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**Mooresville City Schools**  
**Local Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan**  
***Effective 2016-2019***

**Approved by local Board of Education on:** 30-JUN-16

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Mooresville City Schools has developed this local AIG plan based on the NC AIG Program Standards (adopted by SBE, 2009, 2012, 2015). These Standards serve as a statewide framework and guide LEAs to develop, coordinate and implement thoughtful and comprehensive AIG programs.

The NC AIG Program Standards encompass six principle standards with accompanying practices. These standards articulate the expectations for quality, comprehensive, and effective local AIG programs and relate to the categories related to NC's AIG legislation, Article 9B (N. C. G. S. 115C-150.5). These best practices help to clarify the standard, describe what an LEA should have in place, and guide LEAs to improve their programs.

As LEAs continue to transform their AIG Programs to align to the AIG Program Standards, LEAs participated in a self-assessment process of their local AIG program, which involved multiple stakeholders. The data gathered during this process guided LEAs in their development of this local AIG plan for 2016-2019. This local AIG plan has been approved by the LEA's board of Education and sent to NC DPI for comment.

***For 2016-2019, Mooresville City Schools local AIG plan is as follows:***

**Mooresville City Schools Vision for local AIG program:** The vision of the Mooresville Graded School District, as stated in the district strategic plan developed in 2013, is to ensure the maximum achievement of all students, resulting in a lighthouse district both nationally and internationally.

The vision of the MGSD AIG Program is to nurture and develop the potential of AIG students so they become successful and responsible citizens in a globalized workspace, economy, and community.

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## Standard 1: Student Identification

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

### **Practice A**

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

**District Response:** The following procedures are utilized to refer, screen and identify students as academically/intellectually gifted:

- 1) Third and sixth grade students are administered a group ability test during early second semester of each school year;
- 2) Group ability results for third/sixth graders are reviewed to establish a "pool" of students to consider for further screening, additional assessment/s, and/or ultimately, potential identification and services as gifted students;
- 3) An achievement test (currently the Iowa Test of Basic Skills or ITBS) is administered to selected students;
- 4) Additional instruments (such as the Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test or Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test) are administered to selected students;
- 5) The Teacher Observation Checklist (TCO) and Environmental Consideration Assessment (ECA) are completed on referred students; and
- 6) The district AIG scoring grid is completed and reviewed to finalize eligibility.

It is also possible that within or in addition to this process, some students receive a private (parent-paid) evaluation or a comprehensive psycho-educational evaluation within the district (for example, evaluation of a twice exceptional student). These results are, as with all other assessments for AIG eligibility, recorded on the district scoring grid to determine possible eligibility/placement options.

Relative to communication of AIG procedures, multiple modes for dissemination exist, including a hyperlink to the district-approved plan and an accompanying flowchart summarizing the above process within the Academics tab, AIG section of the school district website.

In addition, the AIG identification process is reviewed with key stakeholders in the early spring of each academic school year. This is accomplished by completing several steps and processes:

- 1) Third and sixth grade parents are notified of the administration of the group ability test;
- 2) Teachers in grades K through six are apprised of the screening and referral process, as well as their role in referral and assessment.
- 3) Parents of students with scores sufficient for inclusion in the pool of potentially AIG-eligibility are notified of the request to screen (assess) their children formally, and permission signatures are also obtained;
- 4) Students within the pool are given further consideration by immediate identification in one or more subject areas, or are further assessed via administration of additional tests if mass screening results indicate eligibility is possible though not yet certain;
- 5) After all assessments possible are complete, including teacher observation checklists and environmental rating scales, remaining students have all assessment data placed on the district scoring grid to determine eligibility of the final strata of students screened/assessed, including those

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whose scores were below the minimal pool criterion, yet who received a teacher referral (and were therefore assessed); and finally,

6) Parents of all assessed students receive letters of regret (those not eligible), or letters of invitation to a parent meeting to discuss AIG eligibility, program and services. These meetings include obtaining parent permission (signatures on forms) to receive AIG services via a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP).

It should be noted that formal AIG identification is not necessary during high school years, yet those students continue to be digitally tracked, and although open enrollment is available to all students, high-ability and high-achieving students are counseled, encouraged and/or recommended to take honors, AP and other courses that develop interest and aptitude. Parent-student meetings are held to explain curricula (offerings) and answer questions.

### **Practice B**

States and employs multiple criteria for AIG student identification. These criteria incorporate measures that reveal student aptitude, student achievement, or potential to achieve in order to develop a comprehensive profile for each student. These measures include both non-traditional and traditional measures that are based on current theory and research.

**District Response:** Multiple criteria utilized for developing comprehensive assessment profiles on potentially AIG-eligible students include:

a) scores from group ability assessments on third and sixth grade students, and alternative (additional) group ability tests on selected students who fall within specific ranges on mass screening results;

b) individual ability tests may be used as needed, including those obtained by private evals via parents or comprehensive evals within the district special education referral process, as well as numerous additional measures (e.g., Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Otis-Lennon School Ability Test, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, etc.);

c) results of End-of-Quarter (EOQ) and End-of-Year (EOY) state academic achievement tests in reading and math, as available;

d) a teacher observation checklist is utilized on students who are within the initial pool of students based on mass ability screening results and/or students who are not initially within the pool but are teacher recommended/referred;

e) an environmental consideration assessment (ECA) is also utilized to develop the potential AIG student profile, particularly useful for identifying underserved population students; and

f) the local AIG scoring grid is completed on potential students to incorporate the various formal and informal assessments listed above. The grid includes any(all) other additional individual assessments used on selected students who may otherwise not be identified or whose eligibility is not otherwise assessed formally and comprehensively prior to these additional assessment data.

### **Practice C**

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

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learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional.

**District Response:** MGSD utilizes multiple criteria for AIG student identification as the primary (yet not sole) mode for ensuring traditionally underrepresented gifted populations are included when identifying students for AIG services. These criteria include the use of research-based assessments to measure aptitude and achievement, in addition to peripheral assessment data aimed at identifying the underserved population (e.g., teacher observation and environmental checklists, etc.). Formal aptitude tests include the InView Cognitive Ability Test or OLSAT (Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test). Achievement assessments include the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), NC End-of-Grade (EOG) Tests, and the MGSD End-of-Quarter (EOQ) tests. Some parents also choose to use personal resources to obtain evaluations from a qualified/private professional, and these assessments are given full consideration. Likewise, when English language learners and/or students with disabilities are considered for AIG eligibility (as perhaps twice exceptional students), the district may utilize the formal special education referral process (including individual comprehensive assessments) to ensure a comprehensive student profile is available as part of a developing comprehensive profiles for determining AIG eligibility.

MGSD classroom teachers and school-based administrators also have the opportunity to complete Teacher Observation Checklists (TCO) and Environmental Consideration Checklists (ECC) as ancillary yet very integral components of students' comprehensive profiles. These two instruments are given special attention (in their completion) and special consideration (in view of overall profiles) on students who may not meet specific benchmarks on formal tests, yet are also within the underserved population.

Non-traditional measures are selected and specifically utilized when culturally diverse or under-represented students are being considered for AIG eligibility. For example, the GATES (Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale), Environmental Consideration Profiles, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, the Leiter International Performance Scale, and/or the Torrence Tests of Creative Thinking are possibilities for assessing students within these groups. These assessments are utilized as additional components when attempting to identify students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, twice exceptional or English language learners.

MGSD also adheres to the specific component within Article 9B by "automatically" qualifying students who are Intellectually Gifted (IG) or Highly Intellectually Gifted (HIG). These are students who obtain scores that are 95%ile NPA (National Percentile by Age) or higher on the InView (or similar instrument), and who have a 10-point or less discrepancy between verbal and non-verbal scores. Automatically identified AIG students also includes those who present assessment data and are eligible for early entry into Kindergarten.

#### **Practice D**

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

**District Response:** The Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator works closely with relevant district-level and school-based personnel to ensure the LEA AIG screening, referral and identification processes are followed to fidelity, consistently. This includes working with the district Testing and Accountability Director to implement mass aptitude screening annually. It

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further includes ensuring that school staffs receive the same communications and that staffs across the district collaborate during the primary AIG identification times (first, during spring, and subsequently as needed, during fall).

