



Warrick County School Corporation High Ability Program Plan

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Warrick County School Corporation High Ability Program

WCSC Mission Statement

The mission of the Warrick County School Corporation is to provide a positive and safe instructional environment which promotes the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social growth of the individual and to encourage each student to become a lifelong learning and contributing member of society.

Program Philosophy

The mission for the Warrick County School Corporation High Ability Program is to provide students who demonstrate consistently high achievement and potential with challenging educational opportunities appropriate for their needs.

It is the responsibility of the corporation to provide learning opportunities that will maximize the potential of every child. Students identified with high academic ability and/or exceptional potential for learning must be given the following opportunities:

- Be appropriately challenged to maximize their potential;
- Participate in differentiated experiences that enhance the general curriculum;
- Foster their creativity, independent learning, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking skills in daily work;
- Participate in cooperative learning structures;
- Have curriculum differentiated in pace and focus based on their unique needs;
- Receive social and emotional learning supports unique to their needs;
- Collaborate and socialize with like-ability peers

Definitions

The Indiana Code (IC 20-36-1-3) defines a student with high ability as one who performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment in at least one domain when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment; and is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

Program Goals

- Provide a variety of programming options to meet the needs of high ability learners across all grade levels
- Communicate with all stakeholders about the identification process and services offered for high ability students in WCSC
- Support staff through professional development opportunities specifically aligned to the high ability program goals and needs

Multifaceted Assessment Plan

Domains of High Ability

- **Domain: “High Ability – Language Arts”**
A High Ability Language Arts student (L-HA) should have this designation on the Student Test Number (STN) if the child performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment and whose educational needs and/or individual academic growth cannot be met through typical grade level curriculum and/or instruction in language arts.
- **Domain: “High Ability – Math”**
A High Ability Math student (M-HA) should have this designation on the Student Test Number (STN) if the child performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment and whose educational needs and/or individual academic growth cannot be met through typical grade level curriculum and/or instruction in math.
- **Domain: “High Ability – General Intellectual”**
A High Ability – General Intellectual student should have this designation on the Student Test Number (STN) if the child performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment and whose educational needs and/or individual academic growth cannot be met through typical grade level core curriculum and/or instruction in both language arts and math.

Identification Committee

Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction
Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction
EXCEL Location Building Principal
Curriculum Specialist/High Ability Coordinator
Two Elementary Building Principals
Secondary Building Principals

Identification Process

All 2nd and 5th grade students are given the CogAT Screener in the Fall. Students scoring at or above the 80th percentile on the Screener will be given the CogAT Full Battery assessment. Those performing at or above the 96th percentile in verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, or both on the Full Battery assessment will be identified as high ability in the appropriate category (LA, Math or General Intellect).

All Kindergarten students are given the CogAT Screener in the Spring. Students scoring at or above the 80th percentile will be given the CogAT Full Battery assessment. Those performing at or above the 96th percentile in verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, or both on the Full Battery assessment will be identified as high ability in the appropriate category (LA, Math or General Intellect).

NWEA Map Growth Assessment scores are also used as a second data point during the identification process.

Parent communication about the assessments will be provided at the building level and communication will focus on the purpose of the assessment and will emphasize meeting the academic needs of the students identified.

Identification of Newly Enrolled Students

Newly enrolled students to WCSC who were identified as high ability in their previous district should submit data and documentation from the previous school corporation. The selection committee will review the data and determine eligibility.

Parents of students who would like their child to be considered for high ability placement should submit their request to the building-level principal. Those students will be given the CogAT assessment.

Appeal Process

An appeal process is in place in the event the identification team does not place a child in services and a teacher or guardian challenges this decision. The following steps outline the appeal process:

1. The petitioner contacts the building-level principal.
2. The appeal request will be communicated to the High Ability Coordinator.
3. Coordinator reviews student profile and requests alternative assessments which may include: NWEA data; state-wide assessment data; approved classroom work samples.
4. The Identification Committee considers any and all new data.
5. The Identification Committee reports results to coordinator.
6. Coordinator reports results to petitioner.

Parents may submit results from privately-obtained, nationally-recognized assessment data for measures of aptitude or potential (verbal and quantitative reasoning). Please call the Curriculum Office for further information.

