

High Ability Program Handbook

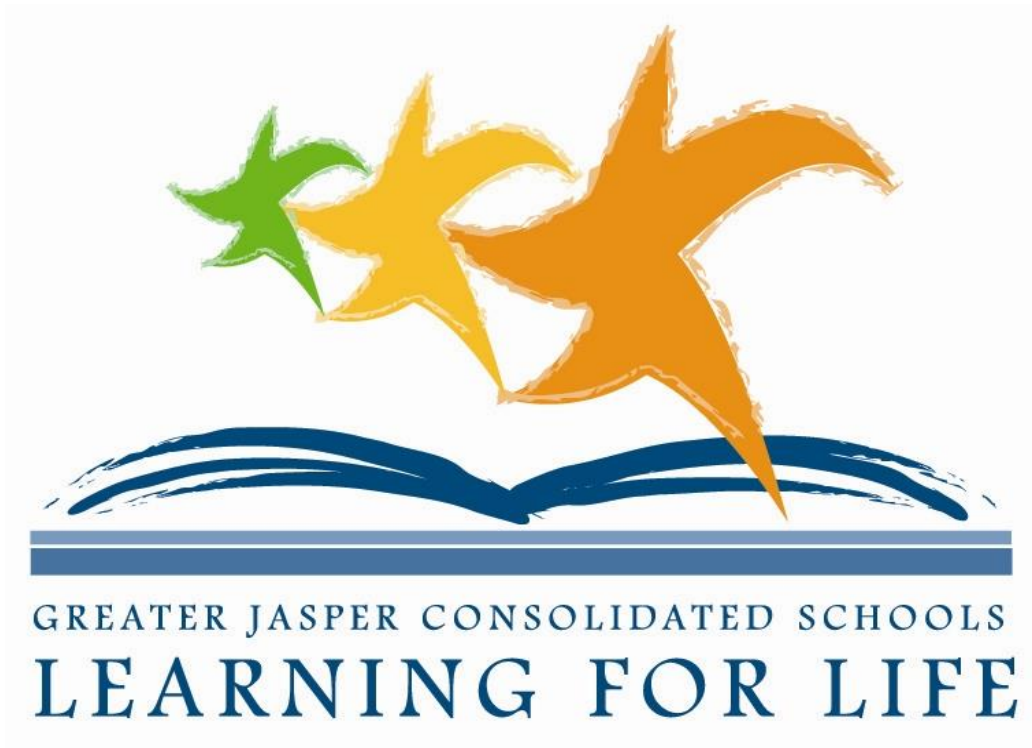


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PROGRAM DESIGN

Philosophy

The Greater Jasper Consolidated School system strives to provide an optimal learning environment, which nurtures those qualities unique to each individual student. All students, including those from economically disadvantaged, racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, are ensured an appropriate education. GJCS affirms the following:

- Strategies are implemented to identify and meet the academic, psychological, and social needs of students.
- Students will experience and enriched, differentiated system of learning that develops higher level thinking skills and advances knowledge.
- Strategies are integrated into the student's daily learning environment to maximize instruction and learning to foster academic and critical thinking skills.

Mission

The staff of the Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools, in partnership with parents and the community, recognizes there are students who exhibit or show potential for exceptionally high academic performance. These high ability learners require differentiated, accelerated, and inspiring learning experiences. We will identify these students, offer social and emotional support, and challenge them with educational choices that lead to the pursuit of excellence.

Definition of High Ability

We recognize high ability students as those students who perform at or demonstrate the potential to perform individually at outstanding levels of accomplishment in at least one domain (general intellectual or specific academic in the areas of language arts or mathematics) when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment. High ability students are those who academic needs would not be met in the regular classroom setting and would benefit from specially designed program and services that would extend beyond the regular grade-level curriculum.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the GJCS High Ability Program are to:

- Provide an enriched curriculum
- Accelerate learning
- Challenge students to reach beyond their intellectual potential
- Capture unique student interests
- Create authentic learning and assessment experiences using multiple-modalities of learning
- Differentiate instruction to meet the unique learning needs of students

- Accurately identify high ability students and strategically plan for their learning needs

Broad-Based Planning Committee

The GJCS Broad-Based Planning Committee (BBPC) members include one school board member, district curriculum director, building level principals and teacher representatives from each district school, high ability coordinator, high ability teacher, and parents. The BBPC will provide input regarding the high ability program design, student identification process, curriculum and instruction, as well as the professional development needs of staff members. This committee will meet at a minimum twice per year.