One of the methods for ensuring fidelity and consistency is the use of district-wide fillable forms specific to the AIG program and processes. This ensures all staff know and use the same instruments and processes to be able to complete forms and determine eligibility, such as the district AIG scoring grid. The accompanying use of district-wide form letters and parent permission forms to notify parents and guardians of assessments, results of assessments, AIG eligibility or program service options further ensures clarity and consistency in processes (as well as communication of those processes and procedures). Questions regarding eligibility and services may be escalated to the central office level by either school staffs or parents/students so that consistency in processes is maintained and communicated regarding individual circumstances/interpretations. Answers to such questions are communicated to school administrators and AIG teachers when questions render new or different interpretations to processes.

When forms or letters that reflect processes are modified, AIG staff and school-based administrators are solicited for input and proofreading to ensure accuracy of content. Teachers of AIG students coordinate efforts to inform parents (particularly parent placement and DEP meetings) so that they work across district schools contemporaneously during the identification process. AIG student files are identical across schools, and these are maintained at each student's current placement site. Finally, the electronic student information management system identifies (labels) students as AIG for tracking purposes, which is of particular importance as students transition to the middle and high school grades where programming/service options occur via advanced curricular offerings (e.g., honors and AP courses, etc.) rather than elementary/intermediate programming led by AIG-certified staff.

### **Practice E**

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

**District Response:** First, test results for students administered mass aptitude screening are on file (maintained) in the Testing and Accountability Director's office or Central Office. Students who score at the district-established percentile level are then included in a pool of potentially AIG-eligible students. This list of students at each intermediate grade schools is the first formal documentation during the identification/eligibility process. These lists are maintained at the school level by AIG staff.

Next, individual student files are developed as students within the initial pool are either immediately identified based on meeting the most stringent criteria, or have letters that obtain permission to screen/assess sent home (parent signatures to be obtained therein) on students who miss the criteria to be already eligible and require further assessment in various forms. Additional assessments (e.g., ability, teacher observation, environmental consideration, etc.) are employed and these data are eventually placed on a scoring grid (another form documenting the process followed and data gathered).

Finally, letters of regret for assessed but non-eligible students, or invitations to parent meetings for

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eligible students, are sent to parents. During parent meetings students being identified have service options explained and the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) developed. DEPs are also maintained as documentation of the process as well as the service option being implemented. Individual student files containing all these forms, letters and student data are maintained at the student's current school and passed on as the student progresses through the grades.

MGSD is further committed to improving the communication process by developing and providing a brochure for parents at each school. While we have an identification process in place, this product will summarize, clarify and enhance communication of the identification process and service options regarding the AIG program. The district flowchart summarizing the identification process is also being revised for clarity and comprehensiveness.

Schools send home results of state achievement testing on all AIG students quarterly and annually. Likewise, parents of students who are placed in the pool of potentially-eligible students are notified each spring and receive followup communication as the process evolves. DEP (AIG placement) meetings are used to explain AIG service options each year, as do letters to parents of students who are eligible in one subject area and annually considered by reassessing the second area of potential eligibility/placement.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** LEA Level Processes

Our current identification process identifies students who are Intellectually Gifted. The MGSD Scoring Grid needs to reflect students who are identified IG.

Parent Communication

Students who do not qualify for AIG receive a letter. This letter needs to be re-written to clearly communicate to parents the processes taken in making the determination of "did not qualify" (DNQ). Develop a brochure (condensed version of website page) for each school and central office.

**Sources of Evidence:** MGSD Identification Flow Chart  
MGSD AIG Scoring Grid

## **Standard 2: Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction**

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

### **Practice A**

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

**District Response:** MGSD works with teachers K-12 to adapt the NC Standard Course of Study to meet the needs of AIG students through a variety of service options as well as curriculum differentiation methods and strategies. During the 2015-16 school year, MGSD ensured that all AIG teachers participated in the NCAGT Conference to assist these teachers in learning new and honing existing differentiation strategies for the AIG population.

The district utilizes technology (both hardware and digital content) as an overall tool for teaching and learning, partially to engage 21st century learners with modes that complement and reflect their lives, but also to easily and effectively ensure customization of learning, i.e., differentiation -- in terms of both struggling students and those who are proficient and might be enriched or accelerated via differentiation. Additionally, grades K - 6 in all schools have specific times during the instructional day during which students are involved in Enrichment/Intervention (E/I). During these E/I times, students are engaged in specific enrichment/intervention instruction based on their most recent formative assessment data. This is a wonderful and effective way of advancing AIG students and others who are already proficient in taught content. Additionally, curriculum compacting, cross-age grouping and in-class flexible grouping are a few examples of modes that are utilized for differentiating and meeting the needs of AIG students and other advanced learners.

Each summer the district has a 2-3 day teacher professional development institute that is primarily aimed at advancing skills in teaching and learning using technology. The main feature of this institute is consistently focused on customization of curriculum and instruction (i.e., differentiation) to advance the learning of both struggling and advanced learners (including, of course, AIG students).

Advanced placement and honors courses at middle and high schools are designed to promote curriculum/content acceleration. Also, in grades 6 and 7, purposeful curriculum compacting is in place to ensure that high achieving (AIG) students are successful in Algebra in eighth grade.

### **Practice B**

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

**District Response:** The school district has developed and designed a set of strategies called the M--Powerment Strategies, which are aimed at this very practice -- addressing diverse learners and

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needs across grade levels. These strategies were developed by district administrators, Media Coordinators and Instructional Technology Facilitators and demonstrate the core tenets of the MGSD philosophy of a student--centered, technology- enriched classrooms, with purposeful instruction designed for advancing student achievement. These M--Powerment Strategies were adapted from various instructional and technology frameworks including: the Houston Independent School District Effective Practices, Discovery Education's SOS Strategies, the 5E Model, SAMR, TIM Framework, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Partnership for 21st Century Skills' 4Cs Framework, Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategies, and Marzano's High- Yield Instructional Strategies.

The M-Powerment Strategies include instructional foci and skills in the following areas:

- \* Collaborative Culture of Caring
- \* High Expectations
- \* Standards-Aligned Lessons
- \* Data-Driven Instruction
- \* Differentiation and Personalization
- \* Maximize Instructional Time and Resources
- \* Acquire and Demonstrate Knowledge
- \* Research and Inquiry- Based Thinking
- \* Students Skilled for Success (4Cs)
- \* Student Engagement

While this set of strategies is not specific to the AIG population, it encompasses the philosophy of advancing or developing the potential of every child, every day -- the district motto that reflects the district mission -- and therefore inherently and purposefully includes advanced learners. The set of strategies, as can be noted by the subtitles or categories, is comprehensive in that it addresses needs and strengths, as well as interests, abilities and readiness levels. Also, as has been previously described, the E/I (enrichment/intervention) dedicated time daily in grades K-6 is aimed at remediation or enhancement of skills based on readiness, ability and learning profiles, and is very effective at addressing a broad range of needs/proficiency levels, including advanced and struggling learners.

The previous M-Powerment Strategies and dedicated daily E/I time, coupled with the digital learning environment (digital content and instruction within a digital learning management system) render both diversity and effectiveness in instructional practices that are flexible and comprehensive when addressing a broad range of learning needs, interests and abilities.

### **Practice C**

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

**District Response:** Based on current research regarding engagement and effective methodology for effectively addressing 21st century learners, MGSD has implemented a Digital Conversion through which all students (and staff) in grades K-12 utilize digital tools (such as computers, tablets and smart boards) along with digital content (curriculum), as well as an abundance of digital resources (such as remediation and enrichment software programs), implemented within a learning management system (LMS). These tools and resources are used to personalize instruction for all students. During the

summer of 2016, MGSD instructional leaders will develop CORE Curriculum and Instructional Guides that will provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum. The Executive Director of Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator along with the lead AIG teacher will work closely with AIG teachers to ensure resources are used appropriately to augment and expand the MGSD curriculum.

When new teaching and learning software is considered, a sample of teachers from representative grades, subjects and levels listen to vendor presentations or examine materials to provide feedback to system administration prior to purchase. One of the primary criteria for selection of a program or resource is that available/presented empirical data indicate effectiveness of the material/s . The district LMS was even selected by this method.

