

High Ability Program Manual MSD of Wabash County

*Excellence in education is when we
do everything that we can to make sure they become
everything that they can..*

- Carol Ann Tomlinson



Dream Big, Work Hard.

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MISSION STATEMENT

MSD of Wabash County understands that not all students learn in the same way. Many students require modified curriculum, including learning at a faster pace, access to more challenging learning materials, or content that is more complex. We acknowledge that there are students in all socioeconomic populations that perform at, or have the potential to perform at, exceptional levels in one or more of the core academic domains.

It is our mission to appropriately identify these students and then offer/provide numerous differentiated programming options to come alongside them and guide them to reach their full potential academically, emotionally, and socially.

INTRODUCTORY BELIEF STATEMENTS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

(Adapted from NAGC Programming Criterion, 2000)

- Differentiated curriculum forms the necessary foundation of all educational services provided. Regular classroom curricula and instruction must be adapted, modified, or replaced to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- Instructional pacing and student grouping must be flexible to allow for the accelerated learning of highly able students as appropriate.
- Appropriately trained personnel must direct services for the education of highly able learners. High ability education must be integrated into the general education program.
- Requisite resources and materials must be provided to support the high ability education program.
- A continuum of programming services must exist for highly able learners.
- A written formal program evaluation that is purposeful, efficient, and ethical should be completed periodically.
- Staff development for educators who work with the highly able will be comprehensive and consistent.
- Student identification processes for high ability services must be research-based, formal, communicated, cohesive, coordinated, comprehensive, and non-discriminatory against racial, ethnic, or socio-economic background.
- Student identification instruments must measure diverse abilities and talents.
- Student identification procedures must include provisions for informed consent, retention, reassessment, exiting, and appeals.

PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal: Identify all students in need of high ability services.

Objective: To use reliable, norm referenced quantitative data in combination with qualitative data sources to identify all high ability students.

Objective: Provide ongoing training for those who evaluate data for high ability students as well as those who use qualitative observations for identification purposes.

Goal: Provide challenging and differentiated curriculum and instruction to address the intellectual needs of identified high ability students.

Objective: Provide a range of services to meet the HA student's needs. Some services include, but are not limited to, cluster and ability grouping, acceleration, differentiated curriculum, and early entrance.

Objective: Adapt, modify, or replace classroom curriculum with proven HA lessons and curriculum that provide challenge and experience with higher level thinking skills for these students.

Objective: Provide ongoing professional development for staff to continue to learn best practices for differentiating for the high ability learner.

Goal: Address and meet the social and emotional needs of the high ability learners.

Objective: Cluster grouping of students to provide interaction with peers of like ability.

Objective: School counselors are available to meet the individual needs of the high ability student.

Objective: Provide ongoing professional development for staff on the characteristics and needs of the high ability learner.

DEFINITION OF HIGH ABILITY

At MSD of Wabash county, our program is designed for the student who performs at, or has the potential to perform at, outstanding levels of accomplishment in at least one domain - mathematics, language arts, or both (the general intellect) - when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment. These students are recognized by the exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests they often exhibit.
Indiana Code 20-36-1-3

INDIANA CODE FOR HIGH ABILITY PROGRAMS

Definitions, requirements for state and local educational institutions and further high ability education codes can be found on the Indiana Department of Education website at: <http://www.doe.in.gov/achievement/individualized-learning/office-hig>

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GIFTED CHILD

Although there are many definitions of giftedness, according to the National Association of Gifted Children, gifted children do have many common characteristics. It is important to note however, that there is a distinction between a child who is bright and does well in school versus a truly gifted child.

A Bright Child	A Gifted Child
Knows the answers	Asks the Questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discussed in detail; elaborates
Top group	Beyond the group
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes the assignments	Initiates projects
Is receptive	Is intense
Copies accurately	Creates new designs
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
technician	inventor
Good memorizer	Good guesser
Is alert	Is keenly observant
Is pleased with learning	Is highly self critical
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GIFTED CHILD... CONT.
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However, it is important to recognize that not all gifted students perform well at all times. Occasionally, these characteristics can manifest in students' negative actions and can indicate giftedness as well. The following are some examples of negatively perceived characteristics based on gifted tendencies...

