced learning options. During and after registration, student counselors work with students and parents/families to establish and periodically revise four-year plans and to make individual schedule changes when conflicts between course preferences arise. After advanced high school course rosters are finalized, the AIG teacher or specialist shares recent, relevant, standards-based subtest data with teachers in order to facilitate flexible groupings prior to quarterly or benchmark assessment.

In every classroom or course, students learn and master content at variable rates, so initial classroom, team, or course assignments alone may not fully meet all gifted and advanced learners' needs. TCS encourages and supports monitoring student progress and flexibly grouping within classes both by selecting curricular/instructional resources that facilitate differentiation and by establishing routines in which grade level or subject area teams periodically analyze and respond to various formative assessment data with instructional leaders.

AIG teachers and specialists in all grade levels may play a role in grade level or subject area team meetings and/or contribute to standards-based extension responses, such as making recommendations for classroom interventions, collaboratively planning, coteaching or supporting smaller homogeneous groups in the classroom, providing alternate instruction to smaller homogeneous groups in their own classrooms, or providing extension lessons during I&E periods.

While flexible grouping allows TCS to extend gifted and advanced learners' standards-based academic work with increased depth and complexity, it also serves AIG teachers and specialists in all grades as they provide a variety of limited duration, topical enrichment supporting a school-specific AIG goal, an ongoing creative or interdisciplinary exploration, specific social-emotional needs, and/or (in elementary schools) each school's distinct thematic program.

*** Practice E**

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.

The legislative language "Academically or Intellectually Gifted" and its "AIG" acronym can trigger mistaken assumptions when individuals do not realize how the TCS AIG program differs from programs in other LEAs or states or how the local program has changed over time. In the past decade, "AIG" has evolved in TCS so that it is no longer the exclusive purview of AIG teachers and specialists. TCS instructional leaders and AIG personnel share this philosophy:

--- Children and adolescents are continually developing in all academic and social-emotional domains; therefore, learning, reasoning, and understanding are best understood as aptitudes which can cultivated and fostered throughout life. ---

Because of this belief, TCS AIG includes cooperation, collaborations, partnerships, and programming which serves gifted and advanced learners, whether they be identified or not. Accordingly, the AIG coordinator, teachers, and specialists work regularly with district and instructional leaders to identify and capitalize on talent development opportunities such as:

- instructional time, I&E time, after school and summer time;
- enriched and/or extended curricula, supplemental school-based curricula or programs, and gifted curricula; and
- heterogeneous or homogeneous settings with regular education or gifted education teachers.

AIG personnel and district and/or instructional leaders communicate and work together face-to-face during curriculum and partnership committee meetings, as well as during district TAG meetings, school-based TAG meetings, and scheduled site visits. Impromptu communication and additional face to face meetings may arise in response to new legislative action, changes in policy or procedure communicated by NCDPI, state and regional AIG meetings, state or national gifted conventions or policy briefs, or new opportunities for local partnerships.

Regular, formal, consistent communication are key to creating a shared understanding of the AIG program and plan. To ensure that all professional staff help implement the local plan in their buildings, AIG teachers and specialists lead or participate in:

- AIG Refresher Training: At the beginning of the school year, AIG teachers or specialists conduct training for teachers, school administrators, and instructional support staff, including Exceptional Children's and English Language Learners' teachers, tying the information to specific Teacher Evaluation standards. This training combines information about the AIG program and plan; professional staff roles in providing services and recommending students for new or additional services; and how the DEP presents each gifted learner's unique needs.
- Characteristics and Needs of Gifted Learners: Prior to annual or semi-annual nomination periods, a separate presentation provides additional information about manifestations of gifted learners' needs and possible identifying characteristics.
- Beginning Teacher Training: The AIG coordinator works with the director of human resources to provide an overview of the local AIG program to beginning teachers and to attending mentor teachers, tying the information to specific Teacher Evaluation standards.
- Peer Observation or AIG Coaching Cycles: Instructional leaders may use AIG teachers and specialists as peer observers or schedule AIG coaching cycles for teachers who serve gifted and advanced students, affording AIG and regular education teachers the opportunity to confer constructively about best practices for differentiating instruction in specific, everyday contexts.
- Grade Level or Subject Area Team and/or MTSS Meetings: AIG teachers and specialists participate in grade level or subject area team meetings and may advise or serve on MTSS teams, ensuring that reliable and correctly interpreted data informs instructional changes both for gifted students and for students who have not yet been identified.
- Professional Learning Community, IEP, 504, or other meetings: AIG teachers and specialists may collaborate with regular education teachers, special education teachers, student counselors, and instructional support staff to plan complementary services, accommodations, or differentiation for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 Plans.
- Sharing Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs): Just as Exceptional Children's teachers share Reviews of Accommodations (RoAs) with regular education teachers who serve students with special needs, AIG teachers and specialists will share relevant information from DEPs with teachers who serve identified students.

* Practice F

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

Each spring, AIG teachers and specialists lay the groundwork for students to experience a smooth start to AIG services in the fall. Prior to universal screening in the spring of 3rd grade, elementary AIG teachers and specialists begin formal communication with parents/families, outlining the role that the upcoming screening will play in next fall's identification process, the projected timing for that process, and the fact that 4th grade students who were not matched with services initially may qualify when the process repeats during 5th grade. Similarly, they communicate with 5th grade parents/families that the identification process will repeat in 6th grade and throughout students' academic careers, and middle and high school specialists repeat the message annually as they hold open interest meetings.

No matter the grade in which a student is initially matched with AIG services, AIG teachers and specialists arrange individual conferences to explain AIG services, receive consent for services, and develop Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) tailored to the service delivery options for the school for which the

DEP take effect.

Because students' needs, program services, and building-level options may change over time, elementary and middle school AIG teachers and specialists annually review or revise DEPs with parents/families. As students grow in self-advocacy through middle and high school, they participate more in review and revision, though AIG teachers and specialists continue to seek informed consent from parents/families.

As students transition or transfer between schools, the previous AIG teacher or specialist hand-delivers DEPs and DEP folders to the next AIG teacher or specialist, and together they review each student's needs.

A critical activity to ensure continuation of services is establishing a point of personal connection for students and parents/families at the key transition points when students move from elementary to middle and from middle to high school. Each spring, the AIG teacher or specialist from the upper school visits the rising AIG students at the lower school, participates in other school transition activities arranged by school counselors or leaders, and meets with parents/families to explain new advanced learning and service options.

TCS students historically have been a mobile population, moving among schools in different parts of the district, withdrawing for a semester/year to experiential or foreign study programs or home schooling, and enrolling in full-day or half-day class schedules at Davidson River School, the district's alternative school for middle and high school students. AIG teachers and specialists are able to respond quickly when identified students move because they receive auto-generated email notices that an identified student is enrolling or withdrawing from a TCS school. Because TCS has an established practice of maintaining DEP folders throughout students' K-12 year according to graduating class, AIG teachers and specialists can readily discuss and transfer historical AIG information and current/recent DEPs at district TAG meetings.

*** Practice G**

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

TCS acceleration opportunities are based on readiness rather than age, and TCS provides many opportunities for accelerated rates of instruction in many of the classes students take, no matter students' age or grade.

TCS policies and procedures for accelerated access include:

- early admission to kindergarten in accordance with State Board of Education policy SBE-GCS-J-001
- for elementary students: cross-grade grouping, grade acceleration
- for middle school students: grade and subject acceleration, including earning high school credits through North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) courses and/or on high school campuses
- for high school students: subject acceleration; state or national CTE certifications/credentials; workplace internships; and college-level study through Advanced Placement classes, dual enrollment, and early-admission college classes

In addition to these points of accelerated access, TCS offers a variety of classes with accelerated pacing. Elementary and middle school math classes may use accelerated pacing to prepare students to take high school Math 1 and Math 2 as 7th or 8th graders. To date, three TCS middle school students who had accelerated math instruction in elementary school have completed Math 2 prior to finishing 8th grade.

To build on this demonstrated success, TCS middle schools are exploring high school Earth/Environmental Science and English 1, which may also entail accelerated pacing in preceding elementary middle school language arts and science instruction.

Once middle and high school students enroll in high school classes, they may elect to take honors level study in many disciplines, learning more deeply and/or applying concepts more broadly in a semester as a direct result of faster pacing. Advanced Placement (AP) courses accelerate honors pacing further, often adding curriculum compacting in order to layer or combining both state and national curriculum standards so that students may earn both graduation credits and potential college credit in one class.

Similarly, dual enrollment courses through partners Blue Ridge Community College and Brevard College use accelerated pacing compared to high school instruction. More significantly, dual enrollment courses represent a culmination of TCS accelerated access because they offer younger students who have acquired college-level skills prior to high school graduation the opportunity to move into academic arenas focusing exclusively on college-level content.

As early as the summer following 8th grade, TCS students can accelerate their access to regular, honors, or AP courses with summer or 5th period classes through NCVPS, when seats are available. Students with demonstrated success in asynchronous/online courses and/or independent learning and time management skills may register for these seats through their student counselors.

In accordance with State Board of Education policy SBE-GCS-M-001, TCS continues to further develop its options for students to accelerate access advanced high school courses through Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM). Through the spring of 2019, students have attempted CDM in three introductory Art and CTE courses; levels 1 and 2 of French and Spanish; three levels each of English and Math; three Science courses; and four Social Studies courses. All together, TCS has awarded at least 31 units of CDM credit.

TCS promotes acceleration opportunities to all students and parents/families in student handbooks, at registration events and interest meetings, during transition activities as students move from one school to the next, when writing/revising AIG students' Differentiated Education Plans, and on the district website and social media.