### **Practice D**

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

**District Response:** The utilization of the district learning management system to implement digital content via computer-driven teaching and learning are also primary components of developing the skills and potential of 21st century students. These digital content, resources and delivery are flexible and effective at delivering and developing skills at advanced levels (while simultaneously excellent for addressing struggling or deficient-skills students). Twenty-first century skills (such as collaboration, creativity, communication and digital literacy) are effectively facilitated and developed by teaching and learning within a digital learning environment, such as when learning is demonstrated via project-based learning, which incorporates several 21st century skills (e.g., research, creativity, communication, collaboration, etc.). The MGSD M--Powerment Strategies discussed in Practice B also provide significant means of addressing 21st century skills for district students. It is also noteworthy that the school district showcases the use of technology for teaching and learning -- and the methods inherent within that model, such as project-based learning -- during a summer institute in which in and out of state school districts pay to attend and learn about this 21st century model. The institute has been in place for over 8 years and districts across the entire country fill the institute to capacity annually.

### **Practice E**

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

**District Response:** MGSD student achievement reflects advanced development and use of formative and summative assessments to meet the constantly changing needs of students. District-wide formative assessments have been in place since the late 1990's, developed as a component of the district's previous intense engagement in year-round instruction as a student-parent option (a program developed from a large grant from a private company). As the year-round calendar option was integrated into a more traditional / collegiate calendar, the common quarterly (formative) assessments remained and evolved. They now complement the additional formative assessments that have been developed and are utilized across the district at virtually all grade levels.

Data from formative assessments are constantly analyzed and instruction is modified to continuously

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ensure that students perform well on summative assessments. Throughout the last several years, district student performance has been within the top 3 to 5 districts in the state due to the longstanding focus on ongoing assessment coupled with adapting instruction to meet all learner needs (such as through in-class flexible grouping). Of course, MGSD utilizes its common formative assessments and quarterly assessments along with state summative assessments such as NC Final Exams and End-of-Grade/Course assessments. Data are analyzed at the individual teacher level, same-subject collaborative teams, schools, and district level to determine adjustments to curriculum and instruction. Additionally, students are taught and expected to set personal goals based upon data while also collaborating with their teachers to identify strategies to meet their learning goals.

### **Practice F**

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

**District Response:** MGSD recognizes the need to identify and implement a more robust complement of specific best practices in order to support the social and emotional needs of AIG students. Currently, the district program of providing dedicated time for AIG students to be instructed solely with like-ability peers is also aimed at meeting (some of) their social-emotional development needs. Furthermore, using AIG-licensed staff only for instruction in the elementary grades also complements social-emotional development since these staff are trained in characteristics of gifted learners as well as how to meet their academic needs.

That said, during the 2016-17 school year, all district AIG teachers in grades 4-6 will participate in a professional development session with a focus on meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Content from *The Critical Issues in Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education* by Joyce VanTassel-Baska Ed.D., Tracy L. Cross Ph.D., F. Richard Olenchak Ph.D. is used for this professional learning activity. Additionally, during the 2016-17 school year, MGSD guidance counselors will participate in professional development in meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners.

Follow up on this topic will continue during the plan years. School-based administrators will be provided with information on supporting school personnel with these efforts.

### **Practice G**

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

**District Response:** Within the K-3 grade configuration, all schools utilize a school-wide flexible grouping structure to address advancement of all levels of student skills. This includes having not only remediation groups but enhancement grouping as well (previously identified in this document as enrichment/intervention or E/I time). To effectively cultivate and develop the potential of young (K-3) students, MGSD utilizes the following strategies whenever possible: project-based learning, academic competition and vertical enrichment. Of course within this grade span, students with exceptional ability may be grade or subject skipped, although grade skipping is rare. Teachers use a wide range

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of strategies in choosing materials that engage students' interests to enrich and deepen student thinking. Students have the opportunity to participate in in-depth concept development experiences, which are effective means of enrichment for gifted students (e.g., studies of cultures, scientific topics, or current issues, etc.). Instructional delivery reflects accelerated, complex, and in-depth content. MGSD uses technology and digital resources to solve real-world problems. Students are encouraged and expected to collaborate with other students, their teachers, as well as experts in their community and around the world to develop deeper knowledge of subjects of interest and engagement. In addition, each school will soon develop a plan to implement a maker space or STEM lab.

### **Practice H**

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

**District Response:** There are numerous methods and venues for collaboration of instructional staff to effectively develop and implement curriculum and deliver instruction. The first and perhaps foremost method of collaboration is via the engagement in a digital learning environment (digital content effected through a learning management system) that is effective and efficient at sharing products (such as formative assessments) as well as collaboration of staff to obtain input during modification of products. Shared digital resources (for example, iXL, a math remediation software product) are easily delivered in a customized form to individual students (or groups).

Another method of collaboration is the use of professional learning communities that are standard practice within the district. Curriculum and instruction are addressed in this venue. For example, it is quite common for instructional staff within PLCs at a school or schools to complete a book study that involves implementing the methods within the book and completing group reflection and sharing of effectiveness, how the methods might be customized for specific students, etc. These PLCs include general and special educators as well as AIG staff.

MGSD holds a summer institute for district staff in which teachers and other staff attend professional development sessions aimed at developing and enhancing the praxis (philosophy combined with actual practice) of instructional staff. This institute has been in place for several years and over 90% of district teachers attend. The final or third day of this professional development is a collaborative planning day for processing and planning how to implement the content/methods/practices learned during days one and two of the institute. As stated earlier, due to the district philosophy and focus on every child, every day (the motto that reflects the mission), differentiation is inherent in the entire effort of the institute and its final day of collaborative planning.

### **Practice I**

Develops and documents a student plan that articulates the differentiated curriculum and instruction services that match the identified needs of the K-12 AIG student, such as a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). This document is reviewed annually with parents/families to ensure effective programming, provide a continuum of services, and support school transitions.

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**District Response:** MGSD has developed and continues to update and revise a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) for AIG students in grades K-3, 4 - 6, and 7 - 8. This DEP is completed on all students who formally meet eligibility guidelines for AIG services in the intermediate grades, yet this form is no longer utilized for those students who do not meet formal eligibility guidelines but are placed in the program for talent development. It is also completed on students formally identified in K-3, and 7 -8, yet also no longer utilized for "placed" students (i.e., those in the same classes or courses who are do not meet strict AIG eligibility criteria). The district DEP defines all service options available at grades K-8, as well as the option/s chosen for each DEP student. The DEP shows the students' area or areas of eligibility as well as the service option (placement).

Once AIG students have completed their 8th grade year, DEPs are no longer in place. However, high school counselors work closely with middle school teams and school counselors to ensure the individual needs of AIG students are met as those students in grades 9 - 12 are enrolled and take honors and AP courses, as well as independent or virtual high school courses as additional ways to take courses otherwise unavailable in the traditional high school campus setting. Although DEPs are developed and discussed during the parent eligibility//placement meetings whereby parent signatures are also obtained, there is not a formal review of the DEP after implementation (end-of-year scores from summative assessments are simply sent home to parents).

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** Develop accelerated documents to augment the MGSD CORE Curriculum and Instruction Guides

Develop clear guidelines on the types of digital resources for AIG students

Develop plans for Maker Spaces in K-3 schools

Increase research opportunities based on individual/group student interest (outside of the MGSD Gateway Project)

**Sources of Evidence:** MGSD CORE Curriculum and Instruction Guides

MGSD M-Powerment Strategies

Social/Emotional Professional Development Plan

### **Standard 3: Personnel and Professional Development**

The LEA recruits and retains highly qualified professionals and provides relevant and effective professional development concerning the needs of gifted learners that is on-going and comprehensive.

#### **Practice A**

Employs an AIG-licensed educator as lead coordinator to guide, plan, develop, implement, revise, and monitor the local AIG program and plan.

**District Response:** The Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Instruction and Technology maintains oversight for AIG programs and services. The individual currently in this role is not AIG-licensed, but does have a doctorate in curriculum and instruction, as well as being licensed in instructional technology and educational leadership. MGSD does utilize an AIG Program lead teacher who is AIG-licensed and who collaborates very closely with the assistant superintendent and peer AIG teachers to ensure the AIG program is guided and monitored during implementation of the plan.

#### **Practice B**

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

**District Response:** MGSD employs AIG licensed staff in AIG teaching positions. Those AIG teachers who are not licensed are required to obtain the add-on AIG license. AIG teachers in grades 4-6 only instruct AIG students (or those who do not meet strict eligibility criteria but are placed in AIG classes for talent development). This model addresses most of the social and emotional needs of gifted learners in that they have dedicated instructional time when they are with peers of similar ability and skills, and also since they have dedicated instructional time with (AIG licensed) teachers who are trained to recognize characteristics and needs and address them. These students also have the opportunity to have a homeroom with their AIG identified and AIG served peers.