Guidance/Counseling

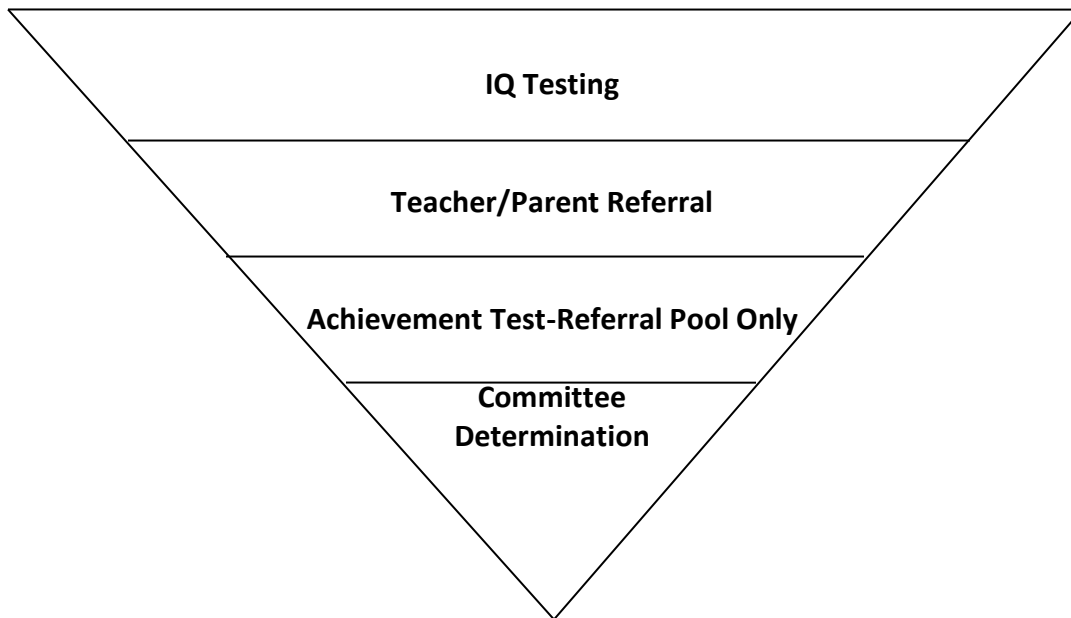
All teachers and counselors are educated on the characteristics of high ability students. Middle and high school counselors help students in making class selections and assist with any other academic issues. Elementary students are supported by their classroom teacher as well as a school counselor as needed.

IDENTIFICATION

Identification Process

Grades K-12

- **Step 1:** Screen all students in grades K, 2, 5, and 8 for identification for High Ability programming the following year by using the Cog-At. (October)
- **Step 2:** Provide all parents and teachers with a list of characteristics of students with high abilities.
- **Step 3:** Ask for parent and teacher nominations for high ability programming
- **Step 4:** Committee reviews all nominations for programming and IQ scores from screening process and produces the screening pool (Nominations and SAS scores of 115 and above are included in pool).
- **Step 5:** Students in screening pool take Northwest test (Grades 2-12) (or other Academic Achievement Test)
- **Step 6:** Committee reviews achievement test score and IQ test score of all students in pool
- **Step 7:** Committee constructs a preliminary list of students who may be high ability in general intellectual or specific domains (Math or LA).
- **Step 8:** Discuss programming options and notify parents
- **Step 9:** Provide additional testing for those who request it due to appeals, illness, and/or moving from a different school or district.