Grade Acceleration for K-3 (all criteria must be met)

- 98% or higher on individual aptitude test
- 98% or higher on individual achievement tests in reading, writing, and math
- Highest level of performance on local assessments
- High level of performance on student progress report
- Appropriate social development (as assessed by teacher and psychologist)
- Strong independent reader
- Student interview
- Teacher and principal recommendations
- Parent approval

Grade Acceleration for Grades 4-8 (all criteria must be met)

- 98% or higher on individual aptitude test
- 98% or higher on individual achievement tests in reading, writing, and math

- 98% or higher on EOG or North Carolina Final Exams
- Grade of A on student performance (report cards)
- Two years above grade level on assessments for two consecutive benchmarks in reading, writing, and math
- Appropriate social development (as assessed by teacher or psychologist)
- Strong independent reader
- Student interview
- Teacher and principal recommendations
- Parent approval

Subject Acceleration for Grades 4-8 (all criteria must be met, except in math which is subject to state requirements for acceleration per HB 986/SL 2018-32)

- Teacher discretion
- Student interest/motivation
- Evidence of independent learning
- Work samples demonstrating mastery
- Parent approval
- Administration approval
- TAG approval

Avenues for high school acceleration include: Credit by Demonstrated Mastery to support proficiency-based course placements and/or to satisfy graduation requirements; Advanced Placement courses; and dual enrollment through Blue Ridge Community College or Brevard College. Per NCGS 115D-20(4.a.3.II), Session Law 2019-185, qualifying AIG students may participate in early access to Blue Ridge's College and Career Promise (CCP) program beginning in 9th grade

When high schools have funds available, qualifying high school students may enroll in North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) courses during the summer and as 5th period classes in order to accelerate through prerequisites for more advanced courses and/or to complete graduation requirements that create scheduling conflicts with advanced courses.

*** Practice H**

Develops mindsets, policies, and practices to promote equity and excellence by broadening access to advanced learning opportunities through a variety of intentional efforts, including talent development, at all grade levels.

TCS believes children and adolescents are continually developing in all academic and social-emotional domains; therefore, learning, reasoning, and understanding are best understood as aptitudes which can be cultivated and fostered throughout life. This belief undergirds TCS talent development efforts and ongoing efforts to broaden access to advanced learning opportunities.

TCS AIG teachers and specialists have revised identification processes and pathways with each new AIG Plan since 2013, using universal screening, multiple quantitative and qualitative indicators, and inclusive nominations; addressing unconscious educator bias; and using new data to re-examine cases in which students were not initially matched with services. In 2019, TCS continues seeking culturally sensitive identification resources/practices, explore developing building norms, and will institute additional changes, including: use the same range of aptitude scores (90%ile or higher) for IG identification as for AR, AM, and AG identification, and use the most up-to-date norms for interpreting test data, specifically using subgroup norms when available.

In 2018-2019, TCS instructional leaders responded positively to reading "Unlocking Emergent Talent: Supporting High Achievement of Low-Income, High-Ability Students," so this new AIG Plan incorporates their efforts to develop talents and broaden their under-represented populations' access to advanced learning. AIG teachers and specialists will work with TAGs to incorporate data and student artifacts from those efforts into flexible grouping decisions, classroom differentiation, class placements/course recommendations, and identification processes. As successes emerge, the district TAG or AIG PLC will study how to scale or apply those efforts to another school or schools.

Because instructional leaders recognize that interrelated factors may preclude optimal growth for gifted and advanced learners, as well as contribute to underachievement, they will continue to include AIG teachers and specialists as advisors or participants on MTSS and grade level or subject area teams where they may help contribute perspective about data interpretation and curricular/instructional interventions. Such advocacy not only can change educators' perceptions of particular students but also can increase general awareness of institutional, cultural, and familial barriers to achievement that exist for both gifted and general populations of students.

*** Practice I**

Enhances and further develops the needs, talents, and interests of AIG students through extra-curricular programming.

Each TCS school offers co-curricular events, field trips, and/or traditional school trips to deepen students' knowledge and broaden their horizons.

Examples include: Biltmore House visit; Career Days; College Fairs; Conservation Day; Cradle of Forestry historical interpretation visit; introduction to orchestral music at Brevard College; Muddy Sneakers environmental education; Thomas Wolfe Auditorium or Asheville Community Theatre plays; Washington, DC trip; World Religions field trip; and school-wide community service days/efforts;; and teacher- or school-arranged guest speaker presentations through the Transylvania Community Arts Council, the NC State Cooperative Extension Service, local Rotary Clubs, and other groups.

Age-appropriate, school-day and after-school opportunities for exploring and deepening interests, developing persistence through sustained effort toward long-term goals, and building leadership skills include:

- Elementary campuses: 4H clubs, Battle of the Books teams, Beta Club, Chess club, chorus, Duke Energy Nights, Lego/Robotics club, Odyssey of the Mind teams, Problem Solvers group, Rubik's Cube club, SMART Kids, Spanish club, TCS Math/Science Fair, World Peace Game simulation game, and yearbook club.
- Middle school campuses: Battle of the Books teams, Beta Club, broadcasting/media clubs, chess club, creative writing club, drama club, Envirothon, MathCounts, MAGIC the Gathering club, Robotics, TCS Math/Science Fair, Technology Student Association, and yearbook club.
- High school campuses: each school's annual musical or play, Art Guild, broadcasting/media clubs, Career & Technical Student Organizations (DECA, FBLA, FFA, HOSA, SkillsUSA), Hunter Safety club, National Honor Society, student council, TCS Math/Science Fair, Thespians, math team competitions, and yearbook.

Age-appropriate, community-based after school youth development programs are offered through local churches, community organizations, Scouting organizations, and the Transylvania County NC State Cooperative Extension Office.

Arts-based opportunities include local dance schools, summer youth theater programs, classes offered through the Transylvania Arts Council, and Mountain School of Strings classes for classical and folk music.

Local daytime or residential experiences also include academic, interdisciplinary, or gifted opportunities such as: day camps and residential camps through 4-H, Blue Ridge Community College, NCSSM, Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute, and universities; the NCSSM Online or Residential programs; the NC Governor's School; the North Carolina Renaissance pre-college summer enrichment program for rural students; the Outdoor Academy at Eagle's Nest Camp; the Transylvania Vision Community Leadership Program's VIZ junior year experience; the UNC School of the Arts residential high school; and locally sponsored Washington UpClose week for juniors.

In 2011-12, Rosman High School students inaugurated an Alumni Hall of Fame with a recognition ceremony. Through a link on a school webpage, anyone in the community may nominate "well-deserving alumni and others who speak of the spirit of this community." A student committee selects new honorees every year.

Shortly before graduation, members of each high school's senior class return to their elementary schools to process in their graduation regalia, encouraging a sense of community and leadership among 12th graders and raising elementary students' aspirations to achieve.

AIG teachers and specialists highlight age-appropriate opportunities and encourage participation as students become eligible and during annual Differentiated Education Plan or other meetings with parents/guardians.

* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard

- Collaborate with other departments in implementing the annual district SEL plan
- Continue to expand participation in elementary, middle, and high school extra-curricular programs which foster academic and intellectual interests
- Communicate AIG identification criteria and service options to teachers who have a specialized student focus, including teachers of Multi-lingual Learners, Exceptional Children's teachers, and Title 1 interventionists

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * Individual student DEP folders including flow charts showing service considerations aligned to identification areas and class/course placements based on advanced learning needs
- * Data Walls for team decision-making or similar artifacts generated by creating, regularly monitoring, and adjusting flexible groups
- * Course descriptions, pacing guides showing compacted content; central CDM spreadsheet of applications/outcomes; student records showing CDM, dual enrollment credits, and subject/grade acceleration

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link

Standard 3: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

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

TCS recognizes that students in every grade level and content area exhibit a range of ability levels and readiness, and classroom teachers strive to adapt their curricula through classroom differentiation strategies and flexible grouping in order to address all needs, including the needs of advanced students.

Elementary Grades

As described below in Standard 1e, elementary schools use a Continuous Progress model for curriculum and instruction. During instructional blocks and Intervention & Enrichment (I&E) periods, TCS uses flexible, skill-based groups for reading and math to support the NC Standard Course of Study (SCOS) through differentiation, enrichment, and extension so that all students may continuously receive both direct instruction and learning activities correlated to their readiness and skills. Students' group assignments are adjusted after quarterly and/or benchmark testing and may be adjusted at other points as well.

Elementary teachers have been trained in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) in order to better differentiate the SCOS. TCS uses Intervention Specialists, Reading Specialists, and North Carolina Education Corps tutors for interventions during instructional and/or I&E periods.

TCS has fully implemented 1:1 computing for all students, Pre-Kindergarten -12, providing each student a Chromebook to use in accessing the learning activities and materials, including digital textbooks. When elementary teachers use electronic resources for independent practice activities in reading, math, science, and social studies, most are tiered and supportive of continuous progress: Accelerated Reader Bookfinder, Adobe Spark, BrainPOP and BrainPOP Jr., Freckle Education, Hour of Code, IXL, Just Books Read Aloud, Kahoot!, MobyMax, PBS Kids, PebbleGo and PebbleGo Next, RAZ Kids, ReadingEggs, and Starfall.

When classroom differentiation and flexible grouping do not provide sufficiently advanced curricula and instruction, TCS offers accelerated access to the SCOS through cross-grade grouping, subject acceleration, and/or grade acceleration. Instructional leaders build schedules which enable the AIG teacher or specialist to provide planned, sustained accelerated instruction to rostered classes of same- or mixed-age students, along with providing enrichment or extension to flexible groups.