MGSD has also developed action plans to work closely with guidance counselors and other staff to specifically address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners. Additionally, beginning with the 2015-16 school year, MGSD put a greater emphasis on academic growth for AIG students as measured by the NC EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System). MGSD has developed action plans to continue to address "growing" our AIG students by increasing academic rigor.

MGSD recognizes the need to identify and implement specific best practices in order to support the social and emotional needs of AIG students. To begin to address this need, all MGSD AIG teachers in grades 4-6 will participate in professional development sessions that focus on meeting the social/emotional needs of Gifted Learners during the 2016-17 school year. Content from The Critical Issues in Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education Series by Joyce VanTassel-Baska Ed.D., Tracy L. Cross Ph.D., F. Richard Olenchak Ph.D. is being utilized. During the 2017-18 school year, a book that focuses on differentiating curriculum and instruction for AIG students will be studied via PLCs.

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The title of this book is *Rigor for Gifted Learners: Modifying Curriculum with Intellectual Integrity* by Bertie Kingmore.

Additionally, during the 2016-17 school year, MGSD Guidance Counselors participated in professional development aimed at meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Follow up regarding this PD topic continues during the years of this AIG Plan. School-based administrators will be provided with information on supporting school personnel in these efforts.

### **Practice C**

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

**District Response:** In general terms, MGSD adheres to North Carolina Professional Development and Licensure requirements. The district also has its own local requirements that must be met to receive CEU credit, primarily modeled after the definition of high quality professional development. This includes meeting the standards that professional development activities attended must be 10 hours or more and based on empirical research. Staff development must be requested and evaluated based on how it relates to teaching and learning (i.e., actual practice). Evaluation of all staff development activities is required prior to CEU credit be awarded/posted.

Additionally, MGSD provides ongoing professional development through our Summer Institutes (over 94% of certified teachers recently attended) and on student early-release days (at least six throughout each school year). Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, MGSD established a requirement for all AIG teachers to attend the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented Conference at least every 2 years. Additionally, MGSD has developed specific action plans to address professional development needs for certified staff members working with AIG students.

MGSD employs AIG licensed specialists (or teachers who are in the process of completing an add-on license) in AIG teaching positions. We have redesigned our delivery model to ensure AIG students in grades 4 - six are in classrooms in which their academic and intellectual needs for CORE content areas are met through a "self-contained" model. This model has addressed some of the social and emotional needs of gifted learners in that their schedules mirror that of non-AIG students. These students now have the opportunity to have a homeroom with their AIG identified and AIG served peers. MGSD has developed action plans to work closely with guidance counselors and other staff to specifically address the social and emotional needs of gifted learners. Additionally, beginning in the 2015-16 school year, MGSD has put a greater emphasis on academic growth for AIG students as measured by the NC EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System). MGSD has developed action plans to continue to address "growing" our AIG students and increasing rigor.

MGSD recognizes the need to identify and implement specific best practices in order to support the social and emotional needs of AIG students. Therefore, during the 2016-17 school year, all MGSD AIG teachers in grades 4-6 will participate in a professional development sessions with focus on meeting the social/emotional needs of Gifted Learners. We plan to use content from: *The Critical Issues in Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education Series* by Joyce VanTassel-Baska Ed.D., Tracy L. Cross Ph.D., and F. Richard Olenchak Ph.D. The following year a book study focused on

differentiation for AIG students will be completed. This book is called Rigor for Gifted Learners: Modifying Curriculum with Intellectual Integrity by Bertie Kingmore.

Additionally, during the 2016-17 school year, MGSD Guidance Counselors participated in professional development on meeting the social/emotional needs of Gifted Learners. Follow up PD on this topic will continue during the plan years. School-based administrators will be provided with information on supporting school personnel in these efforts.

#### **Practice D**

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

**District Response:** AIG students in grades 4-6 are either placed in "self-contained" classrooms (1, 2, or 3-person teams) or in "resource" classes taught by AIG specialists who have completed AIG add-on licensure or have a NC Provisional License and are in the process of completing coursework to add AIG to their license. AIG students in grades 7-8 receive instruction primarily through honors (academically accelerated, compacted and enriched) classes. MGSD attempts to ensure teachers of these classes are AIG certified; however, other criteria are also considered and may take precedence when assigning teachers for AIG students. At the high school level, MGSD utilizes open enrollment, which allows students and families choice in registering for classes while still meeting the needs of high ability learners. Numerous options exist for advanced students for these students; however, two primary choices are honors and AP courses. Therefore, AIG students are not necessarily placed with AIG-certified teachers, yet AP courses (which are a frequent and appropriate choice for AIG students) are instructed by AP-certified staff only.

#### **Practice E**

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

**District Response:** MGSD maintains a professional development activities plan/calendar that is updated annually, and based, in part, on the district annual staff development survey. Professional development planning also reflects review and analysis of summative assessments obtained at the end of each school year. Yet professional development activities are modified and new ones created based on needs identified throughout each school year (including analysis of formative assessment data) as well.

Longer term goals resulting in professional development activities are based on the district strategic plan, and again, these might evolve or be modified based on current or changing data. In that regard, the AIG program goals and staff development are aligned with the district's overall professional development, initiatives and goals. The AIG program is simply another instructional component of the total program, along with general and special education, and planned/integrated accordingly. Professional development consistently enhances the use of digital tools and resources for teaching

and learning, and again, AIG program activities are subsumed within this overarching district focus and system initiative.

### **Practice F**

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

**District Response:** All MGSD staff members are given opportunities to provide input regarding professional development needs and activities. Feedback is solicited specifically during planning of the staff development summer institute in which most teachers participate. Each school offers opportunities for teachers to refine applications of their professional learning, primarily through use of professional learning communities (PLCs) as well as ongoing department and grade level collaboration (such as regular grade-level planning and work on district formative assessments).

AIG staff are included in these input sessions or modes, as well as PLCs and peer teacher collaboratives. Additionally, District AIG teachers meet at least once during the school year to discuss and plan for professional development needs based on Plan goals, school improvement plan goals, and data from assessments and surveys. AIG teachers also informally meet and communicate regularly to ensure consistency in program implementation and curricular alignment. Finally, the district also structures and encourages vertical and horizontal alignment via periodic meetings each school year. Again, AIG staff are an integral part of those sessions and that work.

MGSD recognizes the need to identify and implement specific best practices in order to support the social and emotional needs of AIG students. During the 2016-17 school year, all MGSD AIG teachers in grades 4-6 will participate in a professional development session with focus on meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. We plan to use content from: The Critical Issues in Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education Series. The following year teachers will complete a book study on differentiation for AIG students.

Additionally, during the 2016-17 school year, MGSD guidance counselors will participate in professional development in meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Follow up PD on this topic will continue during the plan years. To ensure success of these goals and activities, school-based administrators will be provided with information on supporting school personnel in these efforts.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** Implement plan to specifically address the social/emotional needs of AIG students.

Provide additional opportunities for AIG specialists to collaborate across and between schools.

**Sources of Evidence:** MGSD Summer Institute Schedule  
MGSD Summer Institute Course Offerings

## **Standard 4: Comprehensive Programming within a Total School Community**

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

### **Practice A**

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

**District Response:** AIG programs/services exist across the entire K-12 spectrum; however, placement or service continuum options exist at varying degrees, depending on the grade level/s being described. The following details describe the overall programs and services currently available, with some parenthetical "admissions" of where needs exist or programs/services could be enhanced.

In Kindergarten, students might receive early admission based on meeting state-defined criteria for intelligence and achievement. Students in grades K through 3 have various program options available, although actual formal AIG programs based on (mass) formal identification are not in place. Students who require additional challenge beyond typical general education instruction are considered for the following in K-3:

- 1) in-class flexible grouping based on skill (ability) level;
- 2) academic enrichment based on interest and ability per student (e.g., learning packets and/or other independent study/learning as necessary);
- 3) subject skipping (going to another grade level for instruction a specific subject);
- 4) grade skipping; and
- 5) consultation with a district AIG teacher instructing AIG students in the intermediate grades.

Since formal AIG identification begins at the end of grade 3, the above options also exist for identified students in grades 4-6 (with the exception of early admission, of course). In addition, students may also receive specific instruction from an AIG-licensed teacher in the areas of English-language arts and/or mathematics via a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). These classes replace (rather than enrich or supplement) general education classes in these subject areas. Students in this age/grade level have social-emotional needs partially met through being placed and instructed with similar ability/skill students for a dedicated time daily, and by spending dedicated time with teachers who are trained in recognizing their needs (AIG characteristics).