Bored with routine tasks
Refuses to do rote homework
Is more concerned with the concept than the details
Hands in messy work
Makes jokes or puns at inappropriate times
Refuses to accept authority
Is nonconforming; stubborn
Is reluctant to move to another topic
Overreacts
Gets angry or cries if things go wrong
Domineers
Disagrees vocally with others or with the teacher about ideas and values
Is self-critical; impatient with failures
Is critical of others or of teacher

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SERVICES (GRADES K-6)

Programming

At MSDWC we use a variety of programming options depending on the building.

Options include but are not limited to:

- Various forms of cluster grouping in our classrooms
- Differentiated instruction and lessons
- Opportunities for enrichment
- Flexible reading groups at all levels
- Subject or grade advancement
- Independent study
- Independent Math study using online management systems

Additionally, students have opportunities to participate in extracurricular academic activities such as STEAM club, Maker Spaces, Robotics team, Spell Bowl, Math Bowl, Battle of the Books, or school newspaper, depending on the school they attend.

Definition of Cluster Grouping

All students are purposefully placed into classrooms based on their abilities, potential, or achievement. This allows for flexible grouping, differentiation, and intellectual peer interactions. A group of high ability students are clustered in a mixed ability classroom. This model works well with commonly used inclusion models where special education students are clustered based on the services they require, as it mimics that design.

Clustering is not tracking. In tracking, students are grouped into classrooms with others of comparable ability and remain together throughout their school years. Curriculum is based on the ability levels of the students in each track. Rather, when clustered, all classes have a range of abilities. Teachers modify or extend grade level standards according to the students' needs and abilities. The classroom composition changes each year.

Gifted students need to spend time learning with others of like ability to experience challenge and make academic progress. They better understand their learning differences when they are with learning peers, rather than always being the explainers of knowledge to others. While this tool is sometimes a valuable way to learn, students learn best when they too are being guided. Helping other students learn is not the responsibility of gifted students, and they are usually not very good at it!

Also, teachers are more likely to differentiate curriculum when there is a group of gifted students.

Because either gifted or high achieving students will be in every class, all classes have academic leaders. Gifted students do not always make the best academic leaders because they make intuitive leaps, and therefore do not always appear to have to work as hard as others. This system also allows high average students to have new opportunities to become academic leaders, once out of the shadow of the gifted students.

In a Gifted cluster model - or Total School Cluster model, the gifted cluster groups are rarely distinguishable from other groups of students in the classroom. All students move in and out of groupings according to interest, ability, and pace regarding different topics.

Sample classroom composition

<i>30 students in 3 classes</i>	<i>High Ability</i>	<i>High Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low Average</i>	<i>Far Below Average</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>

Identification:

Grade level testing procedures:

Incoming Kindergarten:

At MSDWC we recognize the importance of identifying giftedness early, yet acknowledge that pre-school experiences can greatly influence clear identification, both by masking giftedness or falsely presenting it. It is our goal at MSD to do our best to find those students with true giftedness by teacher observations in the classroom of higher level thinking, advanced abilities, interests, performance, and potential for giftedness measured on a standardized cognitive test.

To do this, we use KOI planned experiences, intentional teacher observations for gifted characteristics, CogAt screener test, reading benchmarks, and NWEA test scores. While this data is important we still take into consideration that students showing great potential still need a solid academic foundation on which to build and that students will be evaluated again in second grade.

All results and data are examined by a committee to determine appropriate placement, and we are looking for students who consistently score in the 95th percentile or higher on our collected data.

Grades 2 and 4:

We reevaluate students who have been previously identified as gifted, as well as those who were not. At this time we recognize that some students' giftedness may have been masked by differences in learning abilities and at this time often have caught up to their peers in the academic realm and we find they are performing at advanced levels or we can now better see their potential to perform at higher levels. It is the goal in the second and fourth grade ID process to find those students who have begun to blossom since the last identification period.

To do this, we use KOI planned experiences(2nd grade), intentional teacher observations for gifted characteristics, reading benchmarks, ILEARN and IREAD (4th grade) and NWEA test scores. We form a pool of students who generally perform in the 90th percentiles or are showing signs of giftedness in other ways, and administer the CogAT test. All results and data are examined by a committee to determine appropriate placement, and we are looking for students who consistently score in the 95th percentile or higher on our collected data.