Middle Grades

The results of elementary schools' Continuous Progress model and accelerated access to SCOS elementary math classes are seen in the array of SCOS math classes students take at both TCS middle schools: while some students progress through 6th, 7th, and 8th grade maths, others progress into high school Math 1 and even take Math 2 on the high school campus. Brevard and Rosman Middle Schools strive to adapt SCOS middle school maths through classroom differentiation using Illustrative Mathematics resources, and they use curriculum compacting to integrate some 8th grade Math content into Math 1, a year-long class in which the teacher adapts the SCOS with Open Up Math resources.

? Note: Because Math 2 is a semester-long course, middle school students who take it may pair it with another semester of academic content. Even though both middle schools offer exploratory levels of World Language, they may allow their Math 2 students accelerated access to high school World Language

through North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) instead of rotating back into a middle school exploratory course.

Further building on the Continuous Progress-based growth of their incoming students, both middle schools are exploring whether to offer high school Earth/Environmental Science to 7th graders and English 1 to 8th graders. In both cases, the courses would likely be year-long, with teachers adapting the high school SCOS and using curriculum compacting to integrate middle school content. Complementing these explorations, during the 2019-2022 AIG Plan cycle, Pisgah Forest Elementary School will augment its science instruction by using Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary and Middle School Students (SAGES-3) to identify, instruct, and monitor students who have emerging science talent. As these PFE students move into Brevard Middle, they may form the cohort that would pilot early access to Earth/Environmental Science.

Brevard Middle School will explore using the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping model in order to better facilitate adapting the SCOS in core classes with classroom differentiation and flexible grouping.

High School Grades

In Art, English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Languages, both high schools may use Advanced Placement curricula and resources and curriculum compacting to adapt standard high school SCOS and create Advanced Placement classes. In all academic areas and most visual/performing arts courses, the high schools similarly adapt the SCOS to create Honors classes. In most Career/Technical Education (CTE) fields, they adapt course Blueprints to create Advanced Studies electives, most bearing Honors credit.

With the support of a variety of partnerships, TCS has extended high school SCOS classes with multiple semesters of advanced elective options, such as:

- live North Carolina School of Science and Math (NCSSM) interactive video-conferenced classes
- AP Computer Science Principles class
- advanced math courses, including Statistics and Calculus through the Advanced Placement program; linear algebra, discrete math, and other mathematics courses accessible through College and Career Promise at Blue Ridge Community College; and Calculus II and Calculus III through dual enrollment at Brevard College.
- independent study, credit-bearing internships, and advanced studies leading to national/industry-recognized credentialing through the district's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program

All Schools

TCS extends the SCOS of many core academic, visual/performing arts, and CTE courses with in-class, co-curricular events and activities offered annually by many community partners.

TCS enriches the SCOS of selected core academic, visual/performing arts, and CTE curricula with co-curricular clubs and teams that meet during I&E or after school.

Finally, AIG teachers and specialists may further augment in-class, I&E, and after school enrichment and extension by:

- collaboratively planning lessons or units with teachers
- coteaching on regular rotations or for specified units
- organizing their own I&E or after school clubs, teams, or activities

*** 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.

TCS recognizes that students perform best when their teachers select instructional practices which draw on students' identified abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Instructional leaders and teacher teams compile and consider a variety of data and observations, and AIG teachers and specialists make suggestions and recommendations based Differentiated Education Plans, gifted pedagogy, and their longitudinal relationships with gifted and advanced students.

Instructional practices used in TCS include:

- Creative problem solving
- Critical thinking activities
- Curriculum compacting
- Debate
- Problem-based learning
- Research projects
- Socratic or Paideia seminars
- Thematic or interdisciplinary lessons/units

*** Practice C**

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

When TCS AIG teachers and specialists teach students and collaboratively plan or coteach with regular education teachers, they use a variety of evidence-based resources to enhance learning for gifted and high-ability learners. These resources include:

- Differentiating Instruction with Menus for English/Language Arts, math, and science
- Hands On Equation Building
- Math in Real Life
- Mindset Mathematics
- Jacob's Ladder academic and affective curricula
- North Carolina School of Science & Math K-9 STEM Enrichments
- Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS)
- SCAMPER Technique for creative thinking

- ThinkUp! Math
- Visual Thinking Strategies
- William & Mary Center for Gifted Education novel units

Instructional leaders and AIG teachers and specialists would also like to explore:

- Developing Creativity in the Classroom
- Google Lit Trips
- Mentoring Mathematical Minds
- Paul's Elements (or Wheel) of Reasoning
- Teaching Tenacity, Resilience, and a Drive for Excellence
- William & Mary Navigators Heritage Series and newer/revised series

Ever on the look-out for evidence-based resources that could help TCS better meet the needs of advanced and gifted students, instructional leaders and AIG teachers and specialists learn of new ideas from professional development activities; online professional learning networks; state/national gifted associations' research and conference presentations; regional/state AIG meetings; and the AIG and Advanced Learning Division of the NC Department of Public Instruction.

Books or other hard resources are housed in the district AIG library in the Curriculum Support office or in AIG teachers' classrooms/offices.

*** Practice D**

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

TCS fosters students' development of future-ready skills by weaving together learning technologies, curricula, and programs and by providing forward-thinking, context-appropriate staff development.

Along with 1:1 devices, TCS students have Google accounts, giving them access to Google Docs, Draw, Sheets, Sites, and Slides, and other applications which allow teachers to deliver technology-enhanced lessons and facilitate student collaboration. Teachers use Google Classroom to distribute, collect, and grade student work electronically. Digital Learning Specialists conduct ongoing staff development for using Google apps, extensions, and other web-based tools for engaging students with content, other students, and assignments or projects.

TCS fosters teachers' exposure to real-world demands for graduates equipped with future-ready skills by partnering with Blue Ridge Community College to provide Career Academy, an annual summer professional development opportunity. Career Academy combines an overview of local economic development and a three-day behind-the-scenes tour of local businesses and industry. Facilitators guide discussions about incorporating future-ready skills into daily instruction and classroom routines.

TCS offers instruction in World Languages beginning in middle school and continuing through high school, with face-to-face language instruction in Spanish and French and with hybrid instruction in multiple additional languages delivered by North Carolina Virtual Public Schools. Beginning in 2020-2021, TCS began using the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' web-based AAPPL exam, which uses interpersonal speaking/listening, reading, and

electronic writing tasks to assess students' language abilities, in order to empower students to pursue the NC Global Language Endorsement in a world language they acquire either through academic study or as a heritage language.

Elementary, middle, and high schools offer Creation Stations, Maker Spaces, and various clubs to provide students STEM/STEAM experiences. Digital Learning Specialists and classroom teachers have collaborated to develop Breakout EDU puzzles to build teamwork and problem-solving skills among small groups of students while enriching or extending regular curriculum. Digital Learning Specialists also offer exploratory technology/coding activities during Intervention & Enrichment (I&E) periods at each school, including exploratory activities through Code.org-supported computer science curricula, and TCS now offers Advanced Placement (AP) Computer Science Principles in high school. In 2015-16, TCS added a Marine Corps JROTC program with leadership curricula and cybersecurity activities.

The robust Career/Technical Education (CTE) program begins developing future-ready skills in elementary students with 5th grade Career Day, and then in middle school students may take formal CTE classes in technology systems or biotechnology or 9-week exploratory rotations in health occupations, culinary arts, and business/marketing. High school CTE curricula include nationally recognized career clusters (which themselves include advanced certifications and credentials) Agriculture, Business, Family and Consumer Science, Health Science, Marketing, Manufacturing, Technology, and Trades & Industry. Through CTE, students may pursue job-shadowing and internship experiences once they turn 16 years old.

TCS supports Career/Technical Student Organizations such as Distributive Education Clubs of America, Future Business Leaders of America, Future Farmers of America, Health Occupations Students of America, and Skills USA. These clubs provide students opportunities for travel, collaboration, competition, scholarships, and networking, as well as community service opportunities and leadership development through workshops and camps.

Within this rich, future-ready learning environment, TCS AIG teachers teach critical and creative thinking skills; teach collaborative processes for groups; offer enrichment in developing leadership and citizenship or community/school service; and engage students in Problem-Based Learning through Genius Hour, Passion Projects, and real world, cross-grade/cross-curricular projects.

*** Practice E**

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

TCS elementary schools use a Continuous Progress model for curriculum/instruction, relying on formative and summative assessments to monitor and respond to student growth.

For students entering Kindergarten, Instructional coaches, lead teachers, and grade level chairs use results from a school- or district-developed Kindergarten Assessment of basic knowledge, skills, readiness to create heterogeneous regular education kindergarten classes in which teachers differentiate instruction; similarly, they use End of Year benchmark and End-of-Grade test data to create classes for grades 1-5.

Within these classes, reading and math data from Beginning of Year, Middle of Year, End of Year assessments, and/or district Quarterly Benchmark assessments, as well as teachers' own assessments, inform grade level teams' decisions to create and adjust flexible groups and target them with appropriate instruction. This target instruction may occur during daily instructional blocks and/or dedicated Intervention & Enrichment (I&E) periods.

In addition to supporting flexible grouping based on quantitative data, AIG teachers and specialists encourage teachers to plan flexible groups based on student interests and social-emotional readiness and needs. Qualitative sources for these grouping decisions may come from teacher observations and surveys, learning profiles suggested in DEPs, and students' participation in talent development and special programs.

As middle and high schools respond to increasing numbers of students whose grade-level designations belie their academic progress, teachers must increasingly rely on ongoing assessment, both formative and summative, to determine varying levels of student need, proficiency, and readiness.