In middle school grades (7 - 8) AIG students retain a DEP and AIG identification yet are served through advanced/accelerated learning classes, often called honors classes. These courses are available in the areas of English (language arts) and math, as they were in the intermediate grades. However, teachers may not be AIG-licensed in all instances. Other programming/service options such as grade skipping, independent study, etc. continue to be available, as they are in grades K-6. These service delivery options are decided on a per student basis, depending on need and ability/skills presented. Students in middle school, as with intermediate school AIG students, have social-emotional needs partially met by being educated with similar-ability/skill peers daily. However, these students are availed more (additional) extracurricular activities that more fully address social and

emotional needs and interests.

Finally, in high school, students of high ability and/or with advanced academic skills are availed a vast array of honors and advanced placement courses through the district philosophy of open enrollment, coupled with counseling and guidance. AIG/high achieving/ability students also have options such as independent study, virtual public high school courses, and other interest-based, on-campus offerings to meet their interests and challenge them intellectually/academically. Social-emotional needs for this group are met by being with similar-ability peers during dedicated times, but even more so by the expanded extra and co-curricular diverse options available to them.

### **Practice B**

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

**District Response:** AIG students are identified for an academic-skills-based program due to the primary goal (mission statement) of developing the academic potential of gifted students. The program primarily addresses basic subject areas of reading and math. Therefore, students are served in reading (English-language arts) and math. This is most directly/clearly observable, and therefore most aligned, in grades 4 through 8, where formal AIG identification has occurred and school subject names (courses/classes) are a 1:1 match with the AIG identification areas. The main resource for the program and goals at these grade levels is employment of and direct instruction by AIG-licensed teachers, coupled, of course, with the technology and digital resources necessary to teach and learn within a digital environment (school district).

At other grade levels the goal for AIG programs/services is also to develop or maximize the academic potential of identified students. However, at grades K-3, the alignment of the goal with identification and resources is much more individualized, and also less present. As described in the Practice A for this Standard, services for K-3 are per child and based on presented needs (for example, students who are eligible for and receive early admission to K). Therefore, resources are also individualized, such as when AIG consultation is requested and/or employed, or when a student goes to another (higher) grade level for a specific subject. Even with grade skipping in the primary grades, the general education teacher is the primary resource to develop the child's potential and thereby meet the program goal. Ancillary instructional materials, if necessary to meet the individual student's needs, are requested and become available as an AIG resource.

In high school, resources are largely, again, through instructors of courses in which students are enrolled, whether these are AP-certified teachers, or simply state-licensed teachers in honors classes or virtual public high school classes. Likewise, technology and digital resources are immediately in place, in addition to supporting instructional materials needed for individual students, which could be sought and approved.

Generally speaking, MGSD works with teachers K-12 to adapt the NC Standard Course of Study to meet the needs of AIG students. Within recent years, MGSD has increased the number of AIG personnel and also the number of AP courses available to students in high school. Teachers of these students are also frequently receive professional development, whether through the district annual

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Summer Institute, or AIG-licensed teachers attending the state conference, job-alike meetings or participating in a PLC activity.

### **Practice C**

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

**District Response:** MGSD has implemented a Digital Conversion whereby all students in grades K-12 have a digital device, such as a laptop or tablet. Teachers and students likewise have access to an abundance of digital resources (textbooks are digital, yet numerous other software programs are in place and utilized). These resources are used to personalize instruction for all students, and this is not different for AIG students. In other words, the alignment of digital teaching and learning is across all grade levels and completely integrated into whatever special programs and courses exist, such as AIG, AP, honors, special and vocational education, etc.

During the summer of 2016, MGSD instructional leaders developed CORE Curriculum and Instructional Guides that provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum across grades, subjects and academic levels. The Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator, along with the lead AIG Teacher works closely with AIG teachers to ensure resources are used appropriately to augment the district curriculum for this group.

As mentioned elsewhere in this document, the MGSD M--Powerment Strategies were also developed and designed by the MGSD Administrators, School Library Media Coordinators and Instructional Technology Facilitators to demonstrate the core tenets of the MGSD philosophy of a student--centered, technology- rich classroom with purposeful instruction designed for achievement. The MGSD M--Powerment Strategies were adapted from various instructional and technology frameworks including: the Houston Independent School District Effective Practices, Discovery Education's SOS Strategies, the 5E Model, SAMR, TIM Framework, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Partnership for 21st Century Skills' 4Cs Framework, Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategies, and Marzano's High- Yield Instructional Strategies. Rather than list the categories again, it is noteworthy only to say that these strategies are part of the total instruction program and therefore also used as AIG programs/services are delivered.

In addition, all schools grades K - 6 have specific times during the instructional day where students are involved in Enrichment/Intervention time. During this time, students are involved in specific enrichment/intervention instruction based on most recent formative assessment data. For many students this dedicated instructional time involves remediation of a skill, skill set, or concept/s. However, this is typically a time in which AIG students receive academic enrichment or their instruction is enhanced by broadening and deepening the learning, since their data often reveals proficiency of the skill or concept. Again, this example demonstrates the integration of a district instructional model that is integrated such that it is also utilized for AIG (in addition to the lower level or struggling students).

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**Practice D**

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

**District Response:** The MGSD AIG Plan is publicized on the MGSD website. The Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator works closely with administrators to ensure AIG services are delivered according to the AIG plan and also MGSD expectations. Lead AIG teachers at each intermediate school, along with the school-based administrators, take responsibility for communicating AIG processes, programs (including service delivery and differentiation), and procedures to each school's staff. For example, during the eligibility determination process, AIG staff communicate with general educators to ensure they are aware of the characteristics and behaviors of potentially gifted learners, so that referrals are appropriately forthcoming.

Currently, curriculum and instruction updates are also sent to staff members monthly. Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, strategies for developing the potential of young learners will be included in the updates. A narrated presentation explaining the AIG identification process will be available and shared with staff in January of each school year. Finally, district forms utilized for AIG identification and services are digital and available via Google docs, an additional way in which timely, accurate information is ensured and made consistent across all schools/staff.

**Practice E**

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

**District Response:** The Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education holds the primary responsibility for ensuring smooth transitions and that services for AIG students are continued effectively across all grade levels. School administrators, the lead AIG teacher, and AIG teachers are key staff in assisting and effecting both communication and services continuation during transition times and periods.

The typical transition "places" in MGSD are due to and reflect grade configurations. The district has primary grades or K-3 schools, intermediate or 4-6 grades schools, middle schools with grades 7-8, and a high school with the remaining grades 9-12. Therefore, key transition points are from grade 3 to 4, 6 to 7, and 8 to 9, and this implicates general education students as well as students with special needs (including AIG students).

Formal transition meetings are held annually to assist with smooth transition of students from one grade configuration to the next. Paper and digital student files are in place and formally transferred (typically with the knowledge and assistance of school counselors and AIG staff) at the end of each school year, during summer and/or whenever a student moves from one grade level/school to the next (although rare, this might necessarily include students who skip a grade due to high ability/achievement).

AIG staff hold parent meetings and complete formal communication with staffs at schools to which

students matriculate due to normal transition points. Again, files are maintained that contain documents revealing the timelines, processes and services for these students; these files aid the transition process and ensure continuation of services. AIG staff also communicate with general education teachers and school administrators so that everyone is aware of the number of AIG students who are transitioning as well as their identified needs (services documented on DEPs). Finally, and although this has been stated in another part of this Plan, AIG teachers (across grades and schools) themselves meet and communicate regularly to ensure consistency of services and procedures for students at all grade levels and service delivery (continuum) alternatives.

### **Practice F**

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

**District Response:** AIG and general education (teachers and administration) work collaboratively to implement the program, which inherently includes meeting gifted learners' social and emotional needs. This is particularly apparent during the process of determining eligibility and during transition times/points. Also, the service model of dedicated instructional time for AIG-identified students is partially aimed at meeting their social-emotional needs. Whatever service or service model is utilized requires the collaboration of relevant staff, perhaps more apparent at the K-3 grade level where direct services are individually implemented than with a course or class. For example, if a first grade student could benefit from attending third grade (just) for reading, collaboration of both general education teachers and the school administrators is necessary, but this service has typically been put in place after consultation with an AIG teacher. And although this looks most like meeting an academic need on a spurious level, it actually meets social-emotional needs of a child who otherwise might be bored, become unmotivated, misbehave or develop poor work habits from not being challenged.