Instruments/Assessments

1. CogAT: Cognitive Abilities Test- Quantitative (Grades K-12)
2. NWEA: Northwest Evaluation Assessment – Quantitative (Grades 2-12)
3. Purdue Checklist – Qualitative (Grades 2-12)
4. Kingore Observation Scales –Qualitative (Grades K-2)
5. ACUITY – Quantitative (Grades 3-5)
6. mCLASS Dibels/Math- Quantitative (Grades K-2)
7. Teacher Recommendation – Qualitative (Grades K-12)
8. Parent Recommendation – Qualitative (Grades K-12)

Identification Procedure for New Students

Parents or teachers may make requests for students new to Greater Jasper Schools to participate in the High Ability screening process. A parent permission form (Appendix A) for testing will be sent home and the corporation will administer the Cog-At screening test within ten school days of the date on the signature form. Results are sent to parents and principals so that qualified students are placed in the appropriate classes.

Appeals Process

When there is a disagreement about the identification or programming of a student in the High Ability program, an appeals process may be initiated. A parent, teacher, or administrator may begin the process by notifying the High Ability Coordinator in writing, identifying the specific reasons for the appeal. The appellant will then meet with the building principal, the high ability resource teacher, the coordinator, and the curriculum director to review data relative to the current identification or programming decision. At the meeting, the appellant or members of the committee may introduce new information, clarify inaccuracies, review decisions, and then make a decision for a course of action.

Withdrawal Process

Students who are not achieving in the High Ability program may be removed by parent request, or an administrator, guidance counselor, or classroom teacher. A withdrawal form (Appendix B) must be submitted to the High Ability Coordinator and a conference should be scheduled with the child's parents, homeroom teacher, resource teacher, coordinator, and principal. There a decision will be made on the placement of the child.

Individual Assessment File

An individual assessment file containing student performance information on all cognitive, achievement, and nonstandard measures will be maintained for each identified student and housed in the permanent record.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The goals, objectives, content, process, and product of curriculum for high ability students is appropriately modified from the standard school program per individual students' academic needs in language arts, mathematics, science, and/or social studies.

Service Delivery

K-2

Identified primary age student enrichment and acceleration needs are met through a tiered approach with differentiation of instruction based on individual student skill needs. Students may also be placed in a cluster classroom depending on their individual needs. The use of ongoing formative assessment provides monitoring of student progress. Modification of the

goals, objectives, and level of expected outcomes of student performance are adjusted accordingly to maximize individual potential.

3-5

Students in grades 3-5 that qualify for high ability services are placed in a cluster classroom or receive differentiated and/ or accelerated instruction. Instructional strategies vary by teacher and school. Compacting, flexible groupings, acceleration, and tiering are among those areas of differentiation most commonly used.

6-8

Identified middle grade students are provided opportunities to participate in accelerated courses in English, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies (grades 7-8 only). Introduction to World Languages is also available for high ability eighth grade students. Enrollment is based upon ability in each content area allowing acceleration in one or more courses dependent upon unique student learning needs.

9-12

Honors courses in the following subject areas are offered to students who meet minimum prerequisite course grade requirements and the scrutiny of the selection committee:

English 9 Honors
English 10 Honors
English 11 Honors
World Literature and Composition
English Literature and Composition
Algebra I Honors
Algebra II Honors
Geometry Honors
Biology I Honors
Earth and Space Science I Honors
Physics I Honors
World History Honors

Advance Placement courses are available in Calculus and Biology. AP course offerings will expand in the areas of Literature, Composition, Spanish, and French beginning with the 2010-2011 school year. Visual arts enrichment experiences in the Arts Horizons program maximize student's artist knowledge and potential.

Select students may opt to take advantage of a "fast track" through high school program which will allow for demonstration of course proficiency through end of course assessment. This will

enable high ability students to advance through the prescribed curriculum more quickly accelerating matriculation.

Opportunities for High Ability Students

The needs of high ability students can be met through different opportunities, such as early entrance, grade skipping, ability grouping, early matriculation, and dual enrollment.

COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE

Information and Training

Guidance and counseling Services

Referral Process

Academic/Career/Personal-Social Development

Intervention Strategies

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is offered to all staff members, including a focus on those who work with high ability students. Training is accomplished in variety of ways, including:

- a) Collaboration on curriculum sequencing and instruction by elementary, middle school, and high school teachers including Honors and Advanced Placement courses
- b) Attendance at workshops targeting high ability programs, such as the Advanced Placement trainings, Indiana Department of Education workshops, workshops and conferences on differentiation and instructional strategies
- c) Attendance at conferences such as the Indiana Association of the Gifted state conference
- d) Other professional development opportunities as they become available each school year

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Internal

Internal evaluation of the GJCS high ability program will occur annually. Feedback through surveys of students, teachers, parents, and community members will be used by the BBPC to determine the program strengths and needs in the following areas: student progress; program design; student needs; learning environment; program goals and curriculum; student identification; personnel qualifications; resources; staff and community awareness; and cost effectiveness.

External

GJCS will invite an external source to evaluate the high ability program using the Indiana Standards for High Ability Education every 3-5 years. Recommendations will be utilized to align the program to best-practice for gifted students.

Program Revision

GJCS will use the evaluations to continually revise the high ability program. Teachers, administration, parents, and stakeholders will play a vital role in program development and revision.

Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools

High Ability Testing

Parent Permission Form

Student Name _____ Birth Date _____

School _____ Teacher _____ Grade _____

Parent Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Work/Cell Phone _____

_____ I give permission for my child to participate in the High Ability screening process.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools

Withdraw from High Ability Program

Elementary _____

Middle School _____

After careful consideration, it is agreed that _____
should be withdrawn from the program as of _____
because _____

- Signed:
1. _____ (Parent) _____ (Date)
 2. _____ (Teacher) _____ (Date)
 3. _____ (Principal) _____ (Date)
 4. _____ (Student) _____ (Date)

WEBSITES AND RESOURCES ON HIGH ABILITY (FORMERLY GIFTED EDUCATION)

- www.gifteddevelopment.com Dr. Linda Silverman's website at the Gifted Development Center. Dr. Silverman focuses on the affective and guidance needs of gifted children and adults.
- www.jhu.edu/~gifted/ Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth's website. Information on talent searches and summer programs would be of interest.
- www.cectag.org The Council for Exceptional Children has a special division called The Association for the Gifted (TAG). Good initial resource.
- www.gifted.uconn.edu The University of Connecticut's Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development is another worthwhile site.
- www.bsu.edu/gifted Ball State University's Center for Gifted Studies and Talent Development shares information on services available in Indiana.
- www.bsu.edu/sis/ The Shared Information Services of Indiana are lending libraries that loan educational materials free of charge to any adult resident of Indiana. These libraries are located at Ball State and Purdue Universities.
- www.geri.soe.purdue.edu Purdue's Gifted Education Resource Institute
- www.iag-online.org The Indiana Association for the Gifted's website. Lots of info! This organization also sponsors a state conference
- www.nagc.org The National Association for Gifted Children publishes many documents and hosts an excellent national conference.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILIES

1. Though your child is identified with special gifts, they are still children. They need love, but controls; attention but discipline; parental involvement, yet training in self-dependence and responsibility.
2. Consistency of parental value systems is important for a child's optimum development. This means that there should not be wide disagreements over values between parents.
3. Parental involvement in early task demands, such as encouraging the child to perform tasks themselves, to count, tell time, use correct vocabulary, be responsible for homework and assignments are all important.
4. Read to your child, discuss ideas in the presence of children.
5. Growing up healthy and happy is an important factor in a child's emotional stability.
6. Since High Ability children often have vague awareness of adult problems, such as death, sickness, finances, war, etc. which their lack of experience makes them unable to solve, they may need reassurance in these areas.
7. Fill your home with multi media.
8. Parents should avoid direct, indirect or unspoken attitudes that fantasy originality, unusual questions, imaginary playmates or out-of-the-ordinary mental process on the part of a young child are bad, —different|| or to be discouraged. More caution about an older child's mental processes should be kept in mind.
9. Help your child understand the importance of safety when using the Internet, e.g. researching, playing games, chatting, etc. Often they are curious about a variety of topics and lack the understanding represented by misuse of this tool. Discuss Internet safety and monitor your child's online communities and conversations.
10. Parents, avoid over structuring a child's life...they need free time.
11. Don't compare your child to other children. It places the responsibility to be —gifted|| all of the time, and it certainly is not fair to the child. Every child is unique.
12. Enjoy your child. Your gifted child may try your stamina and endurance at times, but enthusiasm and lust for learning will more than make up for the pace. Your argumentative child may be practicing new skills and communication. Try to relax and enjoy the excitement.

Recognizing the Characteristics of Gifted Children

ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children (1985) cites three types of characteristics of gifted children: general behavioral, learning, and creative characteristics.

General Behavior Characteristics

Gifted children's behavior differs from that of their age-mates in the following ways:

- Many gifted children learn to read early, with better comprehension of the nuances of language. As much as half the gifted and talented population has learned to read before entering school.
- Gifted children often read widely, quickly, and intensely and have large vocabularies.
- Gifted children commonly learn basic skills better, more quickly, and with less practice.
- They are better able to construct and handle abstractions.
- They often pick up and interpret nonverbal cues and can draw inferences that other children need to have spelled out for them.
- They take less for granted, seeking the "hows" and "whys."
- They can work independently at an earlier age and can concentrate for longer periods.
- Their interests are both wildly eclectic and intensely focused.
- They often have seemingly boundless energy, which sometimes leads to a misdiagnosis of hyperactivity.
- They usually respond and relate well to parents, teachers, and other adults. They may prefer the company of older children and adults to that of their peers.
- They like to learn new things, are willing to examine the unusual, and are highly inquisitive.
- They tackle tasks and problems in a well-organized, goal-directed, and efficient manner.
- They exhibit an intrinsic motivation to learn, find out, or explore and are often very persistent. "I'd rather do it myself" is a common attitude.

Learning Characteristics

Gifted children are natural learners who often show many of these characteristics:

- They may show keen powers of observation and a sense of the significant; they have an eye for important details.
- They may read a great deal on their own, preferring books and magazines written for children older than they are.
- They often take great pleasure in intellectual activity.

- They have well-developed powers of abstraction, conceptualization, and synthesis.
- They readily see cause-effect relationships.
- They often display a questioning attitude and seek information for its own sake as much as for its usefulness.
- They are often skeptical, critical, and evaluative. They are quick to spot inconsistencies.
- They often have a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics, which they can recall quickly.
- They readily grasp underlying principles and can often make valid generalizations about events, people, or objects.
- They quickly perceive similarities, differences, and anomalies.
- They often attack complicated material by separating it into components and analyzing it systematically.

Creative Characteristics

Gifted children's creative abilities often set them apart from their age-mates. These characteristics may take the following forms:

- Gifted children are fluent thinkers, able to generate possibilities, consequences, or related ideas.
- They are flexible thinkers, able to use many different alternatives and approaches to problem solving.
- They are original thinkers, seeking new, unusual, or unconventional associations and combinations among items of information.
- They can also see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts.
- They are elaborate thinkers, producing new steps, ideas, responses, or other embellishments to a basic idea, situation, or problems.
- They are willing to entertain complexity and seem to thrive on problem solving.
- They are good guessers and can readily construct hypotheses or "what if" questions.
- They often are aware of their own impulsiveness and irrationality, and they show emotional sensitivity.
- They are extremely curious about objects, ideas, situations, or events.
- They often display intellectual playfulness and like to fantasize and imagine.
- They can be less intellectually inhibited than their peers are in expressing opinions and ideas, and they often disagree spiritedly with others' statements.
- They are sensitive to beauty and are attracted to aesthetic values.