TCS uses benchmark testing in core subject areas as one form of ongoing assessment. TCS also administers the PreACT to all 10th grade students, in addition to the state-mandated ACT for 11th graders, to gain other indicators of readiness and proficiency in core subject areas.

CTE teachers may use pre-assessments as formative assessments, and for juniors and seniors they may use PreACT and ACT reading and math subtest scores as leading indicators of ACT WorkKeys performance.

Middle and high school World Languages teachers increasingly use standards-based assessment practices to monitor students' growth, and individual teachers in other disciplines are supported as they also convert to standards-based grading.

Common pacing guides, standards-based grading practices, and formative and benchmark testing for core academic subjects (language arts, math, social studies, and science) help teachers and instructional leaders recognize whether students who move quickly through content are learning it superficially or mastering it. These insights can suggest changing flexible groups, adding enrichment/extension activities, or considering cross-grade or subject acceleration.

TCS encourages collaborative planning between regular classroom teachers, grade level or subject area teams, and AIG teachers and specialists so that teachers may confidently create flexible groups and collaborate to meet the variety of instructional needs of those changing groups.

*** Practice F**

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

Beginning with the 2013-2016 Plan cycle, the TCS AIG program has turned specific attention and resources to the social and emotional needs of AIG students.

A first step was incorporating social-emotional development into annual Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) writing/revising with parents/families and students by increasing personalized learning for younger students and providing older students with long-range perspective for complex goal-setting.

A second step has been collecting and sharing resources about the social-emotional benefits of academic acceleration to counter misperceptions held by educators and parents/families.

A third step has been exploring and using affective curricula such as Jacob's Ladder and Philosophy with Kids in seminars during elementary AIG enrichment periods. Middle schools may explore using Teaching Tenacity, Resilience, and a Drive for Excellence during the 2019-22 plan cycle.

A fourth step has been cultivating a talent development, achievement-oriented culture among gifted and advanced students in all schools. Anchored with an online community maintained by the AIG teacher or specialist through a Google Class, this culture manifests itself in guest speaker presentations (both in I&E periods and targeted academic classes), cross-grade academic clubs/teams, career fields exploration, and wide publication of Credit by Demonstrated Mastery opportunities, college-based camps, contests/competitions, and summer/extracurricular offerings.

Through Differentiated Education Plans and in face-to-face meetings and consultations, AIG teachers and specialists advocate specifically for differentiation, flexible grouping, and curriculum compacting practices which provide gifted and advanced learners access to affective curriculum and interdisciplinary/thematic or interest-based topics alongside their academic learning in regular education settings.

*** Practice G**

Cultivates and develops the potential of young (K-3) students with early intervention and talent development opportunities through purposeful and intentional differentiated curriculum and instruction.

In K-3, flexible grouping in math and reading instruction are a daily feature of classroom differentiation and are professionally facilitated and supported by collaborative planning and monitoring efforts of grade level teams and instructional leaders. This consistent, close attention to classroom performance allows for routine use of above-level materials and cross-grade grouping both during instructional blocks and in Intervention & Enrichment (I&E) periods. The AIG teacher or specialist may be involved in planning for or facilitating differentiation for these times; additionally, he/she may provide accelerated, enriched, or extended instruction in a separate setting.

Indicators that a child may need direct instruction from the AIG teacher include formal assessment data (e.g., Kindergarten Entry Assessment and grade-level benchmark assessments) and observational data that a student is often performing two or more grade levels above his/her peers. Consistent with principles of flexible grouping, K-3 students who receive AIG instruction on either a rotational or daily basis are regularly monitored and regrouped appropriately.

With informed consent from the parent/family, the AIG teacher or specialist may use aptitude testing (e.g. CogAT verbal, quantitative, and/or nonverbal batteries or Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test) to further inform instruction prior to the school-wide gifted screening which occurs in the spring of 3rd grade. Case-by-case, early aptitude testing may lead to a formal identification for ongoing gifted service matches.

The AIG teacher or specialist maintains a list of names of students who received AIG instruction in K-3. These students are included in the pre-identification pool during both their 4th and 5th grade years.

*** Practice H**

Develops and implements differentiated curriculum and instruction that addresses the academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners, across all grade levels, through collaboration with a variety of personnel based on student needs.

TCS creates a variety of routines and support structures in order to facilitate collaborations among educators which will support differentiation.

All schools use grade level, subject area, or MTSS teams guided by instructional leaders to monitor and respond to student needs and growth. During these routine meetings, teachers may discuss or formally collaborate to implement differentiation.

Because members of these teams also gather for Professional Learning Community (PLC) purposes, they meet periodically with AIG teachers or specialists, media specialists, instructional technology facilitators (ITFs), student counselors, and/or CTE or workforce development coordinators to collaboratively integrate complementary curricula, skills, resources, and/or instructional practices which support or augment differentiation.

In addition to collaborative planning, TCS uses differentiation in its embedded technology training and menu of technology professional development modules to encourage and model classroom differentiation. The AIG Coordinator will follow suit in continuing to develop AIG training and professional development modules so that participating teachers will develop and implement discipline-specific differentiation in their classrooms.

*** 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/guardians to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

When a TCS student is first identified for AIG services, the AIG teacher or specialist invites the parent/family, and when appropriate the student, to confer privately about identification evidence and create a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) for the school year.

Each school's Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) pre-approves a slate of differentiated curriculum and instruction service matches and learning environment modifications which may be included on the DEP:

- Elementary School: flexible grouping, subject or grade acceleration, learning centers, independent work, parallel curriculum, curriculum compacting, AIG consultation/support, and/or AIG enrichment/extension

- Middle School: flexible grouping, subject or grade acceleration, parallel curriculum, curriculum compacting, advanced electives through North Carolina Virtual Public School, AIG consultation/support, and/or AIG enrichment/extension during I&E or exploratory rotations
- High School: alternative culminating products, alternative assessment standards, alternative processes, ability- and interest-based flexible groupings, independent work, curriculum compacting, advanced/complex texts, texts presenting multiple/alternate perspectives, advanced problems/products, thematic/interdisciplinary study, and/or AIG consultation/support

AIG teachers and specialists highlight connections between students' interests, readiness, and abilities by including suggestions for co-curricular and extracurricular activities on the DEP, in addition to service matches. These connections can help parents/families and educators alike sustain students' growth and interests during the school year and over successive years, even when transitioning between schools.

As students transition into and progress through high school, high school DEPs incorporate a "Four Year AIG Trajectory" to encourage gifted and advanced learners to view high school as a stepping stone. Each student outlines his/her own intended "Trajectory":

- planning advanced, enriched, and/or accelerated paths of study in specific fields
- planning whether to supplement academic classes with related school- and community-sponsored extracurricular activities, special programs, or job-shadowing or internships
- determining whether earning awards and/or attending special schools may boost them toward more opportunities for further advanced studies
- considering how to develop leadership skills and experience
- considering appropriate and fulfilling service opportunities

To update or revise (DEPs) annually for students who have previously been matched with services, AIG teachers and specialists use identification evidence, new evidences if any, historical and recent growth and achievement data, and/or qualitative observational data. They invite parents/families and students to arrange private conferences to review and finalize the newly drafted DEP, or parents/families may pick up the draft at Open House (or similar events) and return it with suggestions via the student, mail, or electronically.

Elementary and middle school AIG teachers and specialists develop and revise most DEPs in September/October. High school AIG teachers and specialists develop and revise DEPs for rising 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students in conjunction with students' registration activities. For all grades, AIG teachers and specialists also develop initial DEPs for newly identified students as soon as identifications are approved by school TAGs.

When parents/families cannot meet with the AIG teacher or specialist face-to-face, conferences are held by phone or asynchronously through email.

In all cases, parents/families indicate their informed consent for AIG service matches with a physical or electronic signature on the DEP, a copy of which is maintained in students' DEP folders.

Beginning in the spring of 2022, TCS's elementary and middle school AIG teachers and specialists will send home quarterly AIG progress reports or Nurturing progress reports to inform parents/guardians of how their students have responded to the services received in push-in/coteaching, pull-out/flexible grouping/enrichment, and/or advanced course environments. Using continua such as "sometimes - often - almost always" or "developing -meets expectations - exceeds expectations," these progress reports will provide observations on students' critical thinking and problem solving, engagement and self-direction, effective communication, respectful collaboration, and creativity.

- Strengthen efforts to cluster students in all grade bands in order support use of specific strategies to differentiate curriculum and instruction, with a focus on enrichment, extension, and/or acceleration
- Continue to ensure that AIG enrichment and extension curricular materials are easily cross-referenced and parallel to SCOS and materials used in general education settings
- Provide coaching support and instructional resources for K-12 classroom teachers to enrich, extend, and/or accelerate the SCOS for AIG and advanced learners
- Grow from collaborative planning to a co-teaching model in specific grade bands

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * Pacing guides and lesson plans, correlated to SCOS, specifying resources and approaches used to enrich, extend, and/or accelerate instruction
- * Data from formative/summative assessments and artifacts documenting differentiation and flexible groupings resulting from monitoring and assessing performance, including AIG/Nurturing Progress Reports
- * DEPs for AIG-identified students and artifacts documenting parent conferences and transition activities

Type	Documents	
	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

Transylvania County Schools (880) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 4: Personnel and Professional Development

The LEA recruits and retains highly qualified professionals and provides relevant and effective professional development concerning the diverse needs of gifted learners that is ongoing 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.

During the 2016-2019 AIG Plan cycle, TCS created a dedicated AIG Coordinator position, staffed by a licensed AIG specialist, and developed new routines to better inform and support the work of AIG teachers/specialists throughout its schools.

During the 2019-2022 Plan cycle, TCS created a Director position bringing together Federal Programs, Early Learning, AIG, and Multilingual Learners Services. TCS employs an AIG-licensed educator as a lead coordinator who reports to the Director.