During the 2016-17 school year, system AIG teachers in grades 4-6 are participating in professional development focused on meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. This PLC is using content from The Critical Issues in Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education Series by Joyce VanTassel-Baska Ed.D., Tracy L. Cross Ph.D., and F. Richard Olenchak Ph.D.

Additionally, during the 2016-17 school year, MGSD guidance counselors, who meet monthly for professional development, will participate in professional development in meeting the social/emotional needs of gifted learners. Follow up PD on this topic will continue during the plan years. School-based administrators will be provided with information on supporting school personnel in these efforts.

### **Practice G**

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

**District Response:** AIG (and other high ability or high achieving) students have a variety of opportunities and venues for acceleration of academic content (by subject/course and grade). Two

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primary venues for acceleration are the Early Admission to Kindergarten and Credit by Demonstrated Mastery processes, which are honored as outlined and recommended by the state agency. Both these processes are publicized annually by the district; however, the early entrance criteria are given to parents on a case-by-case basis (typically parents inquire about early entry during the Kindergarten registration process), while Credit by Demonstrated Mastery procedures and criteria are more formally publicized in early fall of each school year via a parent meeting. This meeting is facilitated by the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary/Vocational Education in cooperation with high school administrative and counseling staff.

Two more central opportunities exist for students who benefit or desire content acceleration. The first of these is grade skipping, which is rare but available to students/parents upon request or if a student's unusual achievement or ability is noted by a teacher or other staff member. Grade skipping requires a comprehensive look at ability, academic achievement and social-emotional factors, in addition to environmental considerations such as grade level and support from parent/s and the school community. The school principal, in communication with central office staff, generally handles requests or needs for grade skipping. The other main option for acceleration is curriculum compacting, which is much more prevalent than early K entrance, credit by demonstrated mastery, or grade skipping. Curriculum compacting occurs within AIG classes within grades 4 - 6, and also at the middle school level in the area of math, so that students can be successful at Algebra in eighth grade. Other, infrequently used but available, options for content/academic acceleration are subject skipping and individual programming (IDEPs, for example), which would likely occur in grades K-6, but also are possible in grades 4 - 8. Finally, content acceleration might occur on a per student basis via the general education teacher in consultation with AIG-licensed teachers/staff.

### **Practice H**

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

**District Response:** In the past, MGSD offered limited service delivery options. Beginning with this plan year, AIG students will be provided with service options that best meet their academic and social/emotional needs.

Service options in grades 4 - 6 include:

**AIG Classroom:** AIG students at the intermediate grades have been placed on 2- or 3-teacher teams where they received all core instruction during the last 2 school years. The benefit to the under-represented AIG population in this model is that the student does not experience any potential negative effect that is possible when teachers unfamiliar with the student's potential teach the student in a non-AIG specific subject. The AIG teacher has the same high expectations and supports available across subjects in this type setting.

**Pull Out:** This is a service delivery option available for twice exceptional students, as well as students who have exceptionally large gaps in performance in math and reading. With this option, students are pulled into an AIG classroom for core subject and stay with a regular homeroom classroom the majority of the day. This model benefits the under-represented AIG students by providing dedicated instructional time with like peers as well as the benefits of having an AIG-licensed teacher who understands their characteristics and needs.

**Push In:** This service delivery option is available for twice exceptional students, as well as students

who have significant gaps in performance in math and reading. With this option, students are sent out to a regular classroom setting for one core subject but remain with AIG homeroom the majority of the remainder of the school day. This model is also available for ESL students who are also AIG placed or identified. The model has the benefits of meeting the specific needs of twice exceptional and ESL students for both high ability as well as addressing in concurrent deficits they might demonstrate.

Consultative: This service option is available for students who are identified, yet are not served in one of the service options above. The team, including parents/families, makes the decision to receive this service option, which addresses needs of the underrepresented students whose difficulties are not as great in domains such as academic gaps or cultural differences.

The district also "places" some students in AIG and honors classes, although these students do not meet strict eligibility criteria for identification as AIG, or the student is noted to be highly capable but not performing well or to capacity academically, so would not typically be put into an honors course. Placed students are typically from the under-represented populations of minorities, economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse, such as ELLs. Placed students often require additional assessments with significantly more emphasis on scores or results from environmental rating scales and teacher observations than traditional standardized tests.

### **Practice I**

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

**District Response:** MGSD provides several extra curricular activities that address the needs/interests of AIG students, beginning in 4th grade, yet less so in grades K - 3. These opportunities include but are not limited to robotics clubs in the intermediate and middle schools, media/technology clubs across the same grade levels, Career Bridge seminars at the high school level, second/foreign language clubs, chess club, math and science competitions, spelling bee, etc. Additionally, MGSD has added summer programming opportunities to meet the needs of AIG students. The district also facilitates and promotes participation in the Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP). Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, MGSD will utilize an AIG Advisory Committee to develop additional ideas for extra-curricular activities and/or special events. Additionally, the MGSD AIG Quarterly will be used to communicate these and other opportunities to all AIG students and their parents/families.

### **Practice J**

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

**District Response:** MGSD has developed and consistently implements a dedicated flexible grouping time daily within grades K - 6 at all schools. This time is minimally 45 minutes each day and based on ongoing/formative assessment data. The time is known as Enrichment/Intervention (EI) time and groups are flexible and change frequently, based on skills needed for those requiring remediation (intervention), and area/skill identified (sometimes based on interest) for those (AIG and other

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advanced) students who are proficient so that knowledge or concepts are broadened, deepened or enriched.

Beyond EI time, deliberate flexible grouping also occurs in most classes in elementary and intermediate grades in reading (at least, but sometimes in other subjects such as math or written language) to effectively instruct and support growth for all students, developed initially to assist struggling readers. Groups that include the AIG students are typically allowed much more independent (interest-based) reading/writing time while the 3 to 4 other lower level students are being seen in small group by the general education teacher (and teacher assistant, where available).

Flexible grouping also occurs within ninety-minute instructional blocks in middle and high school in core academic areas, again based on ongoing/formative assessment data. And again, AIG students are encouraged and permitted via independent work (often interest-based projects or assignments) to progress beyond required or assessed minimal proficiency levels during times when other groups are being offered remediation. Intentional flexible grouping is somewhat less likely to occur in high school (yet it does) due to schedule constraints; therefore growth and interests are supported via actual course/class selection and extracurricular offerings and choices, such as enrollment in a virtual high school course of interest in lieu of a limited interest on-campus offering.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** Schools can collaborate to offer various extra-curricular activities and allow students to travel between schools based on their interest.  
Utilize MHS students to serve as mentors in extra-curricular clubs/activities

**Sources of Evidence:** MGSD Credit by Demonstrated Mastery Plan  
MGSD Social/Emotional PD Plan

## Standard 5: Partnerships

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

### **Practice A**

Develops partnerships with parents/families and the community that are intentional and meaningful to support the following needs of AIG students:

- academic and intellectual
- social and emotional.

**District Response:** MGSD enjoys a high number of very active and engaged parent and community stakeholders. This is evident in the high number of parent volunteers across schools, consistently well attended and supported school district arts and sporting events, and attendance at special events such as academic awards ceremonies or special events such as district parent training efforts (for example, numerous parent education efforts have been effected regarding the use of technology for teaching and learning).

Specific to the AIG Program, the school district has an established AIG advisory group that consists of AIG parents/families, AIG lead teacher and Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator. Other AIG teachers or general education staff are welcome to attend, yet typically only do so due to a request to respond or due the specific topic being addressed during the regular meeting. To be forthright, the advisory committee membership and frequency of meetings have waned over time and therefore require re-invigoration if not re-visioning. The district plans to intentionally increase both membership and utilization of the AIG Advisory Committee to provide a deeper and more regular/frequent level of involvement in the planning, development, implementation, and monitoring of the MGSD AIG Program. The addition of AIG students to this advisory group is also recommended to enhance the perspective of the group and its products/dialogues.