High Ability Assessment Schedule

Identification of high ability students is done in grades K, 2, and 4. Assessment for the following school year's high ability placements begins in September and is concluded in April. Parents are notified of the assessments through school newsletters and parent permission forms (if applicable). Parents whose students participate in testing with parent permission required, receive notification of their child's placement/non-placement in high ability programming for the next school year by the end of the current school year.

...Assessment Schedule...

Overview:	Planned Experiences	KOI Observation Window	SIGS (if necessary)	CoGAT
Kindergarten	Sept Oct Nov	November	X	December
2nd Grade	Nov Dec Jan	January	February	March

4th Grade	X	X	January	February
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*Dates vary by year.

Kindergarten

Beginning in September, all kindergarteners participate in planned experiences intended to highlight high ability characteristics. In the winter all students are given the CogAT screener. All data, including teacher observation, winter NWEA scores, and reading benchmarks are collected and evaluated by the identification team to determine appropriate identification and placement.

2nd grade

Beginning in November, all second graders participate in planned experiences intended to highlight high ability characteristics. Teachers observe for characteristics as well and based on observations, reading benchmarks, and winter NWEA scores, a pool of students is formed to be administered the CogAT full battery test to test verbal, nonverbal, and quantitative thinking skills. Students in this pool may be also scored by parents and teachers with the SIGS rating scale. All data is compiled and examined by the identification team to determine appropriate identification and placement.

4th grade

Beginning in January, scores and winter NWEA scores are evaluated to form a pool of students to be administered the CogAT full battery. Students in this pool may be also scored by parents and teachers with the SIGS rating scale. All data is compiled and examined by the identification team to determine appropriate identification and placement.

Placement Criteria

Current Kindergarten: Local norms will be determined after administration of assessments and collection of additional supporting data from the CogAT, NWEA, Reading Benchmark levels, KOI experiences, and teacher observations.

Grades 2 and 4: Local norms will be determined after administration of assessments. Other supporting data may be considered as needed: Benchmarking Reading Level; scores in the Pass+ category; teacher recommendation based on classroom data, NWEA, CogAT, and Parent and Teacher SIGS rating Scales.

Middle and High School: Students can be placed in advanced classes based on performance in previous classes.

Request for Review/Appeal

A request for a review of records can be made by a parent on behalf of a student who is not selected for high ability programming. The request should include evidence a parent wishes to have considered by the review committee such as student work samples, portfolio, outside testing, etc., that was not available during the initial identification period. This supporting evidence is then reviewed by the committee which will make the final determination for placement for the current school year. (See Appendix for a copy of the Request for Review/Appeal Form)

Exit Procedures

Students who are not successful may be exited from the high ability program at any time. This process may be initiated by the school or by the parent. Before a student is removed from programming, a committee made up of the parent, teacher, high ability staff, and school administrator/counselor, will meet to establish a Student Improvement Plan. The goal of the Improvement Plan is to set forth interventions which will assist the student in being successful in the high ability placement. Improvement steps will be identified, a timeline will be set for completion and then the committee will reconvene to determine the success of the plan. If improvements have been made, additional supports can be added to continue the placement. If the interventions have not assisted the student in being successful, then the student may be exited from the program. (See Appendix for copies of the Student Improvement Plan and Exit Procedure Form)

MIDDLE SCHOOL SERVICES (GRADES 7-8)

Programming

High ability students in grades seven and eight may experience acceleration and/or enrichment in language arts and mathematics instruction. Differentiation is emphasized as an important methodology, while also offering advanced classes. Service under the differentiation philosophy may take on a variety of service plans based upon the student's needs. Each school's guidance department is ready to discuss these options. Some options may include, but are not limited to: Early entrance into High School, Subject or grade advancement, -Individual options and internships, or High Ability math or English classes.

Identification

In the spring of their 4th grade year, students are identified for high ability services in the middle school. Students continue through middle school in High Ability programming unless they are exited from the program. Students may also enter the High Ability program at any grade after 4th grade through demonstration of advanced proficiency of grade level curriculum and after discussion with at least guidance counselors, but could also include the high ability teacher or coordinator, parents, teachers, and building administrators.