Responsibilities of the AIG Coordinator include:

- overseeing the screening, referral, and identification processes across the district
- maintaining documentation of student identification evidence and services provided
- monitoring implementation of program services
- providing leadership and advocacy for the needs of AIG and advanced learners at all levels, including broadening access to advanced learning opportunities through intentional, data- and evidence-driven practices
- facilitating access to advanced academic opportunities, including processes like subject acceleration or Credit by Demonstrated Mastery; partnerships for dual enrollment with local institutions of higher learning; and course options through honors, diploma endorsement, Advanced Placement, North Carolina Virtual Public School, and the NC School of Science and Math programs
- participating in professional development opportunities, including regional and statewide meetings to support gifted programs
- providing professional development, work/training sessions, and resources to engage AIG teachers and specialists in continued adult learning regarding gifted and advanced students
- mentoring new or newly-hired AIG teachers and specialists
- providing embedded professional development for and/or :coteaching with high school teachers with clusters of AIG and advanced learners
- developing partnerships with and communication strategies for parents/guardians and the community to support the AIG program

The director and coordinator meet at least monthly to monitor and evaluate implementation of the local AIG plan, arranging timely support for the array of AIG and talent development projects and processes carried out by teachers, schools, and the district as a whole.

*** Practice B**

Engages AIG-licensed specialists in tasks that explicitly address the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of K-12 gifted learners.

TCS AIG-licensed teachers' and specialists' roles address the needs of gifted and advanced learners, across all grades K-12:

- Manage AIG screening, referral, and identification processes, including accurately maintaining student records in PowerSchool (K-12)
- Advise instructional leaders about class/team assignments, clustering, and scheduling classes, Intervention & Enrichment (I&E) blocks, and/or instructional rotations in order to facilitate push-in service (K-12)
- Advise and/or collaborate with instructional leaders and grade/subject teams to develop/select and deliver advance, accelerated, enrichment, extension, and/or talent development curricula (K-12)
- Advise and/or collaborate with regular education teachers to devise and implement differentiated instruction (K-12)
- Collect data to support and participate in decision-making processes to monitor and adjust flexible groupings (K-12)
- Respond to local/state initiatives affecting AIG and advanced learners and to emerging areas of need by participating in professional learning/training and monthly meetings for AIG personnel, in grade/subject meetings, and in Multi-tiered Services and Support (MTSS) teams (K-12)
- Meet with parents/guardians to review DEPs and revise designations or service options (K-12)
- Communicate to parents/guardians individual student response to gifted/nurturing services via quarterly progress reports (K-8)

AIG teachers' and specialists' teaching duties include:

- Rotations for talent development lessons, for example using Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) curriculum (K-3)
- Flexible group enrichment rotations (grades 3-8)
- Rostered classes for advanced English/Language Arts and/or Math instruction (grades 4-8)
- Coteaching and/or collaborative planning for classes with clusters of gifted/advanced students (grades 6-12)

*** Practice C**

Establishes specific and appropriate professional development requirements for all personnel involved in AIG programs and services, including classroom teachers, instructional specialists, student services personnel, and school administrators.

In TCS, all personnel who serve as AIG teachers must have an AIG specialist license. Educators may add this to their existing license by passing the appropriate PRAXIS exam or by successfully completing an accredited university licensure program.

TCS expects AIG specialists to remain informed about policies, research, and trends in gifted education and to use their knowledge to help guide school and district AIG services. TCS encourages them to participate in professional gifted education organizations such as the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and the NC Association for Gifted and Talented (NCAGT). TCS will explore funding options for sending teams of instructional leaders and AIG and regular education teachers to NAGC or NCAGT conferences.

Information about the AIG plan and AIG students' performance and needs is shared annually with district leadership at their summer planning retreat. Monthly conversations continue throughout the year during monthly District Leadership meetings, and district professional development planning includes consideration for above-grade level student needs.

Regular education teachers, instructional specialists, and student services personnel receive an overview of the AIG plan during a staff meeting at the beginning of the year. Regular education teachers and instructional specialists also receive a list of their identified and nurtured students, along with the students' AIG designations and suggestions for classroom differentiation.

TCS encourages regular education teachers who serve gifted and advanced learners to pursue additional training or licenses through opportunities such as:

- workshops/conferences on topics appropriate for gifted/advanced learners such as: differentiation; evidence-based curriculum/teaching models for heterogeneous classes; gifted, twice exceptional, or multi-lingual learners; standards-based grading; 21st century skills; or honors or PreAP/Advanced Placement curricula (K-12)
- job-embedded professional development with collaborative planning and/or coteaching with the high school AIG specialist (grades 9-12)
- collaborative planning and coteaching with a middle school AIG specialist (grades 6-8)
- National Board Certification (K-12)
- programs through institutions of higher learning (K-12)

The AIG director keeps personnel at all levels informed about AIG topics through a monthly segment in the district's internal newsletter.

*** 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.

As a small district, TCS requires that all general education personnel be highly qualified in the content area(s) in which they deliver instruction. Clustered and accelerated placements, along with practices such as differentiation and flexible grouping, provide structures which allow general education teachers to meet many needs of gifted and advanced learners.

Instructional leaders assign teachers to accelerated classes and classes with clusters of gifted/advanced students based on teachers' credentials, professional development/continuing education credits, and previous EVAAS performance with the AIG sub-group.

To guide and support regular education teachers in meeting gifted and advanced needs, an instructional leader/coach, lead teacher, and/or AIG specialist participates in grade/subject planning and progress monitoring.

*** Practice E**

Develops strategies for the recruitment and retention of AIG-licensed professionals, including those of diverse backgrounds.

Because TCS continues to prioritize providing regular AIG service in each school building, TCS district and building administrators analyze needs among the schools to strategically combine AIG responsibilities with other educational roles during the hiring process.

When hiring for positions with AIG responsibilities, TCS historically has provided financial support for educators who seek an AIG add-on license through an accredited university licensure program by providing 50% tuition reimbursement. Educators may instead pursue an AIG add-on license through the PRAXIS exam.

In order to attract and recruit personnel, including AIG-licensed professionals, from diverse backgrounds, TCS human resources personnel attend job fairs across the state, including job fairs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). TCS also provides practicum and student teaching placements for pre-service teachers by partnering with Brevard College, UNC-Asheville, and Western Carolina University.

TCS provides a retention bonus for all personnel.

*** Practice F**

Provides focused professional learning opportunities to realize equity and excellence in gifted education including changing mindsets, policies, and practices.

The AIG director, coordinator, and teachers/specialists engage instructional leaders and school Teams for Academically Gifted (TAGs) in conversations about school and district populations which are underrepresented in the AIG program. Visual representations of data from fall and spring headcounts, from nurtured but not-yet-identified students, from universal screening processes and AIG referrals, and from enrollment in advanced classes are presented in order to make considerations of equitable access to advanced learning opportunities part of decision-making routines. Focused occasions for ensuring equitable access to programs are schools' and the district's summer leadership retreats and monthly district leadership meetings.

*** Practice G**

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

TCS has established the following strategic goals for the district which focus school improvement and professional development:

- Every Transylvania County Schools student has a personalized education graduating from high school prepared for work, higher education, and citizenship.
- Every Transylvania County Schools student, every day has excellent educators.
- Every Transylvania County Schools student is healthy, safe, and responsible.

Current multi-year district and/or state initiatives within these goals include:

- LETRS training (K-5)
- ThinkUp! training (K-8)
- state and/or district training on social-emotional needs and learning (K-12)
- district-provided training on digital learning tools and implementing remote learning (K-12)
- district-provided professional development on formative assessment, progress monitoring, and flexible/differentiated responses (K-12)

AIG personnel support these goals promoting best practices and serving on a variety of school-based teams. When applicable, the AIG coordinator facilitates a Professional Learning Community (PLC) among AIG personnel which parallels current initiative(s), focusing specifically on meeting gifted student needs, on

developing teacher leadership skills, and/or supporting implementation/revision of the AIG plan. Within this PLC, AIG personnel can thus refine and grow from applications of required professional learning.

*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

- Ensure all educators receive professional learning on the role of gifted education within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Develop more differentiation within locally-required professional development to support the varying needs of all personnel, including AIG and Advanced Placement teachers, instructional specialists, and student services personnel
- Develop more local AIG professional development offerings, including modules that lead to local AIG certification
- Develop “Quarterly AIG PD Tidbits” to deliver at faculty/staff meetings, making sure to differentiate for various professional roles
- Continue to develop capacity and leadership potential among AIG teachers and specialists through periodic AIG PLC activities

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * Personnel reports showing licenses and credentials of AIG teachers and classroom teachers who are assigned clusters of AIG students
- * Artifacts from presentations at TAG meetings, summer leadership retreats, and monthly district leadership meetings
- * Artifacts from AIG PLCs, including lesson plans, progress monitoring, assessment, and teacher reflections

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 5: Partnerships

Transylvania County Schools (880) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Standard 5: Partnerships

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

*** Practice A**

Develops intentional, two-way partnerships with parents/guardians to support the following needs of AIG students:

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional.

TCS AIG teachers and specialists intentionally cultivate long-term, meaningful partnerships with parents/guardians to support AIG students not only during the school year but also during transitions between schools.

Understanding that relationship-building begins with creating awareness and establishing reliability, AIG teachers and specialists participate in annual orientation/registration events when school begins. Then throughout the year, they use their school's preferred communication channels (i.e., principal phone messages, letters/flyers in student communication folders, PeachJar flyers) to announce annual events such as universal CogAT screening, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery testing, and other advanced learning opportunities that are open to all students.