### **Practice B**

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

**District Response:** The school district website currently houses the AIG Plan, along with a flow chart that shows the identification process and some other details relative to the AIG program. AIG teachers also disseminate and discuss referral and identification process information to/with general education teachers in grades 3 - 6, annually. Parents are provided letters and forms that describe the process at certain points, and simultaneously request permission to screen/assess students, as well given a printed handbook of parent rights during the identification process. Additional forms provided to parents describe the identification/testing process followed, as well as program eligibility criteria along with whether or not their child has been identified, and the specific area of eligibility and the program/services being offered or effected. MGSD plans to strengthen these practices by

disseminating quarterly newsletters to provide pertinent information for AIG students and their families. Parents of non-eligible students, those disagreeing with identification procedures/criteria, or those who disagree with placement are given a document detailing the dispute resolution process and timelines to be followed. An AIG brochure that highlights the process, services and timelines is being developed for dissemination district/community-wide during the 2017 calendar year. This brochure will also be available via the district website. The AIG Plan is also approved by the local Board of Education at a meeting which is open to the public and summary information about this product and process is contained within Board minutes on the district website and available upon request in printed format. Finally, Board policies that address student programming, achievement and behavior (that might also integrate with AIG students and their families) are public domain on the web and also available in print upon request.

### **Practice C**

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

**District Response:** The school district has an established AIG advisory group that consists of AIG parents/families, AIG lead teacher and Executive Director of Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator. Other AIG teachers or general education staff are welcome to attend, yet typically only do so due to a request to respond or due the specific topic being addressed during the regular meeting. To be forthright, the advisory committee membership and meetings have waned over time and therefore require reinvigoration if not re-visioning. MGSD will increase both membership and utilization of the AIG Advisory Committee to provide a deeper and more regular/frequent level of involvement in the planning, development, implementation, and monitoring of the MGSD AIG Program. The addition of AIG students to this advisory group is recommended as an enhancement toward monitoring and improving AIG program/s and services.

### **Practice D**

Informs parents/families and the community of opportunities available to AIG students on an ongoing basis and in their native language.

**District Response:** Parents of AIG students are informed about the program (service delivery options) as students are identified for the program. However, this is most significant in the intermediate grades (4-6), and to a slightly lesser degree, in the middle school grades. The Duke TIP program, summer camps and specific district summer opportunities aimed at high ability or high achieving students are also publicized to parents annually by flyers or other documents being sent home. As with (for) all district students, AIG-specific forms and other printed information are/is able to be translated as needed for any student/family. The district employs a translator who is available to attend conferences or meetings to translate for parents who speak Spanish. Translations (verbal or in print) are available in other languages via a contract with an agency in a Charlotte NC.

Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, MGSD will send quarterly newsletters to parents/families of

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AIG students. The newsletter will include information regarding opportunities available to AIG students in the community. Although this communique would be available to be accessed in Spanish (the most prevalent second language in the district at 8%), the present plan is to publish the document in English only. Realizing that parents might present a need for information in a second language that is not a student need, the district would rely on students to indicate the (parent) need so that a contracted translation might be effected.

**Practice E**

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

**District Response:** MGSD has minimal partnerships with community organizations to enhance and gain support that is/are specific to school district AIG programs and services. Developing relationships and establishing partnerships with community or business organizations should become a priority for the members of the AIG Advisory Committee as it is revived.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** Designate time each month for parents/community members to facilitate small groups based on curriculum and student interest. Examples: engineering, poetry, puzzles, Stock Market, etc.

**Sources of Evidence:** MGSD AIG Community Advisory Committee

## **Standard 6: Program Accountability**

The LEA implements, monitors, and evaluates the local AIG program and plan to ensure that all programs and services are effective in meeting the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

### **Practice A**

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

**District Response:** MGSD has developed a written AIG plan that describes the local AIG program. The Plan was approved by the local Board of Education in June 2016, and submitted to the state subsequently. Feedback from the state agency indicates a need to revise a substantial portion of the submitted Plan, which has been significantly modified after receiving both state technical assistance and additional feedback from district staff (particularly AIG teachers and the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education). The revised AIG Plan is submitted to the local Board for approval in March 2017, and immediately submitted to the state agency during the same month. The revised Plan is developed to meet and be commensurate with state statutes (Article 9B) as well as feedback and technical assistance from NCDPI. The revised Plan is a much more comprehensive and clear representation of and response to state standards, practices and statutes.

### **Practice B**

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

**District Response:** Due to the smaller size of the district (there are eight schools total), faithful implementation of the AIG Plan is easily ensured. District directors are engaged with all schools almost daily, which supports program consistency and Plan implementation. AIG teachers also communicate regularly and frequently, which ensures consistency and fidelity in Plan/program implementation. Site administrators, AIG teachers and other stakeholders (including parents) can quickly and easily access central administration to locate information or ask questions about AIG Plan components (such as eligibility criteria) when any issues regarding program interpretation potentially affecting fidelity occur. District-wide forms and parent letters specific to the AIG process and services are utilized to implement the program, which, along with strong communication between and among all stakeholders, also supports program fidelity.

Soliciting feedback from our stakeholders will be conducted on an on going basis through surveys and/or focus group sessions. We will continue to emphasize the importance of demonstrating growth with our AIG populations. Our district employs local quarterly assessments that are aligned with state standards. Local assessments will serve as a component of evaluation of the effectiveness of AIG program. Year-to-year and longitudinal data on state EOG tests are analyzed to assess group and individual growth and to develop goals that ensure program alignment at all sites and at all levels.

### **Practice C**

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

**District Response:** MGSD uses and monitors all state funds allotted for the local AIG program according to state policy. The majority of the funds are used to pay AIG teachers' salaries and benefits. No state-allotted AIG funds are used for AIG program administration. Also, AIG state funding does not adequately cover the cost of the district AIG program staff, materials, professional development, etc. Therefore, an additional \$18,827 is allotted for program implementation from local funding sources. Monitoring occurs via collaboration with the AIG program overseer (Assistant Supt for Elem Ed) and the district finance officer. In addition, outside financial auditing is completed annually as per state law and best practice.

### **Practice D**

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

**District Response:** MGSD is an intensely data-driven district that frequently and consistently analyzes and shares student achievement and other relevant data (such as drop-out data) in order to guide and improve instructional and decision-making processes. In fact, one of the belief statements in the current strategic plan that spans 2013-2018 reads as follows: reflection based on data informs instructional practices and programming that is personalized, customized and individualized.

There are numerous ways in which student achievement data are analyzed and shared. First, ongoing (formative) assessments, often developed by teacher teams, grade levels or departments, are used to obtain frequent data and guide the instruction of students, both as (flexible) groups and individuals. Often, these data are obtained or readily available from digital resources (academic/instructional software programs) that are student-performance centered and driven. This allows for individual students to be aware of, understand and become accountable for their own learning, which is of particular benefit for AIG students.

District-wide common quarterly assessments that render very useful student data are also used to drive instruction. Based on the results of these assessments, but also including other data, quarterly school-based data meetings are held at all district schools, which are led by teacher leaders and school administrators, and attended by central office directors and supervisors. Data within these meetings ranges from attendance, to discipline, to grade and subject level scores, to drop-out data. Data are disaggregated for all subgroups, including classes and students with special needs, AIG, etc.

Finally, end-of-year student data are reviewed, analyzed and shared during summer and the beginning of the next school year. These data serve as a way to reflect on the prior year's progress and challenges, and to develop and/or refine goals for the coming year. Again, these data include a look at all typically reported subgroups overall, and this includes a current emphasis on growth of students who score at the highest level on state assessments. These data are presented to the entire

staff at the back-to-school convocation, as well as provided to school leadership teams to assist development and modification of school improvement plans.

During the current school year, AIG student achievement data were disaggregated and reveal a lack of what the district considers sufficient growth for this subgroup. Therefore, coaching and professional development is aimed at improving scores for this student group. AIG teachers are focusing on social-emotional professional development for the 2016-17 school year via a book study, and have chosen another book for the 2017-18 school year that focuses on academic growth of AIG students via instructional differentiation.

### **Practice E**

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

**District Response:** The Executive Director of Elementary Education provides an annual report in May or June to the MGSD Board of Education, which includes data on the demographics of students who comprise the district AIG headcount along with student achievement data. And, at certain points, there has been dedicated and very focused attention placed on improving the representation of underserved populations, particularly ethnically and culturally diverse, and economically disadvantaged, in the AIG program. Along with that, grades and achievement data of those students in the AIG program have also received much attention, which implies a focus on their academic performance and retention in the program. By the school year 2014, the number of underserved students in the AIG program reflected district demographics at large. However, it is noteworthy that these data are not currently being reported or tracked in a focused manner; therefore, the rating on this practice has been changed to reflect its less known status.