Request for Review/Appeal A request for a Review of Records can be made by a parent on behalf of a student who is not selected for high ability programming. The request should include evidence a parent wishes to have considered by the review committee such as student work samples, portfolio, outside testing, etc. that was not available during the initial identification period. This supporting evidence is then reviewed by the committee which will make the final determination for placement for the current school year. (See Appendix for a copy of the Request for Review/Appeal Form)

Exit Procedures

Students who are not successful may be exited from the high ability program at any time. This process may be initiated by the school or by the parent. When a student's performance is questioned, communication occurs among the parents, the student, the teacher, the guidance counselor, and the department chairperson (if necessary) to examine the problem. If the placement is not appropriate, the student will move to a regular class. However, if the student is placed correctly but not performing at an acceptable level, an improvement plan is generated and assistance is provided to help the student reach his or her potential. A student is only removed after s/he has been given time to improve but shows no improvement.

HIGH SCHOOL SERVICES (GRADES 9-12)

Programming

Differentiation occurs for high ability students in both English and Mathematics instruction through the course selection process as guided by their counselors.

Advanced Placement (AP) courses will be offered to students who desire advanced instruction. Any student opting to take AP courses will be required to take the appropriate AP exam if s/he wants to receive a weighted grade for the course.

College credit courses are also provided. Students have the option to take the course not only for high school credit but also for college credit. Courses include dual credit classes led by MSD teachers as well as classes on campus of local colleges or universities, such as Indiana

Wesleyan University or Manchester University. Students bear the responsibility for the cost of taking these courses for college credit.

Opportunities to participate in academic competitions are in place. A mentorship program is also in place. Students may participate in a work-related mentorship with, for example, a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer, or they may apply to participate in a creative arts mentorship position.

Identification

Students are admitted to honors classes based on current success in high ability classes or teacher recommendation. However, MSD maintains an open enrollment policy in honors classes except where specific prerequisites are indicated. Approximately 15% of students in an individual grade level are recommended for honors classes, but non-recommended students who wish to take these more challenging courses may pursue scheduling them by completing the appeals process. Students recommended for honors programs may opt not to be placed in those classes with parent permission. Because of MSD's desire for greater numbers of students to be enrolled in college level courses, students may demonstrate eligibility for these classes by achieving the bulleted items below:

- strong scores on the PSAT,
- the recommendation of a teacher in the content area,
- a personal commitment to a rigorous curriculum, and/or
- an intent to take the college-level examination.

Request for Review/Appeal

The student's current teacher in the content area being appealed must complete a "High Ability Checklist" for the student. The student must also provide his or her grades and a sample of his/her applicable academic work. A high school assistant principal may also schedule an interview. Finally, an appeals committee will review the documentation and make a decision.

Exit Procedures

Removal from an honors course is based on inappropriate placement, parent request, or low performance. When a student's performance does not meet the standards established for an honors class, communication occurs among the parents, the student, the honors teacher, the guidance counselor, and the department chairperson (if necessary) to examine the problem. If the honors placement is not appropriate, the student will move to a regular class. However, if the student is placed correctly but not performing at an acceptable level, an improvement plan is generated and assistance is provided to help the student reach his or her potential. A student is only removed after s/he has been given time to improve but shows no improvement.

PROCEDURES FOR NEW STUDENTS

Parents of new students should indicate on enrollment paperwork whether or not their child has participated in high ability programming at a previous school. If desired, parents may opt to have their child participate in MSDWC assessments to determine eligibility for our programs. Placement in a previous district is not an automatic placement in MSDWC, as districts often have different measures and criteria for placement. The assessments used to determine placement for new students will be similar to those used for identification of current MSDWC students. Testing will take place at an appropriate time determined by administration and the identification committee. Parents may also choose to supply supporting data from a previous school district or private testing, but it is not necessary.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Educators, K-12, are encouraged to attend local workshops on differentiation, as they become available. Teachers are invited to attend the state (DOE•IAG) high ability conference and any workshops sponsored through the Educational Service Centers and other organizations related to high ability studies. Guidance counselors are encouraged to attend any workshops or programs pertaining to the social and emotional needs of highly able students.