To specifically highlight opportunities which address AIG students' academic, intellectual, social, and/or emotional development, AIG teachers and specialists promote age-appropriate and interest-driven co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities in the district's AIG newsletter for parents/guardians, enabling them to see not only what is available to their children now but also what will be available as their children continue to age and develop.

Building on these one-way efforts to build awareness and reliability, AIG teachers and specialists intentionally seek to develop and maintain true partnerships through interactions and personal communication, using each parent/guardian's preferred avenues: face-to-face meetings or virtual meetings, emails, phone calls, or text messages through school-approved apps. Interactions include creating, reviewing, and revising students' Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs); reviewing new identification evidence for refining/updating AIG designation; providing academic and transition advisement; and serving as student advocate during IEP or 504 meetings at parent request.

DEPs include academic, intellectual, social, and emotional learning opportunities. When creating or revising DEPs or updating designations for elementary and middle school students, AIG personnel include the parent/guardian's perception of their students' strengths and challenges on the DEP, while middle and high school increasingly incorporate students' own voices. Including such non-academic activities and this array of perspectives supports meaningful, personalized learning for younger students, and it provides older students with long-range perspective for complex goal-setting.

*** Practice B**

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

TCS believes that developing students' potential begins with education, but their success depends upon their finding meaningful, fulfilling pursuits in adult life. Gifted and advanced learners, and many other students, benefit from connecting their school work to explorations of their communities and the larger world, activities during which they begin forming their identity as citizens.

TCS is fortunate to have many strong partnerships in Transylvania County and the region, including two institutions of higher learning:

- Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) partners with TCS to
 - develop and schedule dual enrollment classes which fit within high school periods and allow for safe travel time
 - support a career coach who advises and monitors TCS dual enrollment students, works with TCS student counselors to arrange FAFSA application workshops, and arranges College Day field trips for juniors and seniors
 - provide early access to the College and Career Promise program for qualifying AIG students, per Session Law 2019-185 Senate Bill 366
 - jointly offer Career Academy annually, a Continuing Education Unit (CEU) course for teachers, which combines a three-day behind-the-scenes tour of local businesses and industry with an overview of local economic development and concrete discussions about 21st century skills
- Brevard College offers dual enrollment classes for high school students for nominal tuition
 - if a sufficient number of TCS students request a class, the college department chair may cooperate with the schools to schedule the class during a time which fits high school periods and allows for safe travel time

Many Transylvania County and community agencies actively seek to involve students in year-long leadership-building and community service activities:

- C.A.R.E. Coalition of Transylvania County: Teens Advocating for Future Youth
- VISION Transylvania Community Leadership Development Program: VIZ Youth Leadership
- Transylvania County Library: Teen Advisory Board
- Transylvania County Parks and Recreation Department: Transylvania Youth Council
- Transylvania County Sheriff's Office: Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
- Transylvania County School Board: student representatives attend school board meetings on rotating basis
- Cindy Platt Boys and Girls Club: volunteer staff and tutors
- El Centro Comunitario Hispaño-Americano of Transylvania County: volunteer tutors
- Neighbors in Ministry's Rise and Shine Freedom School: volunteer tutors, homework coaches, and STEAM programming
- NC State Cooperative Extension Service: various TCS school-based clubs and Transylvania 4-H Clubs

Many organizations and businesses partner with TCS to provide organized, ongoing opportunities for students to explore and develop special skills or interests and/or career/workplace experience:

- local businesses and community/government agencies which host student interns and job shadowing experiences

- Rotary clubs of Pisgah Forest and Brevard
- Transylvania County Soil & Water Conservation District
- El Centro Comunitario Hispánico-Americano of Transylvania County
- Education Committee of the Transylvania NAACP
- American Association of University Women, Brevard (NC) Branch
- Waightstill Avery Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution

*** Practice C**

Establishes and utilizes an advisory group to develop, implement, monitor, and revise 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/guardians, AIG teachers, and other instructional and support staff.

TCS uses a district Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) to inform development and implementation of the local AIG program and plan. The district TAG consists of the AIG director, coordinator, and the K-12 AIG teachers and specialists, and it meets monthly to ensure fidelity of implementation and/or to troubleshoot problems and clarify processes as needed.

In year two of the three-year AIG Plan cycle, the district TAG members work collaboratively with instructional leadership teams in each school to evaluate whether the current plan practices sufficiently address needs within that building. Improved practices may be “beta tested” or new practices piloted during year two or three and then written into the new plan for school board approval.

The district TAG, instructional leaders, and district leadership regularly evaluate the AIG program and plan with quantitative data, but the district TAG additionally solicits qualitative data and feedback through: targeted surveys of all certified staff, including administrators, instructional support staff, student counselors, and teachers from general education, special education, and multilingual education; focused discussions with principals, their leadership teams, and school TAGs; meetings with community partners and parents/guardians; and the annual stakeholder satisfaction survey of parents/guardians.

*** Practice D**

Informs all students, parents/guardians, and the community of the following:

- Local AIG Plan
- Local AIG program services
- Policies relating to advanced learning and gifted education
- Ways to access opportunities available to AIG students

Communication is ongoing and responds to the diverse language needs of the community.

In order to inform students, parents/guardians, and the community about the AIG program, TCS posts on its “AIG & Advanced Learning” webpage a summary of Article 9B, the current AIG Plan, the AIG Parent Handbook, and a variety of additional resources for parents/families.

The webpage explicitly includes a link to the NCDPI Division of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education (DALGE), listing the variety of state- and locally-supported programs that benefit local students: Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted; Advanced Placement; Credit by Demonstrated Mastery; Dual

Enrollment, including College & Career Promise; the North Carolina Governor's School; and NC High School Diploma Endorsements. Subpages of the "AIG & Advanced Learning" webpage provide more information on local processes for accessing these opportunities.

Parents/guardians receive a link to the electronic version of the AIG Parent Handbook when AIG teachers or specialists solicit informed consent for testing, and they receive a physical copy when giving permission to identify students with an AIG designation.

Because TCS regularly serves students whose parents/guardians speak Spanish, TCS has developed Spanish versions of its AIG Parent Handbook, annual stakeholder survey, and all official AIG form letters. Whenever a new document is made, the AIG coordinator drafts and appends a Spanish translation to it for easy access, and after the draft has been reviewed/edited by a TCS-employed Spanish translator or contracted translation service, its readiness is noted electronically within the document.

For informal communication purposes, AIG teachers and specialists are encouraged to use the Talking Points translating app to text parents/guardians in their native languages and receive translated responses. All TCS personnel are encouraged to use Google Translate or similar tools for written communications, and instructional leaders may use the district-employed Spanish translator or contracted translation service to conduct conferences in parent/guardians' native language.

* Ideas for Strengthening the Standard

- Reconvene Superintendent's Parents Advisory Council
- Continue to communicate opportunities to multilingual learners' families in their native language
- Consistently highlight AIG students' accomplishments in district newsletter and AIG Parent/Guardian newsletter to "close the loop" when students take advantage of advanced learning opportunities

Planned Sources of Evidence

- * Communication artifacts including: letters/flyers, AIG newsletters, DEPs, AIG/Nurturing Progress Reports, logs/notes from meetings/conferences, and translations
- * Rosters and class schedules documenting dual enrollment in Blue Ridge Community College and Brevard College
- * Links to AIG Plan, local program services, policies relating to advanced/gifted learning, ways to access opportunities, and AIG Parent Handbook in English and Spanish posted on district website

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	

Standard 6: Program Accountability

Transylvania County Schools (880) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

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 diverse 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.

Transylvania County Schools shares the sense of urgency conveyed in NCDPI's Division of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education (DALGE) "Call to Action: Critical Actions to Realize Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education - Changing Mindsets, Policies, and Practices." Each of the critical actions influenced how TCS implemented the 2019-2022 AIG Plan.

Student Identification described in the 19-22 plan already incorporated many practices to increase access, including the following:

- universal screening processes in elementary, middle, and high school
- annual windows for referral in schools
- proactively addressing potential educator bias in referral with training/refreshers when referral window opens
- asking parents to specify whether newly-enrolling students had received gifted services at their previous schools
- use of multiple pathways for identification and service; and
- use of multiple criteria for identification with no single criterion excluding a student from consideration.

Influenced by the "Call to Action" throughout implementation of the 19-22 plan, Student Identification evolved to include the following new considerations which in turn influenced views on Comprehensive Programming, on Differentiated Curriculum & Instruction, on AIG Personnel's tasks/training, and on developing Partnerships:

- interpreting aptitude and achievement scores with local/building norms;
- presenting school-based, disaggregated annual headcount data to principals and other instructional leaders and then soliciting referrals for identification;
- updating AIG designations when new data shows students' needs have expanded;
- supporting principals in selecting avenues for and then piloting/planning talent development programming in their schools (implementation slowed by COVID-19)
- establishing the expectation that AIG teachers monitor student performance within their school's talent development programs;

To develop the 2022-2025 AIG Plan, the AIG teachers and specialists, coordinator, and director collaboratively determined which standards to address with particular groups of stakeholders. Next, AIG personnel held data discussions with their instructional leadership teams. Then, the AIG director conducted a centralized follow-up discussion with principals and district administrators, and followed up with a survey tool to solicit both evaluative commentary on current practices and suggestions for improving them. These survey results, in addition to the newest results of the NC Teacher Working Conditions survey and annual Parent/Guardian stakeholder survey, inform this Plan.

To secure school board approval, the AIG director will submit the finished plan to board members at least a week prior an announced school board meeting to secure a place on the business agenda. The AIG director will present the plan at that meeting and respond to questions. The AIG director will submit a letter of approval from the school board or similar documentation of approval to NCDPI, along with the complete plan, by the specified deadline, July 15, 2022.