### **Practice F**

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

**District Response:** The Human Resources Department collects and maintains data regarding the credentials of all instructional and administrative staff. HR also reports and holds accountable all staff for maintaining credentials/licensure, including professional development or course requirements. The Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education/AIG Coordinator works closely with the Human Resources Department to annually monitor the credentials of AIG personnel. The district also requires all teachers of AIG students in specific AIG classes to hold or obtain AIG licensure. Teachers who do not meet and maintain required license requirements are eventually deemed unemployable.

### **Practice G**

Elicits regular feedback from students, parents/families, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding

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the implementation and effectiveness of the local AIG program.

**District Response:** Intermittently during prior years, MGSD conducted surveys with AIG teachers and parents/families of AIG students to obtain feedback about program/services quality and satisfaction. This information was used to make adjustments and changes to the AIG Plan and program. During the 2016 Plan Year, MGSD improved this practice by choosing to conduct surveys with all AIG students. The information collected from teachers, students, and parents/families was utilized to develop the current plan. The district plans to continue this practice on an annual basis.

### **Practice H**

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

**District Response:** Data sources used to review and revise the MGSD AIG Program Plan include student achievement data, implementation data (administrative walkthroughs), survey data, and demographic data. Since student achievement is the primary goal and focus of the district mission and vision, disaggregated student achievement data is the main component of program evaluation, though staff quantity and quality, instructional content and materials, etc. are certainly important ancillary components. Analysis of these data points is used for a comprehensive program evaluation and corresponding action plan/goals toward program evolution and improvement.

### **Practice I**

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

**District Response:** MGSD shares program evaluation data with the public primarily through monthly Board of Education meetings. For example, the AIG Plan being revised so that it may be resubmitted to the state is shared with the Board (and Plan approval obtained), and the attending public will also hear that the Plan has been rewritten (revised) to improve or clarify several Standards and Practices, which in itself serves as a form or component of program evaluation. For example, Practices that are minimally evident are pointed out to the Board and public based on current state feedback on the Plan and changes noted to them relative to the impending Plan revision. As the AIG Advisory Committee is revived, it can serve as another venue and format for AIG program evaluation and reporting.

The school district also develops and widely disseminates to stakeholders and interested parties an Annual Report, which includes specific program information. Another form of program evaluation that is reported in various ways is student achievement and headcount data, both which are presented to district stakeholders such as school leadership teams, school administrators, as well as publicized on the district website and in local news media. Individual schools also have and update at least annually a one-page score sheet of pertinent data on school, student and staff demographics, achievement and other relevant scorecard information.

Finally, the school district strategic plan is posted on the district website, yet serves as a living

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document for guiding goal (and therefore program) evaluation. The strategic plan is intermittently revisited by the central administrative team to assess progress on goals and objectives, which further assists in providing Board updates, the public venue for reporting program evaluation. (Board minutes become a primary source for stakeholders who are not staff to receive information about district goals/objectives updates, which are considered an integral part of program evaluation.)

### **Practice J**

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

**District Response:** MGSD safeguards the rights of all AIG students and their parents/families through the following written policies, procedures, and practices.

#### Parent Rights:

Academically and intellectually gifted students are provided a free appropriate public education. This means that differentiated services are provided for the academically and intellectually gifted student (1) at no expense to the parent, (2) according to guidelines of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the district's Academically and Intellectually Gifted Program, and (3) according to the student's Differentiated Education Plan (DEP). Referral: When any person believes that a child is academically or intellectually gifted and may need differentiated educational services, that person should inform school personnel in writing the reason(s) for referring the child and complete the appropriate student checklist. The referral should include information about the student's characteristics and strengths that require differentiated services. A student must be enrolled in public school, and the referral should be given to the student's teacher or a school administrator.

Screening and Evaluation: After a child has been referred and in order to determine his/her need for differentiated services in the academically and intellectually gifted program, a screening process must be followed:

1. The parent must give written permission before any individual screening may be done.
2. A school-site team must review all referrals and make a recommendation for further evaluation.
3. Student eligibility for differentiated services will be determined by a school-site team trained to make appropriate recommendations for the individual student.

If the parent does not agree with the system's decision concerning eligibility, he/she has the right to obtain and submit results of an independent educational and/or intellectual evaluation. This evaluation must be given by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the education agency responsible for the student's education. Measures of intellectual aptitude and achievement are two of the criteria used in determining eligibility, and additional measures do not necessarily guarantee placement in the academically gifted program, although those results are considered. The school system is not responsible for paying for independent evaluations to determine student eligibility. The parent has the right to ask to meet with the school-site team to review the committee decision. For students identified as academically and intellectually gifted, a differentiated education plan or program is written. Such a plan will include student strengths and the options considered by the school-site team as appropriate to the student's educational needs. Placement is the end result of referral, evaluation, consideration of all criteria involved in giftedness, and the development of the DEP. The school system must ensure that placement is based on multiple indicators of giftedness and that

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options chosen are based on the needs of the student.

The following procedures are contained within the Parent Rights document; these are specific to addressing the resolution of disagreements regarding referral, identification, or services:

1. The parent may request in writing a conference with the AIG School Review Team.
2. If the parent still disagrees with the committee decision, he/she may appeal the decision by making a written request to the Executive Director of Elementary Education within 30 days of the conference with the AIG School Review Team. The Executive Director of Elementary Education will review the decision of the team and grant a conference within ten (10) school days of the parental request and respond in writing within five (5) days of that conference.
3. If the disagreement is not resolved with the Executive Director of Elementary Education's decision, the parent may request to have the decision reviewed by mediation. The parent may ask the school system to contact the Department of Public Instruction for a mediator, a person knowledgeable about the area of gifted education. The mediator selected will review the decision made by the school system and will render a decision within 30 days.
4. If mediation fails to resolve the disagreement satisfactorily, the parent may file a petition for a contested case hearing under the NC General Statutes. The hearing will be limited to consideration of (1) whether the local school unit improperly failed to identify the student as an academically gifted student and (2) whether the local plan has been implemented appropriately. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge will make a decision based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law. The decision of the administrative law judge becomes final, is binding on all parties, and is not subject to further review under the NC General Statutes. Attorney fees are the responsibility of the parent.

#### Transfer Students:

Students who transfer into the school district and are identified as AIG (or similar label or program) upon enrollment are placed into the program upon verification of documentation from the prior school district or school. Students sometimes do not meet the criteria necessary for AIG services or it is not obtainable from the previous district/school. Yet because the district AIG program serves both strictly eligible and not eligible but placed students in the AIG program, the transfer student is put into the program until more data are available (either sent from their prior district, or obtained by individually assessing the student after he or she arrives). Additional assessment may be completed at the end of the year when mass screening and identification typically occur. However, if the student transfers to MGSD at or near the beginning of a school year -- and especially if the student appears overly challenged by the program content and pace -- individual assessment may occur as soon as parent permission to complete the testing can be obtained. Transfer students are of course afforded and made aware of the same rights during the process and/or due to a disagreement with the process as those students who are already enrolled or placed.

**Ideas to Strengthen the Standard:** Share AIG data summaries on MGSD Website  
Provide opportunities for input/comments via MGSD Website

**Sources of Evidence:** MGSD Document: Your Rights As A Parent

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**Glossary (optional):**

**Appendix (optional):**

M-PowermentStrategiesandTools .pdf (*Appendix - Standard 2*)  
2016 Summer Institute Schedule at a Glance (1).pdf (*Appendix - Standard 3*)  
MGSD CDM Application .pdf (*Appendix - Standard 4*)  
MGSD CDM Considerations.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 4*)  
MGSD CDM FAQs.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 4*)  
MGSD CDM Plan .pdf (*Appendix - Standard 4*)  
MGSD CDM Process Chart.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 4*)  
MGSD Early Entry Kindergarten.pdf (*Appendix - Standard 4*)  
AIG Plan Mod Overview.pdf (*Local Board Approval Document*)  
MGSD AIG Plan BOE Approval 2016-19.pdf (*Local Board Approval Document*)  
AIG Fillable Forms Master Revised for 2017-18(3).pdf (*Other Forms*)  
DNQ 2nd, Served both.pdf (*Other Forms*)  
DNQ Placed.pdf (*Other Forms*)  
DNQ and not placed.pdf (*Other Forms*)  
DNQ continue placed.pdf (*Other Forms*)  
Middle School Lettter-placed.pdf (*Other Forms*)  
Permission to Screen letter or form.pdf (*Other Forms*)  
mms 1 subject.pdf (*Other Forms*)