Exit Procedure

If a student, parent, or teacher believes a high ability placement for services is no longer appropriate for a student, the following procedure will be offered:

1. A conference with all parties involved should be arranged. The parent and teacher providing services should be present. The student should be present if appropriate. This conference may be a telephone conference, if needed.
2. Parent, student, and teacher examine issues of concern and discuss interventions that may be implemented.
3. Participants agree on a probationary period not less than one grading period to implement the interventions.
4. At the end of the probationary period, the parent, student, and teacher meet to review progress and determine whether or not the student should exit the program.
5. If an exit is deemed appropriate, the parent signs the exit form for the student to exit the program and the High Ability Coordinator is notified.

Curriculum and Instruction Plan

Warrick County School Corporation Services for High Ability Students

The Warrick County School Corporation High Ability Program provides services and varying opportunities in kindergarten through grade twelve.

- In the primary grades, opportunities are available for early kindergarten entrance, subject skipping, and grade skipping. High Ability students are cluster grouped in the same classroom when possible.
- Students identified as High Ability - General Intellect in grades 3 through 5 are given the opportunity to attend a differentiated program for students of high academic ability. The Expanded Curriculum for Exceptional Learners, or EXCEL, is housed at Chandler Elementary School and students are transported from their home school district.
- In 5th grade, all students are re-evaluated for high ability identification. Middle school honors and accelerated classes are offered. Students may be offered one or more of these classes depending on their unique abilities and needs. These classes use an accelerated, differentiated, and enriched curriculum.
- High Ability students in high school are offered advanced and honors courses differentiated for ability and interest. Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual-Credit courses are offered to high school students so they can earn high school and college credit concurrently. Students who complete high school graduation requirements in fewer than the traditional number of semesters may graduate for early college entrance. The corporation's online course delivery system is also available to students who may need an advanced class but enrollment numbers at the school prevent a course from being created. These online students will be supported with a licensed teacher in the subject area when possible.

Counseling and Guidance Plan

All students have unique social and emotional needs. High-ability students have a unique set of social and emotional needs due to their increased capacity to think beyond their years, greater intensity in response, combinations of unique interests, personality characteristics, and conflicts that are different from those of their age level peers. Teachers, administrators, and school counselors work to create a program of affective services for high ability students to help facilitate their development. Students in EXCEL participate in a specially created social and emotional learning program.

Social and Emotional Issues Common Among High Ability Students

Overexcitabilities - High ability students may have “intensities” that could manifest themselves in one or more of these areas (Dabrowski’s Theory):

- Intellectual intentness and focus on a particular topic
- Greater sensitivity to environment (appreciation for music or art, sensitivity to loud noises or bright lights, more allergies, etc.)
- Surplus of physical energy
- Vivid imagination and creativity
- Heightened emotional sensitivity (reaction to criticism, perfectionism, empathy, attachment)

Asynchronous Development - Physical, cognitive, and emotional development may be at different places within the same child. This can present a number of problems for the child with exceptional abilities.

- Adults, accustomed to advanced verbal reasoning from the child, may fail to understand emotional outbursts more typical of his/her chronological age.
- Children may find it difficult to communicate with age peers who are considerably below their intellectual level, even if they are at the same level emotionally.

Perfectionism

- High ability students may place unrealistically high standards for performance on themselves. This may result in anxiety, frustration, or self-blame for less than-perfect performance.
- High Ability students may feel as though others (parents or teachers) have unrealistically high expectations. This may result in fear of failure, avoidance of challenges, depression, and connection of self-worth to performance.
- High ability students may develop unrealistically high standards for the performance of others.