*** 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.

In TCS, the AIG director and AIG coordinator share responsibilities for monitoring the implementation of the AIG program and plan, meeting at least monthly to review data and guidelines in order to guide or support the array of AIG and talent development projects or processes carried out by teachers, schools, and/or the district as a whole.

Predictable, ongoing triggers for plan and program monitoring include: semi-annual headcounts, the annual Advanced Math Report, steps within the annual identification process, annual middle and high school registration processes and course development, annual teacher assignments, annual Stakeholder surveys, and building-by-building “AIG Fidelity Checks” in Year 2 of each AIG Plan cycle. Annual Fall and Spring AIG Institutes and interim check-in webinars provided by NCDPI’s Division of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education (DALGE) provide reliable updates to current legislation and state policies.

The AIG director uses a variety of avenues to ensure fidelity of implementation and timely sharing of data: monthly district senior leadership meetings, periodic meetings with or presentations to principals, project-specific supportive site visits, and monthly meetings with AIG specialists and teachers.

Project management tools such as flow charts, forms, correspondence templates, and spreadsheets are maintained in a Shared or Team Drive dedicated to AIG/Advanced Learning, so that processes can continue without interruption because files persist even as personnel move or retire. School and district instructional leaders, school counselors, the district testing and accountability director, and AIG personnel are members of the shared or team drive. Non-secure resources for AIG and regular education teachers and for parents/guardians are maintained in web-based portals for ease of access.

*** 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.

TCS develops its AIG budget based on specific material needs. To ensure that teachers and other personnel whose positions are funded by PRC 034 monies fulfill their specified roles within the AIG program, TCS conducts monthly internal audits of Differentiated Education Plans, reconciling individual student plans, classroom/course assignments, and teaching assignments with identifications and services indicated.

The AIG director collaborates with the district Finance Officer to develop the budget, particularly to have AIG personnel based in each elementary and middle school and a coordinator who serves the high schools.

* Practice D

Maintains and analyzes multiple sources of student achievement and growth data, as well as annual dropout data for AIG students. Data is disaggregated to recognize patterns and trends over time and inform mindsets, policies, and practices for equity and excellence.

TCS measures student achievement and growth using a variety of interim/formative and summative assessment tools to inform Math and English/Language Arts (ELA) programming across the K-12 continuum. This use of achievement and growth data also extends to college readiness test preparation in high schools and access to dual enrollment at Blue Ridge Community College through the College and Career Promise program.

Assessment tools used include: End-of-Grade (EOG) or End-of-Course (EOC) exams (grades 3-12), the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test (IAAT, grades 5-7), the PreACT (grade 10), the ACT (grade 11), and Advanced Placement (AP) exams (grades 9-12)

Math programming

Elementary schools instructional leaders, with collaboration from their AIG teachers or specialists, use Beginning of Year (BOY), Middle of Year (MOY), and other benchmark reading and math data to create flexible groups for instruction and to adjust the groups throughout the year. Grade level teams and the AIG teacher or specialist share responsibility for delivering appropriate instruction within those flexible groups, with the AIG teacher or specialist delivering enriched and/or extended reading and math curricula. When elementary schools create rostered math classes for the AIG teacher or specialist to teach in addition to flexible groups, they enroll both students designated as Academically Gifted in Math (AM) or who are receiving nurturing toward a potential AM designation and students who scored Level 5 on the previous year's math EOG, in accordance with Advanced Courses in Mathematics Legislation, NCGS § 115C-81.36.

Middle school instructional leadership teams use IAAT data, Level 5 math EOG scores, and/or other indicators of math achievement when enrolling students in advanced middle school math classes with compacted curriculum. Level 5 scores for 7th grade math EOGs and/or other indicators of math achievement trigger students' early enrollment in high school Math 1, in accordance with Advanced Courses in Mathematics Legislation.

For high schools, the AIG coordinator compiles and analyzes spreadsheets of math enrollments, math EOG/EOC scores, and PreACT/ACT math subtest scores, in addition to the disaggregated data from the annual Advanced Math Report. Shared with the district high school curriculum director, high schools' instructional leaders, school counselors, and math department chairs, this data serves as leading indicators for high schools to include honors and other advanced math courses in master schedules. Discussions about patterns and trends in the data allow schools to plan to increase access to such courses through scheduling, clustering, differentiated and/or enriched instruction, and/or inter-school transportation.

ELA programming

In participating middle school(s), the AIG specialist compiles longitudinal data to recommend and recruit students to take high school English 9 in 8th grade. This data set includes quarterly benchmark data, reading EOG scores, observational data, and writing performance task scores. In the annual high school course registration process, the AIG coordinator uses disaggregated longitudinal data to help inform efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented populations in honors and AP English courses. The high school recruitment/retention data set includes middle school reading EOG exam scores and teacher grades, high school teacher or EOC exam scores and teacher grades, and English and reading subtest scores from the PreACT and ACT.

College Readiness Test preparation

Within the context of heterogeneous homerooms, the AIG coordinator uses individual and disaggregated EVAAS data to school-wide, tiered instruction before the district's PreACT testing. For the annual "ACT Bootcamp," the AIG coordinator uses individual PreACT scores and local norms (or similar data when students have no scores) to implement school-wide cluster grouping for test prep instruction. Because the local community college can use ACT scores to exempt students from placement testing, qualifying scores can create access to dual enrollment college courses.

Annual drop-out data for AIG students and requests for withdrawal

In TCS, the fall and spring AIG headcount reports trigger internal data collection on students who drop out, students whose families transfer out of district, and students whose parent students/guardians request they be withdrawn from the program. Review of access/participation data alongside drop-out/withdrawal

data may suggest procedural changes in services and/or instruction in order to retain identified students in the program. To expand this annual analysis beyond case studies, TCS will begin including demographic information in the data.

*** Practice E**

Maintains and analyzes multiple data sources focused on the referral, identification, services, and retention of students within the local AIG program to ensure that students' racial, ethnic, economic, or other demographic factors, including other exceptionalities and language differences, do not reduce their likelihood of access to and participation in gifted education.

In response to the new expectation of this practice announced in April 2021, that "students' racial, ethnic, economic, or other demographic factors, including other exceptionalities and language differences, do not reduce their likelihood of access to and participation in gifted education," TCS began adding demographic, exceptionality, and language information to the spreadsheets which annually list the students screened, referred, identified, and served by the AIG program; the students recruited for and retained in honors or other advanced courses; and the students screened or referred as potential NC Governor's School candidates.

The AIG director and coordinator presented this disaggregated information to principals alongside annual review of spring headcount and program participation data. The responses were:

- 1) implementing a simple, web-based process for principals and other instructional leaders to refer students for identification during classroom observations and walk-throughs,
- 2) support from principals for AIG teachers and specialists to nurture non-identified students as well serve identified students, and
- 3) increased interest in building-specific talent development programming.

An early indicator of success is that in 2022, local applicants for Governor's School who were nominated to state level consideration included culturally/ethnically diverse students mirroring the general student population. Another indicator of success is a high school Team for Academically Gifted (TAG) asking why nominees to state level Governor's School consideration had previously been nurtured by AIG teachers or specialists but not identified.

TCS will continue to collect and analyze data focused on screening, referral, identification, and services through the AIG program, sharing that data with instructional leaders and TAGs, and seeking ways to effectively and equitably remove barriers and increase likelihood of access to and participation in gifted education.



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*** Practice F**

Maintains and utilizes current data regarding the credentials of personnel serving K-12 AIG students to align with the goals and strategies outlined in the local AIG plan.

As a small, rural school district, TCS flexibly combines AIG responsibilities with other educational roles to ensure that gifted and advanced learners in each school receive appropriate direct and indirect services.

In elementary buildings, personnel who provide direct AIG service may also serve as interventionists, test coordinators, and/or instructional coaches. In middle school buildings, AIG personnel may also teach general education classes. One AIG specialist serves students in high school buildings and serves TCS as a whole as the AIG coordinator.

The variety of service needed in each building dictates the credentials needed in each role. When hiring for positions that include AIG responsibilities, principals consider candidates' additional degrees or certificates to make informed decisions which will support and strengthen the overall AIG program. Principals generally include the AIG coordinator or AIG director in the interview process in order to respond collaboratively to current needs of AIG students and of the AIG program, as identified by the program evaluation processes described below in practices (g) and (h).

If newly hired AIG personnel do not have a North Carolina or reciprocal AIG license, TCS encourages them to pursue it, either by taking university classes or by taking the PRAXIS exam. TCS historically has reimbursed personnel 50% of the tuition if they pursue licensure through an accredited institution.

TCS uses cluster grouping in elementary and middle schools to ensure appropriate class/course placement for AIG and advanced learners and strives to assign to those clusters teachers who have both advanced degrees or local/other AIG credentials and history of success with gifted learners, as demonstrated by EVAAS value-added scores for the AIG subgroup.

Although school-wide clustering is not practiced in TCS high schools, school counselors and the AIG coordinator encourage students to take honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and/or dual enrollment courses. When course scheduling alone does not place a student in a desired advanced level course, the instructional leaders and the AIG coordinator strive to create clusters of honors-seeking students within standard courses to facilitate honors instruction as part of regular classroom differentiation, and TCS encourages collaborative planning and/or coteaching with the regular education teacher and the AIG coordinator.

TCS also encourages all honors and AP teachers to pursue and maintain a local AIG credential by participating in professional development that incorporates assessment techniques, social-emotional curricular approaches, and gifted pedagogies appropriate to specific academic fields.