To promote and support differentiated instruction, teachers are provided opportunities to develop differentiated lessons, to collaborate with fellow teachers in the development of differentiated projects, or to improve the curriculum. Support is available to teachers who are working with the

high ability students. Administrators also attend workshops and programs pertaining to the education of highly able students.

Finally, teachers are encouraged to earn high ability endorsement on their licensure, to participate in small group discussions about best practices in high ability education, to attend self-selected workshops and seminars on progressive approaches to high ability education, and to follow-up these beneficial learning opportunities with on-site, job-embedded activities.

SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT PLAN

The Broad Based Planning Committee, comprised of educators, school counselors, administrators, parents, students and community members, meets annually to examine the mission of our schools and determine if the high ability program is meeting the needs of these exceptional learners, evaluate the programming effectiveness, develop goals, and the state requirements are reviewed and revisions are discussed. This committee is responsible for directing and conducting the evaluative process, and reviewing and updating the current program plan of improvement.

Program evaluation is systematic with the following areas evaluated on a regular basis: beliefs and goals, student identification and placement, curriculum and instruction, and program design. The evaluation process involves the generation of concerns and critical questions that guide the data gathering process. The information collection strategies used are discussions, interviews, standardized test results (including both ILEARN Pass+, NWEA and Benchmark data), and other sources of information. Based on the analysis of the data collected, the BBPC formulates a plan of action to improve the overall program for high ability students.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Any child who attains the age of five (5) on or before August 1st of a school year, will be admitted to the kindergarten program of the school corporation. If the child is younger than five (5) years and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child wish to enroll the child in the kindergarten program they must make an appeal application to the Superintendent, or his/her designee. (see board policy for a description of the early entrance process).

Additional Questions:

Stakeholders who would like more information about this program, or identification and placement policies, or who would like to be a part of the Broad Based Planning Committee should contact the High Ability Program Coordinator/Chief Academic Officer, Tim Drake, 260-563-8050 @ Central Office draket@msdwc.k12.in.us

Appendix

**Request for High Ability Placement Review/Appeal
MSD of Wabash County High Ability**

Please review my child's academic and assessment file for consideration of placement in the High Ability program.

Child's Name: _____

Current Grade Level: _____

School: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Additional evidence for review: _____

Please know that the initial decision was based upon valid student data and the best professional placement decision for your child. If you do ask for a review/appeal, please support your request with additional data or information that you want the review committee to consider. You may attach additional documents to this form that you believe the committee should review which were not available to them for the initial identification decision (i.e. parent letter, information about a newly identified disability affecting scores, student work samples completed independently, information from outside tutor or enrichment program leader, copies of testing reports from other psychological/academic testing agencies, etc.) Please note that you should not request additional information from your child's teacher as he/she will already be asked to share information with the committee. The High Ability Identification Committee consists of a building level administrator, central office administrators, and high ability and classroom teachers. A letter will be sent to parents in a timely manner indicating results of this review placement for the next school year. Determinations of the High Ability Review Board are final and cannot be appealed further.

STUDENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN
MSD of Wabash County High Ability

STUDENT: _____

SUBJECT OF CONCERN: _____

TEACHER: _____

DATE OF INITIAL PARENT OR GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION: _____

PLAN OF IMPROVEMENT STEPS TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

- 4. _____

- 5. _____

SIGNATURES	DATE
Student _____	_____
Parent _____	_____
Teacher _____	_____
Principal _____	_____

EXIT PROCEDURE
MSD of WAbash County High Ability

STUDENT: _____ GRADE/CLASS: _____
SCHOOL: _____ TEACHER: _____
PARENT(S): _____

DATE: _____
REASON FOR REFERRAL:

DATE OF EXIT CONFERENCE:

PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE:

DATES OF PREVIOUS PARENT CONTACT & COMMUNICATION SUMMARY:

DATE OF IMPROVEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: _____

COMMENTS ABOUT PLAN'S IMPLEMENTATION: _____

EDUCATOR COMMENTS:

PARENT(S) COMMENTS:

GENERAL SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE: _____

FINAL PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

SIGNATURES

DATE

Student _____

Parent _____

Teacher _____

Principal _____

Resources

Office of High Ability, Indiana Department of Education

<http://www.doe.in.gov/achievement/individualized-learning/office-high-ability-education>

National Association for Gifted Children <http://nagc.org/>