Self-esteem/Identity issues - High ability students may experience difficulty constructing their identities, which may lead to lowered self-esteem. Difficulty with identity development may result from any of the following:

- Lack of understanding of higher abilities and their implications
- Feeling different from one's same-age peers
- Behaviors inconsistent with gender role expectations (e.g., sensitivity in gifted boys, assertiveness in gifted girls)
- Being identified as learning disabled as well as having high abilities
- Differences resulting from cultural, linguistic, or SES differences

Other topics to be addressed by affective services provided:

- Introversions: Gifted individuals are more likely to be introverted than the general population (50% of gifted population compared to 25% of the general population).
- Peer pressure: High ability children may struggle more with peer pressure; they are already feeling different from their peers as a result of their ability differences, yet still want to fit in socially.
- Bullying: High ability children may be targets for bullying, and they may also be bullies themselves.
- Competitiveness: High ability children are frequently accustomed to doing well and may need guidance in developing healthy attitudes toward competition with others.
- Social skills: Because of advanced vocabulary, increased intensity, and/or different interests, high ability children may experience difficulty interacting socially with the same-age peers.
- Dealing with stress: High ability students may feel stress from perceived expectations and demands from others and self.
- Responsibility: High ability children may be given more responsibilities by teachers and parents and therefore may need guidance in learning how to manage these responsibilities to self and others.
- Acceptance: High ability children need guidance in developing appreciation for others with different abilities.
- Family dynamics: High ability may influence family dynamics with regard to expectations and parental pressure.
- Study habits: High ability students often lack good study skills, as they frequently can earn solid grades without effort. In later grades, when faced with challenging coursework for the first time, high ability students lacking study skills may avoid the challenge, fail, or experience undue stress and self-doubt from lack of preparation.
- Leadership skills: As high ability individuals often seek out or are called upon to assume leadership positions, they need guidance in developing these skills.

College and Career Readiness

High ability learners are often multi-talented, and this can cause more difficulty in making career decisions. Special care should be taken to ensure students the opportunity to explore career possibilities and to assist them in aligning these possibilities with interests and abilities.

Assistance is often needed to recognize where interests and abilities might be used in college planning and career decision-making. Such assistance many include:

- Mentoring opportunities
- Career shadowing opportunities
- Pre-college opportunities, such as Advanced Placement or academic summer programs/ camps in the college setting
- Knowledge of college selection and application process
- Knowledge of financial assistance opportunities

Additional Resources Available

“Guiding Students with High Abilities: Social and Emotional Considerations” is an IDOE resource available for download in a PDF in the IDOE Moodle Toolkit. This resource includes the following:

- Chart of common characteristics of high ability students and their possible negative classroom manifestations
- Descriptions of common social and emotional issues faced by high ability students
- Tips for parents, teachers, and counselors of high students
- Resources for addressing the social and emotional needs of high ability students

“Activities and Resources for Affective Education of High Ability Students in Indiana” is an IDOE resource available for download in a PDF in the Moodle. This document includes examples of activities to use with high ability students in small groups at elementary, middle and high school levels.

The Indiana Association for the Gifted provides resources for high ability coordinators and parents and teachers of high ability students. Visit www.iagonline.org.

The organization SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) has resources for addressing the social and emotional needs of high ability students. Visit www.sengifted.org

Professional Development Plan

The Warrick County School Corporation will continue to pursue the most qualified teaching candidates for positions in our schools. Teachers within the Honors program will be encouraged to pursue their high ability licensure, or credentials, if they don't already possess this license or credentials.

Building based professional development is offered in addition to participants selected to attend the IAG Annual Conference, AP trainings, curriculum workshops, and other opportunities offered outside the district that align to our High Ability program and goals.

*Professional development plan will be updated as the needs of the district, specific personnel, and program goals change.

Program Evaluation Plan

The district High Ability Plan will be reviewed annually by the Broad-Based Planning Committee.

Broad-Based Planning Committee

Composition of Required Broad-Based Planning Committee:

- Educators
- Parents
- Students
- Community members
- Other stakeholders

Members should have an interest in advocacy for high ability education and include some decision-makers within the corporation. The High Ability Coordinator keeps a record of official members, including contact information, meeting dates, and agendas.

The Broad-Based Planning Committee is a diverse group of stakeholders organized to review the continuous development and implementation of the services and programs for high ability students.

The committee serves as the following:

- Representation of key stakeholders
- Sounding board for programmatic ideas
- Keeper of the vision for high ability education
- Assessor of the degree to which program goals are being met
- Impetus for improvement
- Ambassador for high ability services in the community

The local governing body has ultimate responsibility and authority for all student services; the BBPC is not a decision-making group, but it serves as an advisory board to review policies, services, and outcomes.

*Feedback from the committee meetings will be considered when editing and updating the district plan and making changes to programming.