*** Practice G**

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

TCS elicits annual feedback from parents/guardians through an AIG Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey. When appropriate, AIG teachers and specialists use brief event evaluations to close AIG events in order to elicit immediate feedback from stakeholders.

To elicit feedback from regular education teachers and other instructional services and support staff, TCS may use either a similar survey or a series of guided listening sessions. For feedback from instructional leaders, TCS uses the LEA AIG self-assessment Interim Report to hold collaborative conversations about improving service delivery and program implementation within each building.

Applicable items in the biennial North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions survey also influences program evaluation.

All these sets of stakeholder responses distinguish among the individual schools, allowing the AIG teacher or specialist, school TAG, and principal to respond to specific needs or weaknesses. Commonalities and trends across schools allow the AIG director to respond to programmatic weaknesses or needs.

*** Practice H**

Facilitates a comprehensive evaluation of the local AIG program utilizing multiple sources of data to revise the local AIG plan every three years.

In TCS, the annual Roadmap of Need produced by the Public School Forum of North Carolina's Center for Afterschool Programs (NC CAP), the biennial Teacher Working Conditions survey, and school report cards together inform comprehensive evaluation of district and school needs and successes. District leadership supports principals, other instructional leaders, and School Improvement Teams in analyzing and responding to those needs.

Within this context of continuous improvement, AIG program evaluation and planning also includes multiple sources of data [see practices (b) through (f) above] to determine whether current AIG practices and strategies should be revised mid-cycle. Relevant data and analysis are regularly shared at senior district leadership meetings to both maintain leaders' awareness of AIG goals and to ensure AIG programming remains aligned within district comprehensive programming.

During year two of the three-year AIG plan cycle, the AIG director uses the LEA AIG Self-Assessment Tool with senior district leaders, building instructional leaders, and AIG personnel to collaboratively evaluate program implementation. During year two and three, suggested improvements are piloted. If effective and sustainable, they are incorporated into the new plan.

*** Practice I**

Shares all data from local AIG program evaluation with school and district personnel, students, parents/guardians, families, and other community stakeholders.

TCS values the insight and critiques received from all stakeholders during program evaluation cycles and annual stakeholder feedback surveys. As appropriate, specific data and/or approaches for data analysis appear in relevant portions of the AIG Plan.

Supporting data and trends from the program evaluation process are cited when the AIG Plan is presented to the school board for approval and is supplied when board members, district leadership, and other instructional leaders ask questions during the approval process.

AIG personnel give annual opening of school presentations to instructional leaders and faculty at their schools. These presentations highlight programming delivered within their building and the data/trends and stakeholder feedback that influenced those programming decisions.

Descriptions of AIG programming features and the reasons for programming decisions are shared with parent/guardian, family, and community stakeholders through the AIG newsletter, particularly when stakeholder feedback or changes in student performance have prompted changes in policy or practice.

*** Practice J**

Safeguards the rights of all AIG students and their parents/guardians 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.

TCS protects the rights of AIG students and their parents/guardians through written policies, procedures, and practices and publicizes these protections in the AIG Parent Handbook, which is available to the public in both English and Spanish on the TCS AIG webpage. All formal, written communications to parents/guardians seeking informed consent for assessment, services, or reassessment are provided in English and/or Spanish.

TCS seeks informed consent for assessment by sending a letter which explains how the student was screened or recommended for AIG services and then commencing the assessment process only if a parent/guardian grants written permission. The AIG specialist or teacher shares the assessment results with the parent/guardian regardless of whether the student qualifies for services at the conclusion of the process. If the student qualifies for services, the AIG specialist or teacher sends a written Invitation to Conference to the parent/guardian, and in that conference creates a written plan for service which is signed by the parent/guardian, the AIG specialist or teacher, at least one regular education teacher, and the principal or designee. If the student does not qualify for services at the conclusion of the identification process, TCS obtains parent/guardian's written consent for the school to provide service/s that nurture the student toward potential future identification and for the AIG teacher or specialist to monitor the student's academic progress and response to nurturing.

Because TCS believes that students' strengths, abilities, readiness, and needs can change over time as they learn and grow, AIG specialists and teachers annually review students' performance and achievement in order to determine whether students' designations accurately reflect their need for specific services. For instance, if a student with an Intellectually Gifted designation subsequently receives qualifying reading achievement scores, a designation of Academically Gifted in Reading may be more accurate. In such cases, TCS will obtain written permission from the parent/guardian to make the update. However, once a student has an AIG designation, the student will not be un-identified unless the parent/guardian submits a written request to withdraw the student from the AIG program.

If a student transfers into TCS with an existing AIG identification from another North Carolina district, TCS honors that student's identification but may revise or update the student's specific designation in order to best align local services with the student's needs. TCS will send the parent/guardian a written Invitation to Conference and create a written plan for service as with locally identified students, receiving informed consent from the parent/guardian through that conference.

If a student transfers into TCS from another state, TCS will use all available data in the student's records to determine an appropriate designation for the student, and seek permission to test only if additional data is needed. As with in-state transfers, TCS will send the parent/guardian a written Invitation to Conference and create a written plan for service, receiving informed consent from the parent/guardian through that conference.

Students and parents/guardians may use the following procedures for resolving disagreements. See G.S. 115C-150.7(b)7 and G.S. 115C-150.8.

Step One: Appeal at school level

1. The parent/guardian may request a conference with the school's TAG to present concerns. This request shall be submitted in writing. The parent/guardian may elect to provide only the written request without presenting concerns in person at a conference.
2. This conference shall be scheduled within ten school days upon receipt of the written notice and a review decision made in writing within five school days of the conference.
3. At this conference, all information is reviewed and shared with parent/guardian and minutes recorded.

Step Two: Appeal at district level

1. The parent/guardian may request a conference with the district TAG. This request shall be submitted in writing within five days of the school decision and a conference scheduled within ten days upon receipt of the written request. The school's TAG chairperson and the child's teacher(s), principal, and/or other appropriate individuals may be invited to the conference in addition to the parent/guardian.
2. During the conference, additional information may be requested from the child's teacher(s), the parent/guardian, or school TAG. Written minutes of this conference will be kept by TAG.
3. The district TAG shall give its decision in writing within five school days.

Step Three: Mediation (optional)

1. The parent/guardian may request mediation by a neutral third party. This request shall be submitted in writing to the AIG Coordinator within five days of the district TAG decision.
2. It is the responsibility of the school system to identify and compensate a mutually acceptable mediator.
3. The mediator selects the format for the mediation session to follow.
4. The goal of the mediation will be a written agreement signed by both parties in good faith.
5. In the event that mediation does not resolve the disagreement, parents may continue with the due process procedures.

Step Four: Appeal to the Local Board of Education


1. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision of the district TAG and/or mediation has not rendered a satisfactory solution, a written request may be made to the Transylvania County Board of Education, Transylvania County Schools, 225 Rosenwald Lane, Brevard, NC 28712.
2. This request should be made within five days of the district TAG decision. The appeal then will be placed upon the agenda of the next Board of Education meeting.

3. The Board will review the concern. The Board may request further information from the parent, the child's teacher(s), the school and/or district TAG, the principal, and the AIG Coordinator.
4. The Board shall make a decision in writing within ten days of the appeal.

Step Five: Appeal to the State (G.S. 115C-150.8 Reviews of Disagreements)

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

1. The parent/guardian may file a petition for a contested case hearing under Article 3 of Chapter 150C of the General Statutes. The scope of the review shall be limited to: 1) whether the local administrative unit improperly failed to identify a child as an academically/intellectually gifted student, or 2) whether the local plan has been implemented appropriately in regard to the child.
2. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge shall make a decision that contains the 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.

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*** Ideas for Strengthening the Standard**

Continue to develop relationships with other district personnel, including Testing/Accountability, Curriculum & Instruction, Career & Technical Education, and Student Services, to facilitate access to and analysis of data to understand student needs.

Partner with the new academic process counselor to collect indicators of growth and achievement of AIG students, such as: number of internships, number of students participating in dual enrollment, college acceptances, scholarships awarded, and successful AP class completion and test performance.

Continue to collect, analyze, and respond to data focused on referral, identification, and services, including nurturing, to ensure that students' racial, ethnic, economic, or other demographic factors, including other exceptionalities and language differences, do not reduce their likelihood of access to and participation in gifted education.

Planned Sources of Evidence


- * Spreadsheets of identified and nurtured students documenting achievement, growth, services, and retention in the program vs. removal at parent request or dropping out
- * Artifacts from presentations to district and school leadership showing discussion of disaggregated data
- * Artifacts from annual AIG Stakeholder Survey process, including responses from parent/guardians, teachers, and other educators


Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link

Local Board of Education Approval



Transylvania County Schools (880) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

* Approved by local Board of Education on:

07/18/2022 



07/18/2022 

Original Application Submission Date: 07/20/2022

Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
Local Board of Education Approval Signatures [Upload at least 1 document(s)]	 <u>Local Board of Education Approval Template</u>	 <u>AIG Board Approval 7/18/22</u>

AIG Related Documents

Transylvania County Schools (880) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0


Required Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
Local Board of Education Approval Signatures [Upload at least 1 document(s)]	 Local Board of Education Approval Template	 AIG Board Approval 7/18/22

Optional Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
AIG Glossary [Upload up to 1 document(s)]	N/A	
AIG Standard 1 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 2 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 3 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 4 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 5 Additional Resources	N/A	
AIG Standard 6 Additional Resources	N/A	

Glossary

Transylvania County Schools (880) Regular Local School District - FY 2022 - Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted Plan, 2022-2025 - Rev 0

Phrase	Definition
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 ☐ The Local AIG Plan glossary is provided in an uploaded document.